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        Public Schools
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This summer, you requested that I consult with Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) on equity issues in gifted identification associated with the division's advanced education services. On September 30, 2020, I conducted a series of interviews and focus groups with stakeholders, including yourselves, other HCPS leaders, members of the School Board, teachers, a counselor, parents, gifted education advisory committee members, and principals. After reviewing my notes from those discussions, I requested an additional interview with a principal, which occurred the following week. All told, I spoke with 28 stakeholders. I also requested documentation about HCPS policies and processes and data on the school division and its gifted education programming and analyzed data from the Virginia Department of Education. I appreciate the efforts of HCPS staff and stakeholders to provide me with the information used in this memo, which summarizes my observations and recommendations.

The HCPS Context

Henrico County is geographically unique, covering a large area running around the north side of Richmond from the east to the northwest. It is geographically diverse, including both very rural, suburban, and urban fringe areas and neighborhoods. The eastern sections of the county are also much less densely populated, and residential patterns show evidence of extremely segregated housing. Both of these facts are substantial barriers to providing equity in general within the county's school division, let alone within advanced services. As one interview participant noted, there is a lack of "similar lived experiences" for students based on where they live within the county. Several stakeholders noted that Henrico County suffers from many of the societal issues of equity and privilege as many other communities. Although this is not a unique characteristic of Henrico County, it is real and part of the context in which HCPS does its work.

Figure 1 is a racial dot map showing the racial segregation and population density issues in the county. The far eastern fringe is very sparsely populated and largely white, and as one moves around the north end of Richmond, the population becomes predominantly Black (although still not densely populated). Moving around the northwest, the population becomes more densely populated and more racially diverse, until arriving at the western edge, which is primarily White and Asian-American.

Figure 1. Henrico County Population Density by Race, 2010
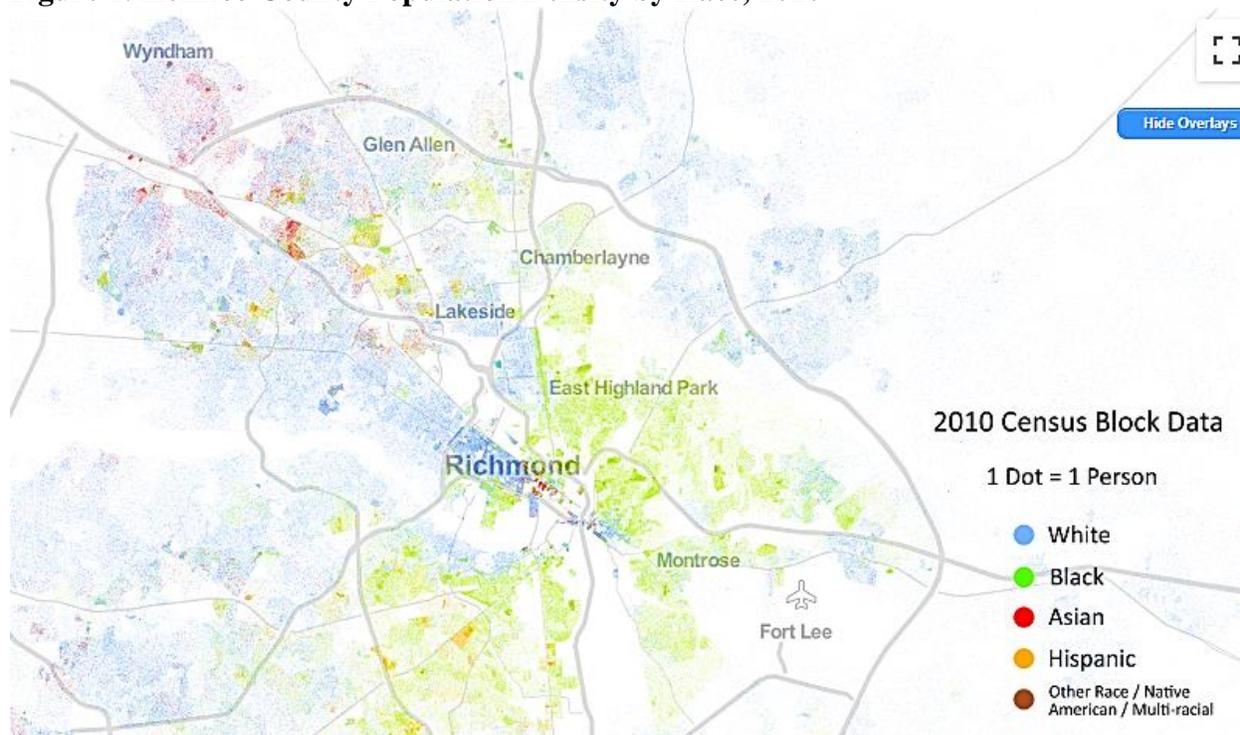
Note. Racial dot map by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia

