

EXCELLENCE WITH EQUITY

THE CASE FOR RETHINKING GIFTED EDUCATION

BY PEG TYRE

APRIL 2024

Future*Ed*

Independent Analysis, Innovative Ideas

About the Author

Peg Tyre, a FutureEd senior fellow, is vice president of strategy, communications, and network engagement at the EGF Accelerator. She is the *New York Times*-bestselling author of *The Trouble with Boys* and a Pulitzer Prize recipient.

About FutureEd

FutureEd is an independent, solution-oriented think tank at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy, committed to bringing fresh energy to the causes of excellence, equity, and efficiency in K-12 and higher education. Follow us on Twitter at @FutureEdGU

Usage

The non-commercial use, reproduction, and distribution of this report is permitted.
© 2024 FutureEd

EXCELLENCE WITH EQUITY

THE CASE FOR RETHINKING GIFTED EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Foreword
3	A Comprehensive Strategy: Gadsden Elementary School District #32, San Luis, Arizona
6	Solving the Pipeline Problem: New York City Department of Education, New York
8	Automatic Enrollment in Advanced Learning: North Carolina
9	A Hard Path to Reform: Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland
13	The Best Advanced-Learning Strategies, Ranked by Research
14	Research Bibliography
15	Endnotes

FOREWORD

The education policy community has focused on ways to help students regain academic ground lost during the pandemic. It's an important goal. But the emphasis on pandemic recovery has obscured another, larger problem in the education sector: the failure of public education to provide millions of talented students—especially low-income students and students of color—advanced learning opportunities through what have come to be known as gifted-and-talented programs.

The dearth of high-quality advanced programs has put the nation at a competitive disadvantage in the global economy. And it has slowed social mobility by denying capable students from low-income communities and communities of color the academic grounding they need to prosper in school and beyond. The term “gifted” is itself problematic, signaling as it does to parents, students, and educators that innate ability rather than hard work is the key ingredient of academic success and perpetuating long-debunked stereotypes that differences in academic performance are rooted in race, gender and class.

Yet a disproportionate representation of Asian and white students in the advanced programs that do exist has led to efforts to abandon advanced opportunities in the name of educational equity. It is a deeply ironic response, one that would ensure the very students equity advocates hope to help continue to lose out on the academic opportunities that would help them get ahead.

The battle between the defenders of traditional gifted-and-talented education and opponents who would dismantle it has played out in heated school board meetings, on op-ed pages and in the courts. It has generated many headlines. But in a handful of states and school districts, a new model of advanced education is emerging that embraces both excellence and equity, a model that supports advanced learning but works to expand the range of students who take part in advanced programs.

This report profiles three school districts that have embraced this third way in advanced learning. Researched and written by FutureEd Senior Fellow Peg Tyre, vice president of strategy, communications, and network engagement at the EGF Accelerator and the *New York Times*–bestselling author of *The Trouble with Boys*, it highlights the districts' insights into the best ways to build advanced programs that are at once rigorous and inclusive.

Jonathan Plucker, a professor at Johns Hopkins University and a leading authority on advanced learning, served as an advisor to the project and compiled the summary of research on advanced-learning strategies. FutureEd Policy Director Liz Cohen and Policy Analyst Bella DiMarco contributed research support. And Molly Breen and Merry Alderman contributed their editorial and design expertise.

We are grateful to the Smith Richardson Foundation for funding the project.

Thomas Toch
Director, FutureEd

Few policies in public education have been as contentious as how schools identify and educate their most academically able students. Capable students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, and those from low-income families have long been denied advanced learning opportunities that are typically delivered through what have come to be known as gifted-and-talented programs. Many school districts serving low-income communities don't offer advanced programs. In more affluent areas, the programs frequently favor families with the time and resources to navigate application systems that are often poorly communicated and susceptible to teacher stereotypes of student ability. Magnet programs have been used to staunch racial flight but have frequently yielded segregated classrooms and schools.

The results are troubling. Vanderbilt University researchers have found that high-achieving students from the wealthiest 20 percent of U.S. families are six times more likely to receive gifted-and-talented services than high-performing students from the poorest 20 percent. Among Black and white students with comparable grades and test scores, Black students are 66 percent less likely to be referred to advanced programs.¹

Compounding the problem, gifted-and-talented programs vary widely in their quality and rigor. Teachers often have scant training in delivering advanced instruction. Depending on the state and school district, gifted education could mean skipping a grade in a subject, moving through a curriculum more quickly, extra classes, taking college courses in high school, a test-in-school, or merely additional homework or extra field trips. Another measure of the incoherence of the gifted-and-talented enterprise: The U.S. Department of Education reports that nearly 7 percent of the nation's 50 million public-school students participate in gifted programs, but the figure ranges from 2 percent or less of students in Delaware, Massachusetts, and Vermont to 15 percent in South Carolina and 18 percent in Maryland.²

Even the term "gifted" is fraught, signaling to parents, students, and educators that innate ability rather than hard work is the key ingredient of academic success—a notion that Asian nations with many high-achieving students roundly reject—and perpetuating long-debunked stereotypes that differences in academic performance are rooted in race, gender, and class. Researchers who study students with the capacity for advanced learning are increasingly abandoning the term.³

