

# Girls Action Board Poem



The Girls Action Board (GAB) is a national leadership opportunity for youth and young adults (ages 18-24) with lived expertise. GAB aims to create pathways for Black girls to lead in the work that centers their healing, resilience, and professional development. Operating as paid consultants, members use their knowledge, skills, and vision to assist in overseeing this initiative, providing insight, co-creating materials, co-facilitating webinars, and sharing their expertise to ensure quality, culturally responsive services for Black girls.

GAB members wrote and performed this collaborative poetry piece about the importance of centering Black girls.

## Black Girl, Speak Your Mind!

Black girl, speak your mind  
We see it too often, when we are pushed aside  
And constantly criticized for the color of our skin  
With roots of great divine, and skin with dark complexion  
Fighting this world and their many objections  
They fear us when we speak our mind, or say that we have an attitude  
Fear us no more as our voices will be heard at a great magnitude

Black girl, speak your mind  
So many words, but they went unspoken  
Until I decided I would no longer allow myself to be unheard  
Or feel broken

Black girl, Speak your mind  
From many places and many faces  
Travel with pace, society, and race  
Try to hide their face  
From the trauma we face  
In which they try and erase, we move about in unison  
What did we do to them?

Black girl, speak your mind  
I used to think if I showed my true colors  
What would society think?  
Would they pity me  
Laugh or consider me to be overreacting?  
Every day, my thoughts ran so deep  
We spend most of our lives being judged on how to move correctly  
How to dress, how to speak, how to walk with class  
We are seen week, told to sit up straight when they walk past

Say your truth  
We carry that weight  
We've built and we've healed  
We've fought, not folded  
Where we are determined ends  
Someone to another must begin  
We are outgoing, charismatic, and innovative

So are you even looking if you don't see extraordinary  
Black women turn heads, with their intricate minds and lovely aura  
So are you even looking if you don't see confidence  
We are the foundation, blueprint, and trendsetters  
So are you looking if you don't see authentic leaders  
We are loving, nurturing, and deserving  
So are you looking if you don't see passion  
We don't fit in any old box  
Not to be mistaken for mediocre nor average

Everyday  
Until we decide  
When we are divine, we were put in mind  
Sister to Sister, we were subject to crime  
Violence and harm seem to fade through time  
We rise up above with thick armor and pure skin  
With brains of excellence and shaping the future, it has no end  
Moving to brighter outcomes, when they were meant to be tragic  
The true representation of Black Girl Magic

But this isn't where it starts or stops  
Come sit at this table that centers us  
It prioritizes girls and women who share our same needs  
It is a space that values our expertise  
Where we have the opportunity and live out our dreams  
You are to respect everyone at this table  
There is intelligence, beauty, power and life at this table  
This is where we are equal, there's no competition  
This is where we are engaged in our craft  
This is where we are encouraged

Our path is our choice  
Table or classroom, center Black girls  
Table or workplace, center Black girls  
Table or organization, center Black girls  
No matter the time or place,  
Our voices are powerful just as much as our race!