HCPS serves roughly 51,000 students across 46 elementary schools, 12 middle schools, 9 high schools, and a handful of additional centers. Two of the high schools and three middle schools are International Baccalaureate schools. The student population has exhibited slow and steady growth over the past decade, with the recent sharp dip likely due to the pandemic and probably not the start of a long-term trend (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. HCPS Enrollment, 2011-2021
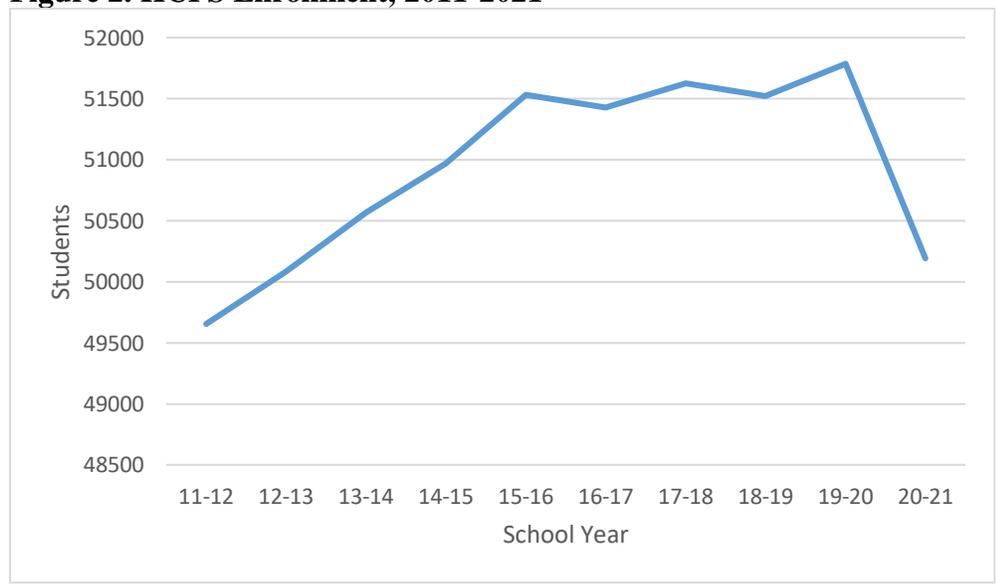
Given the diversity of the county's population, it is not surprising that the division's student body is also diverse (Table 1). Although the total student size has been relatively stable, the racial and economic make-up of the student body is changing considerably. Since 2010-2011, the number of Black students has been stable, White students have decreased 16%, and Asian (+68%), Hispanic (+77%), and Multi-racial students (+82%) have increased significantly. The number of students considered to be disadvantaged (+36%), ELL (+55%), and requiring special education services (+12%) also increased over the past decade. These trends point to HCPS being a diverse district that is becoming more diverse over time. It's also worth noting the growth among students with special needs, which are generally more expensive students to educate.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of HCPS General Student Population and Presence of Equity Concerns in Advanced Service Participation

		Division	**Equity Concerns?**
Black	18559	36%	Yes
White	18985	37%	No
Latino/Hispanic	5517	11%	Yes
Asian	6123	12%	No
Multi-racial	2436	5%	No
ELL	3520	7%	Yes
Disadvantaged	21223	41%	Yes
Students with disabilities	6659	13%	Likely

Notes. All data 2019-2020. Total student population = 51,786

To make the equity concerns decision in Table 1, I examined participation rates in advanced programs in HCPS data, Virginia Department of Education data, and other data sources (e.g., the EDAC report, *Increasing the Enrollment of Marginalized Students in Advanced Coursework*). All data sources provide evidence of significant discrepancies between the HCPS total student body and those receiving access to advanced services (students with disabilities are noted to be "likely" underrepresented based on comments from stakeholders, but I was not able to find solid data on this particular group of students).[1]