The troubled state of advanced learning reflects a broader failure of U.S. schools to teach to high standards, a problem that has intensified in the wake of the pandemic. As the nation's demographics shift, this failure has enormous implications for social mobility and economic productivity. At a time when increasing numbers of jobs require advanced learning, students who have traditionally received the fewest advanced opportunities are entering the workforce in greater numbers. Even after the percentage of U.S. fourth-graders performing at the advanced level doubled from 7 percent to 14 percent between 2003 and 2019, it still lagged far behind that of countries ranging from South Korea (37 percent) to Japan (33

percent), Northern Ireland (26 percent), England (23 percent), and Russia (20 percent).⁴ In the same year, immigrants from these and other countries made up nearly one-fourth of all STEM workers in the United States, up from 16 percent in 2000.⁵

Nonetheless, the concentration of white and Asian students in advanced programs in U.S. public education has spawned a movement to dismantle gifted-and-talented programs, exam schools, and other advanced programs on the grounds that they promote racial and economic segregation in public education.

High-achieving students from the wealthiest 20 percent of U.S. families are six times more likely to receive gifted-and-talented services than high-performing students from the poorest 20 percent.

Critics point to the long tradition of public schools tracking most low-income students and students of color into vocational- and basic-education programs where they learned little. Equity, they say, is best achieved when educators take the stance that “all kids are gifted” and combine students in heterogeneous classrooms with teachers adapting instruction to learners’ various levels. In one widely followed example, San Francisco Unified School District officials a decade ago ended algebra instruction—and tracking by math ability—in the eighth grade. The hope was that students of all abilities would learn math together through middle school and more students from historically marginalized backgrounds would catch up and diversify the ranks of advanced math course takers, which were then overwhelmingly white and Asian.⁶

Yet, at the same time, enrollment data suggest that public education is losing thousands of families who don’t feel schools are sufficiently challenging. Research has found that the range of student proficiency in both high- and low-poverty elementary

schools is wider than many believe, making it difficult for teachers to serve advanced students.⁷

In many instances, talented Black and Latino students stand to lose the most from the abandonment of advanced programs.⁸ “Make no mistake, wealthy white parents will do whatever it takes to access academic enrichment for their children,” says gifted-education expert Scott Peters, a senior researcher at the non-profit testing company NWEA, adding that “when public schools step away from gifted programs in the name of equity” they hurt the very students they are trying to help. Adds Shelagh Gallagher, president of the National Association for Gifted Children: “Almost every school in the nation has children who are performing above average,” but many schools serving low-income students lack advanced programs “because they don’t necessarily think that gifted kids go to school in those places.”

The attacks on advanced education have drawn sharp responses, sparking contentious school board meetings, dividing communities, and generating lawsuits from defenders of traditional gifted-and-talented models, especially parents of students attending the programs, alumni, and other advocates of students statistically over-represented in these programs, many of whom are new or recent immigrants who see the programs in public schools as a path to the middle class. Last month, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear a challenge to the new admissions standards to an elite public high school in Virginia, but school districts in Maryland and Massachusetts that have shifted admissions criteria to advanced programs are facing similar legal challenges. The plaintiff in the Virginia case is a community group seeking, in the words of one of its leaders, “to protect Asian American students.”⁹

Among Black and white students with comparable grades and test scores, Black students are 66 percent less likely to be referred to advanced programs.

In many places, the pushback has been successful. Under pressure from an activist organization, the San Francisco Guardians, and many parents, three San Francisco school board members opposed to eighth-grade algebra were recalled in 2022, and earlier this year school administrators announced plans to restore algebra to all San Francisco middle schools, starting in the 2026-27 school year.¹⁰ Last December, Chicago Public Schools administrators set off a firestorm of opposition when they announced they were “transitioning away” from “admissions/enrollment policies and approaches that further stratification and inequity at CPS.”¹¹ Before long, they were back-pedaling, insisting that any changes wouldn’t affect Chicago’s 11 selective high schools.¹²

But as the skirmishes between the advocates of traditional gifted programs and those who would dismantle them make headlines, millions of talented students remain underserved. And these conflicts have masked a new vision of advanced education that embraces both excellence and equity. This vision, emerging in a handful of states and school districts, supports advanced learning but widens the range of students who can access it to better reflect public education’s rapidly diversifying enrollment. “What we are seeing is that these old controversial programs are fixable,” says Jonathan Plucker, a professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Education and a past president of the National Association for Gifted Education. “We have strong research-based strategies and good examples of communities that have succeeded in using research to create better, more equitable advanced programs.”

Public education is losing thousands of families who don’t feel schools are sufficiently challenging.

This report profiles three school districts that have sought to adopt these research-based strategies for pursuing both excellence and equity, exploring their challenges, their setbacks and the way policy was ultimately shaped by real-life events. It highlights

insights the districts have gained into the best ways to build advanced programs that are at once rigorous and welcoming, providing lessons for education policymakers and practitioners nationwide.

