

Vocational Education Testimony
MCPS BOE Budget Priorities Testimony, 10/16/08
Gordie Brenne

I'm a parent of a Junior at AEHS, and VP of our PTSA, and I want to thank you for coming to our school to hear our ideas.

1. **Achievement Gaps-** I have previously testified about the achievement gap among our Hispanic/Latino and African American students. Recent SAT data shows that even our Asian students are struggling, ranking 24th out of 25 HS.
2. **Poverty-** We are not a wealthy school, and many say that is a factor in the poor performance of our students.
3. **Choices-** Parents want choices for under performing students. Vocational Education is one of those choices.
4. **Vocational Education Engages-** When budgets shrink, successful organizations refocus on their core mission. In our case that's HS Assessment courses, including reading and math. Vocational Education is a strategy that works for our kids by giving them a reason to learn reading and math, and to graduate.
5. **Edison's Popular-** We only have about 50 kids enrolled at Edison Tech HS, mostly taking courses in Building Trades, Automotive Tech and Cosmetology. They graduate with a license in their trade and can then earn enough money to go to college. Edison is very popular and our parents say that in the past 3 kids were rejected for every acceptance, although rejection rates dropped this year.
6. **Edison's Finite-** Edison is well run by Principal Carlos Hamlin who says he would like to take on more of our kids, but he can't. That's because Edison is a "finite resource", according to Shelley Johnson who directs the Careers and Technology Education (CTE) program that Edison is a part of.
7. **Edison's a Zero Sum Game-** That means that if we are to enroll more AEHS students at Edison, worthy students from other HS would be turned away.
8. **CTE Grows-** I mentioned the CTE program that Edison is part of. Excluding Edison, CTE is one of the fastest growing programs in the county and now offers college prep courses for 21,000 HS students, ranging from courses in finance to engineering and medical careers.
9. **Wealth Wins-** AEHS only had 1 student enrolled in medical careers last year, the fastest growing industry in the country. Shelley Johnson has met with us and says that last year AEHS ranked 5th from the bottom in CTE enrollments. Sadly, most of these courses go to wealthier schools, where kids need less help to graduate or get to college.
10. **Plan-** MCPS's strategic plan's first goal has a milestone that calls for preparing every student for college or employment. Shelley Johnson agrees with us that it's not an either/or proposition. By preparing students for employment, we prepare them for college.
11. **Reallocate-** I urge the Board to reallocate CTE resources to poorer schools like AEHS and to double the size of our vocational education program.

Career and Technology Education (CTE) Enrollment Albert Einstein HS Business Case – 9/3/08