The school division's participation inequities in advanced programs are significant, but I am also concerned about inequities in student performance, or what my colleagues and I call excellence gaps. For example, in Figure 3, I included SOL results for students scoring advanced by race/ethnicity (I combined all grades for this figure to make it easier to understand, but breaking the data out grade-by-grade would result in the same conclusions). The data in Figure 3 focus only on elementary and middle school students, but I have yet to find a school district with excellence gaps that were smaller in high school, making it a safe assumption that these gaps are similar if not larger on high school measures of advanced learning (e.g., AP scores, IB diploma

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[1] The EDAC report notes that advanced programs with district wide open enrollment, such as specialty centers, tend to have much higher Black student participation in the eastern part of the county vs. those in the west. Although this *may* be indicative of an equity issue, it may simply be that the district's somewhat sprawling size makes attendance on the far side of the district too difficult for students on the opposite side of the county.

statistics, SAT/ACT scores). Indeed, the EDAC report provides evidence that high school participation and excellence gaps are quite large.

Figure 3. Percent of HCPS Students Scoring Advanced on 2019 SOL Assessment
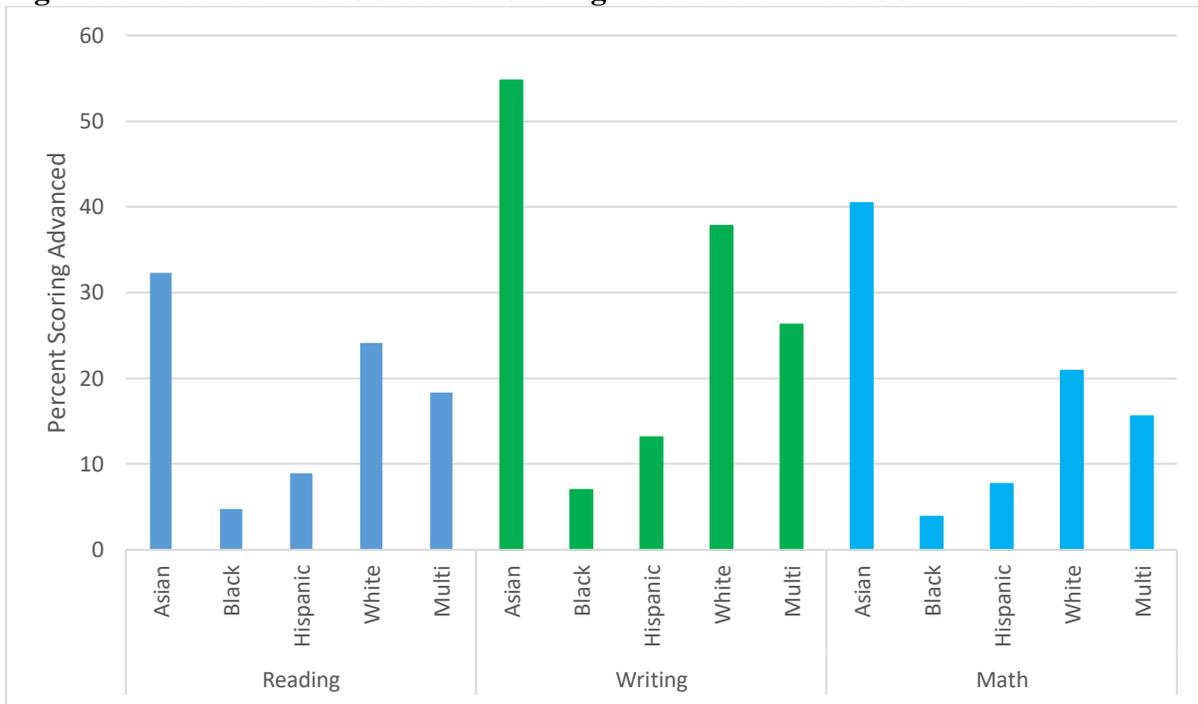
Note. Data from Virginia Department of Education, https://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/sol-pass-rates/index.shtml

General Observations

Across the stakeholder groups, there is a strong sense that HCPS programming, when firing on all cylinders, is good and better that opportunities offered in surrounding school divisions. At the same time, stakeholders saw several areas for improvement. First among these was equity.