Importantly, the profiles focus on advanced programs in elementary and middle schools. While widening the representation of students in selective high schools is an important policy goal—the Supreme Court upheld the decision by Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology to remove a \$100 application fee and a standardized test from its demanding application process, factor students’ socioeconomic status into admissions decisions, and reserve seats for students from each local middle school—the chance to pursue advanced studies early greatly increases students’ later success.

A Comprehensive Strategy

Gadsden Elementary School District #32, San Luis, Arizona

The community surrounding the preschool, six elementary and two middle schools that make up Gadsden Elementary School District #32 in San Luis, Arizona, does not look like an auspicious setting for a math powerhouse. The low-slung concrete and stucco houses in the 35,000-person community speak of a hard life under a hot sun. The pavement on the secondary streets gives way to desert sand and cars are frequently outnumbered by pickup trucks, landscaping vans and agricultural vehicles. It is, per capita, the second poorest zip code in the state. About a quarter of the parents here, most of whom are documented and undocumented Mexican Americans, travel with the growing season, picking broccoli and cauliflower on local farms and migrating to Salinas, California to pick lettuce.

Nearly every student speaks Spanish at home, and some travel a few blocks north each morning, across the international border that separates the U.S. from

Mexico, to attend school. The schools themselves are warm and well-run, but by most academic measures the students are not thriving: about a third of the district's 5,000 or so children lag behind the already-low state average in reading and math. Yet within this challenging environment, administrators, teachers and community members have collaborated to create a pathway for a cadre of students to excel at advanced math—and many do.

Sixteen years ago, a middle-school guidance counselor, Homero Chavez, was sifting through state test data, trying to identify which fourth-graders needed academic support, when he was surprised to notice how many were scoring “highly proficient” on state math tests.¹³ He reflected on his own academic career when, in high school, guidance counselors suggested he take basic math. “They said, Chavez, why do you want to work hard? Just take the basic course.” His face looks pained as he stares through his wire-rimmed glasses, thinking of opportunity lost. “Can you imagine?” He had a hunch that the kids who had top scores on the state tests could go further.

The federal government gives the district about \$1 million a year to support the 1,300 or so migrant students who are enrolled, money that goes for clothing, food, counseling, and intensive tutoring aimed at academic remediation, since the children often leave school with their families to follow the growing season. While the focus has always been on those who are minimally proficient, Chavez successfully persuaded the district that some of that money could be spent on advanced education, too.

But how to introduce advanced learning to his community? Chavez was familiar with the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth summer program, a longtime operator of residential summer schools for middle schoolers who can get a top score on the ACT. Chavez read on the organization's website that it offered scholarships for students who scored well but could not afford the \$7,000 or so tuition for the three-week sessions. “While it was true we didn't have kids who could achieve a high ACT score

in middle school,” he reasoned, “that didn't mean it couldn't happen in the future.”

Back then, the school administrators he spoke to about his scheme were less than supportive. “They thought we just wanted to get paid to teach extra classes. That it was a way for us to make money.” Undaunted, he reached out to the matriarchs of the community—grandmothers who watched over their grandkids while their adult children worked the fields. Chavez is well known in the town because his wife runs the school district's program for migrant students. “I explained to them that there was a pathway to higher learning, to college, that was beyond what anyone in this town was thinking about. But for their grandkids to get it, they'd have to attend tutoring sessions on Saturday and work hard, and we would try to teach them what they needed to know.”

Administrators, teachers and community members have collaborated to create a pathway for a cadre of students to excel at advanced math.

The grandmothers, he said, made it happen. The first month, they invited the highest performing students from every fourth-grade class for after-school and Saturday tutoring in foundational math skills. “They liked it and they wanted more,” says Jesus Arrizon, a metallurgist turned advanced math teacher in Gadsden.

Within a month, word spread, and more than 150 students were attending the catch-up sessions. Chavez didn't turn anyone away and provided transportation and extra help to those who needed it. “If parents want their children in, we let them try it,” he told me as we walked down the middle school hallway, surveying a wall crowded with plaques, each engraved with the names of the advanced math students and the dates they took the ACT. “If students come to us and want to try it and work hard, we say, why not? We'll help you.”

Sometimes, talented students opted out. “If they are feeling the stress, we talk to them,” says Gadsden ESD #32 Superintendent Lizette Esparza. “We benefit from being a small community where teachers really know the students and students love their teachers. But if a student wants to do sports or join the music program instead of advanced math, that’s fine.”

As the first cohort was entering seventh grade, one of the middle-school principals was reluctant to group math students by ability and instead suggested a heterogeneous classroom so the less able math students would learn from the high-flyers. Chavez, wanting to keep his cohort of ambitious students together, unleashed the vocal grandmothers. “I said, ‘Ok, if you want to deal with three hundred angry parents and guardians, that’s fine with me. These are people who work on farms, sometimes in the fields, and they want their children to succeed.’”

Ultimately, the students were grouped together for accelerated math, an ACT prep course and a college-level math course taught by instructors who work at both Gadsden and Arizona Western College, the community college nearby. In the first 14 years or so of the program, until the scholarship money dried up, about 1,650 Gadsden students were awarded over \$7.5 million in scholarships to attend the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth program.

