

Testimony of Carol Boyd

President Navarro, Members of the Board and Dr. Weast –

Good Evening. My name is Carol Boyd. I am now serving my third year as President of Argyle Middle School's PTSA. My daughter promoted from Argyle last June and is now a freshman at Blair High School and my son is a current 7th grader at Argyle.

In August of 2004, my husband and I came to a crossroads about what to do about with the middle school education years of our children. We had lived in Strathmore Bel Pre, a community adjacent to Argyle, for 8 years at that time. We understood and appreciated the importance of the ethnic diversity that our children had been part of as students of Bel Pre and Strathmore Elementary Schools. But whether to send our children to Argyle Middle School was a difficult decision. Many of our neighbors and close friends of our children had moved out of our local community to get their kids into better performing schools or chose to send their children to private schools. The flight of families making these decisions to avoid Argyle was commonplace.

As luck would have it, a new principal, Dr. Debra Mugge, was selected to lead Argyle during the summer of 2004. As we spoke to her about the concerns we had in sending our daughter to Argyle during a community meet and greet, she requested that we give her and Argyle one year to prove that the reputation as an undisciplined and underperforming school was no longer deserved. It was during that time period when the Middle School Magnet Program grant was also announced.

With the solid leadership of Dr. Mugge and our dedicated staff, the magnet program at Argyle is a great success story. The Downcounty Consortium has the greatest concentration of minority, low-income, and ESOL students in Montgomery County. And yet Argyle has made AYP for the past two years! Argyle's program has increased the interaction among students of different social, economic, ethnic and racial backgrounds. I have received feedback from many parents praising the program for the excitement and desire to learn it has fostered in their children.

I was moved by an email I received in broken English and also Spanish. Upon having it translated, the message was clear. This program is reaching students of all backgrounds in a very positive way. As our AYP results help demonstrate, the whole school approach of the magnet program benefits all our students and provides the opportunity to learn digital information technology that will carry them successfully into the future. Argyle is now a place where parents in and outside the Downcounty Consortium want their children to go.

Our students and the communities these three middle schools serve must not be left behind. We are asking the Board of Education for full funding to continue the program in its current format because it works! The program offered at Argyle engages all students in the learning process. The gains students have made are directly related to teachers participating in professional development during the school day. Any less than 8 periods would seriously impact the number of high school credit magnet classes that could be offered. These are the classes that draw students into our programs. Please fully fund the Middle School Magnet Consortium programs at Argyle, Loiederman and Parkland to allow their successes to grow.

Thank you for your time.