Unlike several school districts in which I've recently worked, there was little appetite for blowing up the current system. I heard variations of the phrase "fix it, don't kill it" numerous times during the interviews. Of course, Virginia state law requires gifted education in school divisions, making program elimination a non-starter, but HCPS leaders, educators, and other stakeholders believe the current programs should be strengthened.

Among the apparent strengths of HCPS programs, the gifted resource teachers (GRTs) are widely respected for the training and expertise they bring to each school; the range of diverse program offerings was seen as a better alternative than a one-size-fits-all model for advanced learning; and the use of a universal, multiple-criteria identification system was frequently mentioned as a strength.

Several issues were mentioned during the conversations that are not directly related to equity in advanced programs but are still important to note (and indirectly may be related). First, lack of consistent leadership at the division level was mentioned during multiple conversations. This

does not appear to have been a major barrier to building the advanced offerings up to this point, but it is hard to imagine HCPS successfully tackling its equity issues without stable, enthusiastic support at the division level.

Second, representatives from nearly every stakeholder group questioned the quality of the curricula across the various advanced programs. Even teachers and parents who believe the curricular and instructional quality to be high in their school questioned the consistency of that quality across various sites, and some stakeholders with experience across multiple schools and programs were very direct in their concerns about consistency of curriculum quality.

I wouldn't normally consider this an equity issue unless students from certain disadvantaged groups were receiving a lower quality learning experience in advanced programs.[2] Given HCPS' geographic uniqueness, especially residential segregation, there is the possibility that students in advanced programs on the eastern side of the county are experiencing less rigorous curriculum and instruction than students in other parts of the county (not identical in content, but equally rigorous). Interviewees were quite mixed in their feedback on this point, with some thinking it is a major problem and others believing it definitely is not. I did not do a comprehensive curriculum audit or observe instruction within these programs, preventing me from drawing any conclusions on this point. But it should be investigated further.

Another general point that was frequently raised during the interviews was that Black and twice-exceptional (2e) students who enroll in the three zone schools tend to leave because they do not feel they belong because there are too few Black and/or 2e students in those schools. I examined data on students who left those programs over a three-year period, along with the reason for their departure. Few students left during that period, and almost all of them left because their families moved to another district in Virginia or another state. There could be nuance here that I am not seeing, but this concern does not appear to be a major issue.[3]

One additional general comment is on the division's use of Title I funds to help address these equity efforts. I was not able to determine the extent to which the division is already using these funds to address these issues. I assume it is, at least to a limited extent; if not, I encourage the division to consider it. Under ESSA, the vague NCLB language on whether Title I funds can be used for this purpose has been clarified – it is now unquestionably permitted, and several districts around the country have moved in this direction.

Identification System

The identification system, both as outlined in various documents and as described to me, is comprehensive, uses several research-supported strategies that are considered best-practices (e.g., universal screening, multiple criteria and data sources), and it appears to meet the requirements of relevant Virginia statutes.

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[2] Parents from the western part of the county also shared concerns about variability in program quality, as did several teachers – some of whom desired higher-quality resources and materials.

[3] Interestingly, my colleagues and I hear this concern in almost every district that uses a magnet/zoned-school approach for part or all of their gifted education services. And in most of those districts, it tends to be a small or nonexistent issue.

However, there are several areas where improvements can be made. Here I focus on two main themes: First, families with social capital appear to have significant advantages in navigating and influencing the identification system. Second, and this is admittedly a more complex issue, the advantages of a multiple criteria system also have several disadvantages, with the key issue being subjectivity. As one educator mentioned, the subjective data collected for students is helpful … but it's also subjective. Specific points to illustrate these themes include:

- **Change from an "and" multiple criteria approach to an "or" approach:** Multiple criteria systems can worsen equity problems. When I first taught, I was put in charge of running the school's gifted identification process. The system used several criteria, with reasonable cut-offs at around the 90th percentile for each criterion. But the system required that students meet *every* criteria. So in our upper-income, high-achieving school … one student qualified. Gifted education experts refer to such multiple criteria systems as "and" systems (i.e, you have to meet this criterion *and* that criterion *and* this other criterion), when they should really be "or" systems. Several educators shared that they believe HCPS uses an "and" system, which tends to exclude Black, Hispanic, and twice-exceptional students. I did not have data that allowed me to examine this directly, but it is well worth the division's time to investigate whether, for example, requiring 3 of 5 criteria produces a more diverse pool than a 4-of-5 standard.