Each year, says Chavez, students’ ability, willingness, and motivation surprise him. The highest flyers began taking placement tests to enroll in credit-bearing community college courses for a negotiated discount rate of \$25 a credit hour instead of the usual \$90 (the money comes from parents or the migrant student fund). This school year, 240 out of 1,795 sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders are taking college-level math classes, taught by middle-school instructors, and precalculus and introductory college composition, taught by professors who split their time between the community college and the middle-school campuses. About 30 Gadsden students have earned an associate degree and a high school diploma simultaneously.

The program costs about \$200,000 a year to run and

now includes after-school and summer tutoring, a summer program and transportation, some college-enrollment fees, ACT prep, tuition for the few kids who still apply to the Johns Hopkins program, and scholarships for a week of summer learning at Arizona State University. Chavez and his team cobble together money from the migrant program and the COVID-era Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund, although they know that it is running out. Currently, they are looking for ways to fund a fourth-grade program to start kids on advanced math even earlier.

Supporting students every step of the way with intensive tutoring, test prep, enriched, high-level instruction, and cohesive classrooms where students are tracked by their math ability is key to the program’s success. So is community support. At the start of fifth grade, the names of the students invited to the after-school tutoring program are announced over the loudspeaker. When the ACT test results come out in February, teachers decorate the gym, and the principals hand out certificates and medals for math achievement while the student mariachi band blares out time-tested rancheras. The highest scorers are honored at a school board meeting attended by school officials and prominent members of the community.

Gadsden has abandoned the use of the term “gifted” to bury past stereotypes, more accurately reflect the nature of the programs, and give hard work the privileged place it deserves.

In a town where academic talent was routinely overlooked, Chavez says the notion of determining who was “gifted” and then rationing services was never going to work. “We aren’t looking for gifted kids,” he told me. “We are looking for kids who are at the higher end of proficiency. And who want to do the work. Gifted, I guess, is something else.” Yet Chavez and his Gadsden colleagues have forged a model of advanced learning that combines excellence and equity in a way that few traditional “gifted” programs do.

Solving the Pipeline Problem

New York City Department of Education, New York

David Banks didn't start out as an advocate for advanced programs. In fact, as a teacher, principal, and, later, founder of the Eagle Academy charter schools, he discouraged tracking. He believed that the learning culture was more cohesive and more students fared better academically when kids of all abilities learned together. Yet in 2021, when he was named New York City schools chancellor by Mayor Eric Adams, he faced a crisis. In the five years leading up to his appointment, 120,000 families—representing about 10 percent of New York City's students—had left the public school system, 70,000 of them since the start of the pandemic alone. So, he went on a listening tour. "I talked to parents and families all over the city," he told me. "The ones that were leaving had different reasons, of course, but essentially parents didn't feel that their child would get a high-quality, rigorous education in New York City." What did the parents want, he asked them? More advanced programs.

But gifted education in the city was stuck in a time warp. Students entered the gifted track at kindergarten by getting a top score on a single citywide test at age four, a practice resoundingly criticized by researchers, dismissed by educators, and loathed by parents. Those scoring above the 90th percentile on the exam, which was a combination of the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) and the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, were eligible for gifted programs in their home district, while those in the 99th percentile were eligible for a city-wide program. Year after year, critics pointed out that the 4-year-olds taking the test were not standing on level ground. Private preschools that served affluent and middle-class families routinely steered parents to tutors who charged upwards of \$4,000 to have their 4-year-olds prepped for the test. Because test prep is not the norm in immigrant communities, tutors providing support to older siblings offered an array of test-prep

opportunities for toddlers, too. The exam itself was given outside of school time and the test dates were not widely publicized; as a result, fewer students from low-income Black and Latino communities took the test. And many fewer made the cut.

As a result, affluent districts in Manhattan had as many as seven gifted programs while some communities of color in Brooklyn and Queens had just one.¹⁴ White and Asian American students made up 75 percent of the roughly 16,000 students in the city's 80 elementary school gifted programs, even though they comprised just 25 percent of the school system's enrollment.¹⁵

When it came to admission to elite high schools, which has since 1971 been determined by a single test known as the SHSAT taken in eighth grade, the achievement gap between affluent and poor, Asian and white and Black and Latino, was already baked in. Year after year, the results both shocked and shamed the city. For the 2023 school year, for instance, only 9 percent of the 3,994 seats in the city's eight specialized high schools were offered to Black and Latino students, although they make up 65 percent of New York City public-school students.¹⁶

In many instances, talented Black and Latino students stand to lose the most from the abandonment of advanced programs.

In the name of equity, Adams' predecessor, Bill de Blasio, pushed to abolish gifted education and specialized high schools altogether. As they have throughout the nation, the moves set off howls of protest from parents, business leaders, alumni, and civic leaders, who wrote angry op-eds, mobilized voters, and conducted noisy protests on the steps of City Hall.

David Banks, himself a product of New York City public schools, knew the history of advanced education in the Big Apple. In the 1970s and 1980s, nearly every public elementary and middle school in nearly every neighborhood in New York City had a program for

children with the capacity for advanced learning.¹⁷

There was, as a result, a robust pipeline of advanced learners from all walks of life and many more low-income students of color took the SHSAT. And many prevailed. In 1976, Black students made up 50 percent of the student body at Brooklyn Tech and 23 percent at Bronx Science, two of the city's most competitive high schools, at a time when Black New Yorkers comprised 24 percent of the city's population.¹⁸ But in the 1980s and 90s, those programs came under fire from anti-tracking activists. They were whittled down and mostly eliminated, especially in underserved neighborhoods.

