

The Lift Every Voice series spotlights the individual voices in our alliance who guide us to wrestle with entrenched inequities and structural racism as we all learn, listen and develop strategies for change.

“ I went to Washington Montessori for pre-k and kindergarten, which was a predominantly Black school, then we moved so I went to Summerfield which was white and Black. I went to Mendenhall for middle school, and it was very diverse, and then to Page for High School. In my 9th grade year, I thought Page was diverse but now, I feel like it's not all. I think it depends on what classes you take. For example, I take AP and IB classes, so I see a lot of the white population. When I go into like an Honors English class, it's a more mixed group. In my IB or AP classes, there are maybe three other people of my color. There are only three or four Black girls out of about 30 students in the class. ”



Jadyn Beacoats is a recent Page High School graduate who just started her freshman year in college, but she already has a signed contract to return home after graduation and teach with GCS. Retired educator Julia Osborne talked with Jadyn to learn more about her experiences as a student and her drive to change things in the future. [Click here to read some of that conversation.](#)

What motivates you today to be so involved?

The house I live in or the way that I dress, or the way that I get to school shouldn't determine who I can talk to and who I can't. It opens my eyes because I don't know why people don't want to talk to people who are different from them.

Did you have teachers and principals of color as you were coming through elementary and middle school?

In elementary school, I only remember two Black teachers. They were both women. I connected with them very well. I am still in contact with my third-grade teacher. She was a math teacher, and she's why I want to teach 3rd grade. Then in middle school, I had a lot of teachers of color like my English teacher. She was Indian. My Social Studies teacher was Black. I had a good mix of teachers, so it didn't feel like I was the only Black person around. Since I've been in high school, I've only had three Black teachers and they've all been women. My first-year counselor was also Black, but she left last year. Obviously, there are other Black teachers here, but I haven't had them, maybe because I'm in AP and IB, but I do think that's weird.

Do you have any specific positive or negative experiences that stand out for you as you look back on your schooling?

I think a positive would be that I connect with these teachers no matter their race or their socioeconomic status. I connect with everyone. Something negative that I have seen is that, if you are in the AP or IB classes, those are the people that you talk to. You don't even talk to Honors class people unless you're taking those classes too. Even in those classes, there are sides of the room that you sit on. If you walk into my Sociology class, you'll see that most of AP/IB kids on one side, and then the Honors people are on the other side. I think the AP/IB students need to take Honors classes and the Honors students need to take AP and IB because then there wouldn't be those cliques.

Do you remember when you first became aware of the concept of race?

It was just last year. My 9th grade year was kind of a blur because of COVID. In my 11th grade year, I realized that the people you talk to revolves around the classes you take.

What sort of structural inequities do you see? Do you see any systems and processes that keep things the way they are?

I feel like the AP/IB program shows who has the support and the resources to be successful in AP/IB classes. Some students who don't want to take AP/IB don't feel like they will have the support around them to say they can do it. You just kind of take the classes that you learn about in Middle School. Students don't think that they can choose AP and IB because they've taken Honors classes during their first two years, but you can take AP and IB whenever you want. I think AP and IB classes are great. They teach so many things. My mom pushes me to push myself and she has the resources for me to pick from and say, "Oh, I want to do this," and she opens the book for me. Other people feel like their book is closed. Support at home is important, but it could also be your teachers.