- **Rethink work samples or drop them:** Work samples are seen as a major source of inequity in the identification process, which is something we have seen in other districts. The use of work samples is usually meant to provide bright students who do not excel on standardized tests with opportunities to show examples of advanced learning and potential. In my experience, however, the quality of the work samples tends to reflect the quality of teacher training and opportunities to create those work samples, with economically disadvantaged students having teachers without the necessary training and a lack of classroom contexts in which to produce impressive work samples. I heard nothing positive about the work sample component of the HCPS system and recommend it be overhauled or dropped.

- **Make teacher input the safety net, not a gatekeeper:** Teacher input appears to be given significant weight in the process, yet recent research strongly suggests that such input be limited or removed entirely, as it is a major source of bias in favor of upper-income families. However, unlike some of my colleagues, I do *not* favor removing teacher input entirely. Rather, I recommend using it as a safety net, not a gatekeeping function. One district in which I've worked gathers all the necessary data (most via universal screening), makes initial determinations, then sits down with each teacher to review the data from their students. The teachers are not asked to comment on the selected students but rather are asked to identify *other* potentially advanced students who may have been missed. That strikes me as a good way to incorporate teacher input while guarding against the biases noted in the research.

- **Make sure appeals aren't primarily about social capital:** Appeals processes are almost always sources of inequity, as families with social capital tend to use such processes to advocate successfully for their child. And throughout my interviews, both parents and educators questioned whether school-based appeals were equitable. That said, from the data that was shared with me, the appeals process does not appear to be a major pathway into gifted and other advanced services within HCPS. However, although overhauling the appeals process would not appear to help address equity issues, improving the process to minimize the importance of social capital should be a priority (e.g., see point below about providing

more GRTs, who could advise families on when and how best to use the appeals mechanisms).

- **Behavior should rarely be used as an identification criterion or a reason for non-identification:** Throughout the interviews, especially when speaking with Black parents, I was told stories of negative identification and appeals decisions that, from the interviewees' perspectives, boiled down to Black students not being identified due to behavioral issues. This is worrisome for several issues, including that behavior is often used as an excuse to exclude Black students from necessary, special services. Even one educator who was a strong proponent of HCPS gifted education noted the program tended to "want the easy gifted kids." Research indicates that bored and frustrated students will often act out and appear not to be "easy gifted kids," but that doesn't mean they don't have similar academic and social-emotional needs as the stereotypical teacher-pleasers.

There are also issues related to identification that were mentioned but are probably *not* major factors (or need to be investigated further by HCPS staff):

- A couple people questioned the use of test scores for two years during the identification process. In general, this usually isn't an issue, as the scores tend not to change that much from year to year; put another way, there are other data points in the identification system that are much more likely to show year-to-year change than the test scores.
- The likely occurrence of tutoring for the universal screener by Indian and Asian families was mentioned in the context of some students being better prepared for the universal assessment than others. I agree that this is almost certainly happening – it's a universal problem. But research suggests that such tutoring provides meager benefits, although it does help students become familiar and more comfortable with this form of testing. That said, the students being tutored are probably already comfortable with testing, so although the practice is distasteful, the advantage is almost certainly small.
- A couple stakeholders believe the use of only one universal standardized test was potentially limiting. Possibly, but when my colleagues and I examine data in districts that use two such tests, the scores correlate highly enough that we question whether the second assessment is providing any helpful information. Given the other criteria HCPS includes in its identification system, the addition of a second nationally-normed assessment is unlikely to provide enough unique information to justify the added cost.
- Several interviewees believe the current identification process is not consistently implemented across the entire school division. I could not determine if they were primarily concerned with the issues related to work samples and teacher input mentioned above; if so, they have a point. If not, I did not observe the system in action and cannot speak to this.

Communication, Communication, Communication (and GRTs)

The strongest theme from the interviews – mentioned by almost every single stakeholder – was the need to communicate about the gifted and advanced programs much more effectively, especially to parents of disadvantaged students and those living in the eastern part of the county.