In 2022, faced with dropping citywide enrollment, Banks launched an effort to expand opportunities for advanced learning in the city's elementary schools, particularly in low-income communities. First, he established a new, city-wide screening system that leveraged the city's universal public preschool program. Preschool teachers were trained to recognize extraordinary potential in every classroom, known as universal screening. But unlike in the past, when homeless children in Brownsville were competing for spots with children of jetsetters in TriBeCa, teachers were asked to select academic standouts within the child's home context, setting what are called "local norms." Those children were then invited to apply for one of the so-called gifted classes. Second-graders in the top 10 percent academically in four core subjects were automatically invited to apply.¹⁹ Researchers, including Jonathan Plucker, say the point of universal screening using local norms is not to find children with inborn "gifts," but rather to identify students who demonstrate academic capacity and motivation and support their potential. Banks and Adams also added

It's called frontloading—giving children the opportunity to begin to accelerate their learning before the inequities from their school or neighborhood become a significant factor.

100 seats in advanced kindergarten programs in low-income communities and another 1,000 seats to the gifted program at third grade city-wide. "We wanted to get rid of the scarcity model," said Banks.

Plucker and others who study advanced education point to the importance of supporting students with potential early in their school careers. It's called frontloading—giving children the opportunity to begin to accelerate their learning before the inequities from their school or neighborhood become a significant factor. "Starting a program for advanced learners in high school and hoping to achieve anything like equitable outcomes is simply not going to happen," Plucker says.

If Banks' reforms are successful, more elementary school classes will resemble Chris Haffner's classroom at the Brooklyn Landmark Elementary School, a public primary school in the predominantly low-income community of Ocean Hill-Brownsville. Recently, 17 fourth-graders were working in small groups, using hands-on projects to explore how Native Americans interacted with their environment. Some poured Evian into a clay landscape to determine where best to plant crops, others studied maps to plan their town, and others brainstormed how to use the meat, bones, hide, and horns of bison. The class was rigorous, focused, fast-paced, and engaging. Each topic had new vocabulary words, detailed subject knowledge, and required both collaboration and critical thinking. There was not a worksheet or a multiple-choice question to be found. "And the kids love it," Haffner said as he scanned his classroom. When it comes to sophisticated content, "they want more, more, more!"

In the past, when the New York City Department of Education used a single, city-wide test of 4-year-olds to determine admission to advanced elementary-school programs, school officials said there weren't enough academically capable students in Brooklyn Landmark's densely populated, largely Black and Latino community to fill a single advanced class.

But in 2016, Brooklyn Landmark's leaders quietly began assembling advanced classrooms, pulling in third- and fourth-graders who had top scores on state

tests and strong teacher recommendations—criteria that prefigured the changes Banks championed last year. Chris Haffner and Andrea Castellano, an experienced third-grade teacher, produced an entirely new curriculum, building subject knowledge through collaboration and hands-on, project-based learning, a departure from the paper-based, often rote learning found in many nearby schools. Before she began teaching in a gifted class, says Castellano, she might give a child who was zooming ahead an extra worksheet or some additional homework. “But they were always alone.” While the advanced classrooms are not exempt from a few weeks of test prep before the

state-wide exams in the spring, pulling the academically able students together in a cohort has allowed them to go farther together, she says.

Contrary to critics’ claims that advanced programs create an intellectual oasis for a select few, Castellano and Haffner now conduct well-attended professional-development sessions for general-education and special-education teachers in their school. “Eventually, everyone began doing the projects our classes do, but maybe in different ways,” says Castellano. “It’s important that we don’t gatekeep these enriching experiences.”

Automatic Enrollment in Advanced Learning: North Carolina

In 2017, North Carolina educators, parents, and policymakers realized they had a problem. The state’s department of public education found that roughly 10 percent of eighth-graders in lower-level math classes—about 2,100 students—had earned top scores on the state’s seventh-grade assessment.ⁱ So, legislators enacted a first-in-the-nation regulation: starting in third grade, all students who scored at the highest level on their end-of-grade or end-of-course math test, about 2 percent of the state’s students, would receive advanced coursework the following year.

Districts responded to the legislation by developing partnerships between middle and high schools to provide middle-schoolers with high-school-level instruction; expanding virtual instruction; offering private tutoring; and launching advanced math classes in communities where there were none. Parents could opt their children out, but otherwise

their kids were guaranteed to get advanced instruction and support.

In 2019, the law was amended to require an annual report on statewide and regional implementation and to publicly report data on the uptake levels by subgroups for the advanced coursework, as a way of promoting transparency and accountability. Seven years in, the percentage of high-performing seventh graders in lower-level math classes have decreased to 3 percent. And the percentage of students getting top scores on their end-of-course math exams has risen to around 7 percent, depending on the grade.ⁱⁱ

Although there are some slight discrepancies by race and class, many more students who have the capacity for advanced learning are receiving it under North Carolina’s strategy of combining academic rigor with accountability, producing stronger outcomes for a wider range of students.ⁱⁱⁱ

i State Board of Education, “Report to the North Carolina General Assembly on Advanced Courses in Mathematics, per G.S. 115C-81.36,” North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (December 15, 2022), <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/72591>.

ii *ibid.*

iii J. Luna, “Algebra for None: The Effects of San Francisco’s De-tracking Reform,” Fordham Institute (April 13, 2023), <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/commentary/algebra-none-effects-san-franciscos-de-tracking-reform>; C. Huffaker, “Cambridge Schools Are Divided Over Middle School Algebra,” Boston Globe (July 14, 2023), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/07/14/metro/cambridge-schools-divided-over-middle-school-math/>.

The pushback to expanding advanced education in elementary school, says Banks, has been muted. “There was a little noise early on, but I don’t have anyone saying I’m so dead set against this and making me fight on this every day.” And Banks believes the support exists to expand the programs further.

Rebuilding a racially diverse pipeline of academically able students, starting in the early grades, could also eventually help defuse the highly-charged politics around selective high school admissions. “That is a political fight that is fraught with so much animus,” Banks says. “It sets us up to pit Black and Brown kids against Asian kids and families. And that’s not something the mayor wants to lean into. At the end of the day, those schools represent a small number of kids. The bigger challenge is that we have so many other schools. If we did right by those schools, more kids would have amazing, amazing futures.”

A Hard Path to Reform

Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland

On a recent spring morning, students in Tanya Rowe’s sixth-grade English class in the Eastern Middle School Humanities Magnet Program in Montgomery County, Maryland, were busy trying to absorb the connection between Ancient Greek philosophy and contemporary American democracy with students from the World Studies class next door. The interdisciplinary work is a hallmark of the humanities magnet, one of four advanced middle-school programs available to students in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), a sprawling, 160,500-student district that extends from the District of Columbia’s border north and northwest into exurbs and rural hamlets. The magnet school students are drawn from across the district’s 137 elementary schools and increasingly reflect the school district’s growing racial, cultural, and economic diversity.

That wasn’t always the case. Few would have guessed from Rowe’s classroom that the effort to bring a wider range of students into Montgomery County’s advanced programs has been one of the longest and most contentious in the nation, sparking shouting matches at school board meetings, social media melees, legal challenges, bitter recriminations between activist parents, national news coverage, and, ultimately, an investigation by the U.S. Department of Education’s office of Civil Rights.²⁰

Some of Montgomery County’s 27 high schools are among the nation’s best. For much of the 1980s and 1990s, the pipeline to gain admission to them was clear—at least to some. Parents applied to get their academically capable elementary-aged students a place in the country’s four magnet middle schools, two that were known for being math heavy, two emphasizing the humanities, and all offering sophisticated-sounding electives, field trips, and other enrichment activities. But knowing how and when to apply required a familiarity with the system, and there were “backdoor” entrances: parents who had the resources could have their children privately tested for precocious academic abilities.

As the county’s population grew and enrollment rose, the number of seats in the middle school magnet programs barely expanded; for some parents, the pressure to enroll their children in the programs became intense. Over the years, enrollment also failed to reflect the changing racial makeup in Montgomery County, a place with pockets of extreme wealth and extreme poverty. In the 2013–14 school year, magnet middle school students were 45 percent Asian-American and 33 percent white, while Black students

Rebuilding a racially diverse pipeline of academically able students, starting in the early grades, could also eventually help defuse the highly-charged politics around selective high school admissions.

made up 8 percent of total enrollment and Hispanic students 6 percent. At that time, the school system as a whole was 15 percent Asian American, 33 percent white, 26 percent Hispanic, and 21 percent Black.²¹

In 2015, the district's leadership, spurred by a local advocacy group, Black and Brown Coalition for Education Equity and Excellence, made changes to redress the racial imbalance in the magnet middle schools. In 2017, MCPS stopped relying on parent-initiated applications for magnet programs and instead universally screened its fifth-graders. School administrators reviewed each student's report card grades and standardized test scores and invited half of the county's students to take a cognitive abilities test, the CogAt, an in-person written assessment that purports to measure a student's capacity to learn.²² The test scores were evaluated against test takers in the applicants' home schools, an approach known as local-norming that closely followed research urging policymakers to compare students from the same communities, who presumably have similar socioeconomic backgrounds.

But then district officials announced that students in schools with large concentrations of advanced students would get advanced instruction in their home schools, eliminating the need to expand the magnet programs and reducing additional staffing and transportation

costs that might accompany identifying more academically able students. It was not clear what that advanced instruction in home schools would consist of, or how it would be financed. High-performing students in schools with few advanced students would be offered a spot in one of the coveted magnet programs.