Although several good ideas were shared (e.g., a newsletter about advanced offerings distributed to every family in the school division), stakeholders noted that receiving the information was not sufficient, as many parents/caregivers would not understand the importance of those services.

Research supports this observation: If a family has no experience with gifted and advanced education, why assume they would automatically understand that certain early experiences lead to important later experiences that could eventually set their child up for advanced learning in high school and college? Again, social capital is a huge advantage when you have it and a huge barrier when you don't. As one highly educated parent noted, she had no understanding of the research on the value of 8th grade algebra for success in advanced high school math classes. One of the dangers of social capital is that people who benefit from it often don't even realize they have it, making them naïve about how the lack of social capital harms others.

That said, noting this is one thing, actually addressing it to improve equity is quite another. I know of no research-supported interventions with good track records in this area. But I suspect a combination of the following could help:

- **Get more GRTs:** The lack of GRTs within the division was mentioned frequently. There is a strong perception that there are not enough GRTs, leading to a situation where they cannot adequately do parent outreach, provide professional development for teachers on giftedness and gifted education (widely mentioned as a major need, see below), help prepare students for the identification process, and work with students. Providing more GRTs, especially in eastern county schools, would significantly improve the ability of HCPS to achieve equity in gifted and advanced education.
- **Create a talent development plan:** In my work with districts, I often run into this communication issue. It is difficult to understand the complexities of most districts' gifted education and talent development systems; I readily admit that it took me several days of preparation before the interviews before I had a good sense of the HCPS approach, but even then I realized during the interviews that I had some misunderstandings. I strongly recommend that HCPS spend some time developing a talent development plan – essentially a one-page map of how a student moves through the advanced services in the division – to use as a communication aid for parents. I will attach a relevant article to this memo.
- **More teacher stability and a more diverse teacher corps:** Teacher turnover in Title I schools is perceived to be very high (one parent reported that her child had four teachers in a single year). Lack of teacher stability leads to lack of teacher advocacy for students in Title I schools and unquestionably disadvantages students in the identification process. In a similar vein, the paucity of Black and Hispanic teachers in the division is an obvious problem, both for student advocacy reasons and because those may be able, over time, to help increase understanding about the advanced programs among Black and Hispanic families. Of course, it is easy for me to say "reduce teacher turnover and increase teacher diversity." I noted that the EDAC report also notes these problems and provides several recommendations for addressing them, all of which I thought to be reasonable and research-supported.

Frontloading

When I work with districts, I usually have to push people quite hard to tell me about their frontloading efforts. It is worth noting that frontloading was discussed in most of the interviews, and in almost every case I was not the person who brought it up. The comments were uniformly negative about current frontloading efforts (or the lack thereof), and most stakeholders expressed a strong desire to create a vibrant frontloading initiative in the county schools. **This should be a major priority for HCPS.**

By frontloading, I mean long-term, deliberate efforts to support high achievement among disadvantaged groups of students. A good example, ironically, is what NYC used to do a couple decades ago: Most middle schools used ability grouping and/or honors classes in some way, shape, or form, and elementary schools had the flexibility to identify gifted students as they saw fit (many ended up using local norms, which I discuss in more detail below). The result was that NYC selective high schools were quite diverse, because educators intervened early to provide support and opportunities that, say, poor Black or Hispanic students otherwise would not have had. For whatever reason, NYC made a host of changes to gifted education and advanced learning that not only radically changed their identification system (in nothing but negative ways, from my perspective) but also removed most of the frontloading interventions. That NYC selective high schools are now among the least equitable in the country is not only unsurprising, it was totally predictable due to the elimination of frontloading.

Frontloading is a long-term solution to the problem, but I believe it is the best strategy for achieving equity in advanced education. In particular, I refer you to the Young Scholars program in Fairfax County. It is in need of revitalization, but the basic framework would provide HCPS with a starting point. I recommend the establishment of "Henrico Scholars" programs in all Title I elementary schools.

Local Norms

In general, districts do not use local norms, preferring district or national norms. An example of the use of local norms is how Texas approaches admission to UT-Austin. Any student in a Texas high school finishing in the top 10% of their graduating class is automatically admitted to UT. All the normal concerns about local norms – primarily that the students would be unprepared to succeed and/or that UT academic standards would have to be watered down – appear to be unfounded.