The new program design was a communications disaster and a failed strategy. Parents, many of them white and Asian, who sent their children to a school with a concentration of high-performing students didn't know how they would be challenged in their home schools. And during a pilot year the strategy failed to meet its articulated objective: the numbers of Black and Latino students at the magnet schools barely budged.²³

So, the district changed the selection process again. This time, in anticipation of the 2019 school year, candidates for the magnet schools were separated into three bands: low-poverty, moderate-poverty, or high-poverty and their scores were compared to those of other students with the same socioeconomic status. Again, the district stumbled when it came to transparency and communication: parents had no idea how the formula was weighted and critics complained the socioeconomic bands were a crude proxy for race. That year, the number of Asian American students offered a place in the magnet program dropped by half and the number of white, Black, and Latino students rose.²⁴

Frustrated parents filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, which launched an investigation in March 2019, to see if Asian Americans were being discriminated against.²⁵ Parents of Asian American students, backed by a conservative group looking to overturn affirmative action, filed a lawsuit. At least a dozen Asian American students who scored in the 99th percentile on state assessments and the CogAT were denied admission to a magnet program, they charged in court papers.²⁶

"Because Asian American students are clustered in 25 of MCPS's low-poverty schools, the new process forces those students to compete against each other instead of competing against every MCPS student—with the

Expanding advanced education in Montgomery County seems to be building momentum for higher standards throughout the school district. Since fewer capable white and Asian children from the county's affluent communities are gaining admission to the magnet middle school programs, their parents are pushing for more rigor in what they see as the weak curriculum in their home schools.

purpose of altering the racial composition of magnet schools to include fewer Asian Americans and more students of other ethnic groups,” wrote Carol Park, a research analyst at Pacific Legal Foundation, the organization that brought the suit.²⁷

The parents complained that the new formula lacked transparency to obscure its racially discriminatory basis, since school officials were, at least initially, explicit about changing the formula for magnet admission to improve placement rates for Black and Latino students. Maria Navarro, then the school district’s chief academic officer, defended the new system. “We had an imperfect process, and we have a not-so-perfect process now,” she told *The Washington Post*.²⁸

The acrimony only intensified. As it was reaching a crescendo, COVID struck and upended the magnet schools’ application process yet again. A new superintendent and new school-board members were now at the helm. Finding themselves mired in legal challenges, struggling to resume in-person learning, and dealing with a distrustful and bitterly divided parent body, they came up with another formula.

Unable to administer the in-person cognitive test, they opted to universally screen all fifth-grade students for placement in a single pool. Any student who received an “A” in English, math, history, and science; performed above grade level in reading as fourth-graders; and scored in the top 15 percent of fifth-graders at their home elementary school on a statewide test qualified for advanced instruction. Students in that pool were admitted to the county’s magnet program by race-blind lottery, with a small number of seats in each of the magnet programs reserved for high-performing students from surrounding elementary schools—in Eastern’s case, 12 of 137 spots in the humanities magnet. Those who did not get assigned were to receive special enrichment programming in core academic subjects at their local schools.

The new formula has resulted in more Black students and many more Latino students in the county’s middle-school magnet programs.²⁹ Although MCPS doesn’t publicly disclose the demographics of students

identified, invited, and enrolled at the magnet programs, some 25 percent of Asian-American students, 37 percent of white students, and 36 percent of Black, Latino, and children identifying as two or more races are identified for enrichment annually and offered either places in the magnet program or advanced learning in their home middle schools, according to school district documents.³⁰

They take as their touchstone the idea that motivation, drive and interest to tackle advanced academics can be found in students from every background and from every walk of life.

To Eastern’s magnet coordinator and assistant principal, Matthew Kerwin, Montgomery County’s move to universal screening, local norms, and a race-blind lottery has made advanced education more equitable. When the Eastern humanities magnet was application-based, most students in the program were white or Asian, he said. Now, 20 percent are Latino (60 percent of Eastern’s total enrollment of 900 are Latino). In Rowe’s combined English and World Studies class, a third of the students were white, a third were Black, and a third were evenly divided between Latino and Asian students.

Not all parents are pleased with the shift in enrollment. Although the Department of Education Civil Rights investigation filed in 2019 was dismissed, activist parents vow to fight against what they see as a discriminatory process all the way to the Supreme Court. If gifted education is a perceived benefit, says Christopher Kieser, a lawyer from Pacific Legal, which represents the parents’ group, “then the question is, is the district making a decision to disadvantage certain racial groups to engage in racial balancing? If they are, then we would argue that is targeted discrimination and against the law.”

In an echo of the experience at the Brooklyn Landmark

Elementary School in New York City, expanding advanced education in Montgomery County seems to be building momentum for higher standards throughout the school district. Since fewer capable white and Asian children from the county's affluent communities are gaining admission to the magnet middle school programs, their parents are pushing for more rigor in what they see as the weak curriculum in their home schools. And because universal screening is resulting in a wider range of students being identified for advanced programs, the advocacy group for parents of advanced learners in the county has grown more racially mixed and occupies an increasingly influential role in the community debate.

"When you have capable children, we understand that parents are frustrated that they do not get a seat in the magnet program," says MCPS spokesperson Christopher Cram. "We've made it a high priority in their comprehensive schools to add advanced curriculum." Many of the county's middle schools now have math classes grouped by ability and parents are pushing more schools to develop an honors social studies track and advanced learning opportunities in science. "This is driven by parent interests," Cram says. "They are making it known what they want. And we want to give it to them."