Although we have less research on the use of local norms to identify gifted students at the K-12 level, the experimental evidence suggests students identified using local norms tend to catch up to peers identified with national or district norms within 2-3 years. This finding often surprises people, but it does make sense if you believe that these under-identified students are not reaching their full potential due primarily to lack of opportunity and lack of support to develop their talents. My colleagues and I recently conducted a national study on the various approaches to norming in gifted identification. We found that the use of local (building) norms significantly increased equity in identified gifted students. Interestingly, we also found that the use of national AND local norms at the same time helped identify the most diverse pool of students; but such an approach involves expanding services.

I could not determine the extent to which local norms are used in HCPS. Some stakeholders shared that local norms were definitely being used, others did not believe that was the case. At the very least, I would hope that each elementary school in the eastern end of the county has a gifted program in which local norms are being used to fill the seats.

One aspect of local norms that is undervalued is that they tend to reorient educators' focus from performance to potential. In many school districts, and HCPS is not an exception, I sense frustration from some educators of the gifted that, for example, low-income students who enter the program "can't keep up" and should be removed. The "giftedness = high performance" mindset is very limiting, especially for low-income and 2e students, and I personally believe it is impossible to achieve equity in divisions where that mindset dominates. For example, it is not uncommon for me to interact with principals of schools in high-poverty areas who say, "We don't have gifted students in this school." In reality, they have gifted students, but they may not have *high-performing* students.

The goal of advanced education should be to meet student needs, not identify students who can succeed in a set curriculum. As one stakeholder put it, most HCPS advanced services tend to be programs where students meet the curriculum, not the curriculum meeting the student. Another gave the example of 2e students struggling with the GYSA curriculum; as she put it, they were struggling with the curriculum, but sending them back to their home schools likely leads them to being bored and potentially having even worse behavior problems. That is a clear characteristic of a performance mindset rather than a potential mindset.

Of course, some HCPS leaders and teachers shared a potential mindset, which is a good sign. For example, one principal noted that their GRT was very potential-focused, which she appreciated. But focusing professional development and programming on developing potential rather than challenging already high-performing students will be a big step forward in HCPS equity efforts. At the same time, I want to be very clear that challenging already high-performing students is absolutely necessary; but that happens in a potential-focused system, too.

East end parents expressed a desire for the division to allow grade-skipping, either in certain content areas or across the board. This is a logical response to families being frustrated by lack of advanced services in their schools. I have never worked in a school division that liked the idea of grade-skipping, but other than the logistical implications, the research strongly suggests there is little downside to it. To be clear, it would be a short-term strategy while the division addresses the previously-mentioned issues of rigor of curriculum and instruction and the professional development issues mentioned immediately below, with the goal of not needing it in the future. But it's also worth noting that grade-skipping has historically been used by Black families to address a lack of challenge in their children's education.

Professional Development

Another key theme across the stakeholder interviews was the need for professional development for both classroom teachers and building-level leaders. Classroom teachers are perceived to have a need for basic information about giftedness and talent development, especially the characteristics of high-potential Black, Hispanic, ELL, economically disadvantaged, and 2e students, and how to meet their academic and social-emotional needs. My colleagues and I hear similar comments in every district in which we work. This is in no way the fault of HCPS – teacher preparation programs rarely cover this material, which is shameful. But it is the reality, and the division should make this PD a priority, especially in Title I schools that have high levels of teacher turnover.

At the same time, PD for division- and building-level leaders should not be an afterthought. Principal leadership makes a big difference in equity within gifted education, but there is the perception within HCPS that some principals do not think advanced learning is important or something that should be a major priority. Although many stakeholders believe the division is making a concerted effort to tackle longstanding equity issues, educators questioned whether division leadership has the political will to do the heavy lifting necessary to achieve real equity in advanced programs. The central administration should ensure that all division and building leaders understand that advanced achievement and closing excellence gaps are priorities.

Political Considerations

Many districts that have tried to address equity in advanced programs have found themselves in the middle of a political firestorm. They find themselves in this quandary because they try to address equity without expanding services. *This is almost impossible*. In my observations, districts that "grow the pie" are almost always able to put the politics quickly behind them. By grow the pie, I refer to the fact that parents who have fought hard for advanced services for their child are almost always going to be on alert for having those services taken away – when they hear district leaders say "we're going to have a more equitable system," those parents panic that their child is going to lose services. That's a reasonable fear, and in many districts, that's exactly what has happened.

Montgomery County Public Schools in MD faced such a political backlash when they rolled out their changes a few years ago (mostly involving more use of local norms and school-based gifted programs, although there was more to it). Their intent was to expand services significantly, but the messaging was initially garbled, and parents thought many children were going to *lose* services. Lawsuits are ongoing, but when MCPS personnel realized their messaging was off, they quickly shifted to a much clearer and stronger emphasis on the fact that they were increasing services (growing the pie), not decreasing them (i.e., serving the same pie but to different students). MCPS also needed to reassure parents that the gifted program located in most schools was of high quality. In some cases, it appeared to be rather weak. Strengthening the programming in every school is both educationally and politically smart (I believe strongly that every elementary school in a district should have high quality advanced programming, in part for the local norms and frontloading reasons discussed above).

Of course, any change leads to blowback, but this is a topic that is especially heated in many districts, and the intensity of the blowback can be minimized.

Conclusion

One parent shared their family's experiences with me, and with their permission, I end this memo with their story. The parent, who is a professional, shared that education is very important to their family, and that as parents they focus most of their time on keeping their children healthy and well-prepared for school. When their older child was referred for screening, they had to do a lot of work to understand HCPS gifted programming and the identification system.

Their daughter was not identified, which surprised them when they learned that her friends – her white friends – were identified. From the parents' perspective, all the feedback they received was about her maturity and "emotional readiness," not her academic potential. Yet the child they saw outside of school, diligently doing her homework, highly focused in her piano lessons and in her various athletic activities, didn't match with what they were being told by HCPS personnel. They appealed the decision at the school level and were denied, again being told the issue was one of maturity. They decided not to push the issue and waited for the identification process to begin again the following year.

However, their daughter was again not identified, with similar feedback as to why. They could see the experience was causing their daughter to doubt herself as she saw her similar-ability peers being selected. This time around, the parents decided to push as hard as they could. Their school-level appeal was again denied, and they appealed to the district-level. After considerable extra documentation and back-and-forth, their appeal was successful.

At this point in the story, I said I was glad to hear the story had a good ending. The parent sighed deeply then said, "But why did it have to be so hard?" They talked about how intimidating and confrontational the process was, especially given that they rarely interacted with a person of color throughout the entire ordeal. Although expressing appreciation for the division-level administrator who read all of their documentation and correspondence, they questioned why they had to put dozens of hours into appeals that probably shouldn't have been necessary in the first place. [4]

Of course, I am sharing one side of the story. But even the biggest proponents of the current HCPS policies, processes, and services shared similar stories and concerns with me during the interviews. Many of the recommendations I make earlier in this memo – and summarize below – would help avoid situations such as the one this family had to endure. Indeed, as I later looked over my notes from that interview, I could not help but wonder how many families had stories like this, but without the good ending. I encourage HCPS to commit itself to the hard work that will make these stories a thing of the past.

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[4] In follow-up conversations with this family, they shared that their child has excelled in the gifted program, although she appears to be a little bored because it may not be challenging enough.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Change mindset from gifted=high-performing to gifted=high potential

2. Determine whether students in advanced programs on the eastern side are experiencing less rigorous curriculum and instruction than students in other parts of the county

3. Change identification systems from an "and" multiple criteria approach to an "or" approach

4. Rethink work samples or remove them from the identification system

5. Make teacher input the safety net, not a gatekeeper

6. Make sure appeals aren't primarily about social capital

7. Behavior should rarely be used as an identification criterion or a reason for non-identification

8. Improve not just communication to parents but also parent understanding

9. Provide more GRTs, at least in Title I schools

10. Create a talent development plan

11. Create more teacher stability and a more diverse teacher corps

12. Frontload, frontload, frontload

13. Use local norms and school-based services whenever possible

14. Expand and intensify professional development for both classroom teachers and administrators

15. Consider grade-skipping and other forms of acceleration as shorter-term interventions while bigger, longer-term changes are being implemented in the system

16. Expand rather than redistribute services