Gadsden, New York City and Montgomery County share a commitment to expanding advanced programming rather than needlessly clinging to the scarcity mindset that's the source of so much controversy in advanced education.

The Path Forward

Workforce experts say the nation's schools must do better. As the U.S. economy increasingly depends on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, they say, schools need to provide the advanced learning required to enter those fields to a broader range of public-school students in order for the nation to maintain its competitive edge.

Gadsden, New York City, and Montgomery County have worked towards that goal in different ways. But they share several traits, including a commitment to screening every student for inclusion in advanced programs, starting advanced programs in elementary school, and expanding advanced programming rather than needlessly clinging to the scarcity mindset that's the source of so much controversy in advanced education. They take as their touchstone the idea that motivation, drive, and interest to tackle advanced academics can be found in students from every background and from every walk of life.

The districts give students in advanced programs ample support rather than assuming they can fly on their own because they have potential. They strive to spread the enriched learning experiences that advanced learners enjoy to less academically precocious students. They double-down on communicating to parents and educators about advanced opportunities. And Gadsden has abandoned the use of the term "gifted" to bury past stereotypes, more accurately reflect the nature of the programs, and give hard work the privileged place it deserves in the nation's schools. The districts have combined excellence and equity in ways that can pay important dividends for students, communities and the country.

The Best Advanced-Learning Strategies, Ranked by Research

Research over the past several decades has found some types of advanced instruction to be more effective than others. Here's a summary of the findings.

STRONG RESEARCH BASE

Acceleration, *allowing students to move through a course of study at a faster-than-average pace.*

Permitting advanced students to progress more rapidly through work is supported by a large body of research tying the strategy to improved academic outcomes. The Belin-Blank Center at the University of Iowa has identified more than 20 types of acceleration, ranging from moving through an individual course curriculum more rapidly to grade-skipping and early college enrollment.

Flexible Grouping, *grouping students within classrooms based on readiness, interest, or potential.*

Saiying Steenbergen-Hu of Northwestern University and colleagues several years ago synthesized a century of research on ability grouping and found that students benefit from in-class grouping by readiness, interest and potential. And they found that grouping students within classes is the most effective grouping strategy for promoting advanced learning. Other research has found that students in the top and bottom achievement quartiles may benefit the most from ability grouping, with students in the middle quartiles experiencing little to no benefit or deficit.

Pre-differentiated Curriculum, *instructional materials that are differentiated to address differences in student readiness.*

Given the wide range of academic readiness levels that students bring to the classroom (a range of five or more grade levels isn't uncommon), teachers often struggle to meet students' individual needs.

High-quality curricula that are pre-differentiated by publishers help teachers adapt their instruction to meet these wide ranges of performance levels.

PROMISING RESEARCH BASE

Enrichment, *instructional models that add greater depth to the study of a particular topic, concept, or skill.*

Enrichment is among the most widely used advanced-instruction strategies and enrichment models have been developed for use in school, after school and on weekends, and during the summer. But due to a dearth of independent experimental studies on enrichment, the strategy's effect on student achievement isn't well-established. While existing research is generally promising, especially for summer programs, there have been few high-quality studies on the value of enrichment programs for low-income and other underserved populations.

Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs, *advanced courses for high school students and related programs for younger students that are based on curricula established by the course developers, the College Board and the International Baccalaureate.*

Although case studies and surveys of students and teachers suggest these programs improve student outcomes, there is limited experimental evidence that that's the case for most students. But research does point to significantly improved college outcomes for low-income students who participate in AP and IB programs.

WEAK RESEARCH BASE

Selective High Schools, *public schools with admission requirements, usually involving prior student performance.*

Selective schools are among the oldest approaches to advanced learning, especially at the high school level. But there are few experimental studies showing the schools' impact on student achievement and the research that does exist has produced mixed-to-negative results. There are longstanding concerns about a lack of racial diversity in many of the schools and their contributions to student achievement.

In-class Differentiation, *models in which advanced learning is dependent on teacher instructional, curricular, and assessment differentiation in classrooms containing students with a range of academic readiness.*

This approach relies heavily on teachers to differentiate curriculum and instruction for the wide range of student-performance levels in their classrooms, but there is little evidence that teachers are routinely effective at doing so.

Psychosocial Interventions, *strategies that seek to create growth mindsets in children, improve their "grit," and protect them from stereotype threat, among other strategies.*

Despite the popularity of these interventions over the past decade and a half, there is not a strong body of research suggesting they increase learning for advanced students.

—Jonathan Plucker

Research Bibliography

Here's a representative sample of the research on the most widely used strategies for providing students advanced learning.

Strong Research Base

ACCELERATION

S. Steenbergen-Hu, M.C. Makel and P. Olszewski-Kubilius, "What One Hundred Years of Research Says About the Effects of Ability Grouping and Acceleration on K-12 Students' Academic Achievement: Findings of Two Second-Order Meta-Analyses," *Review of Educational Research* (2016), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44668238>.

FLEXIBLE GROUPING

S. Steenbergen-Hu, M.C. Makel and P. Olszewski-Kubilius, "What One Hundred Years of Research Says About the Effects of Ability Grouping and Acceleration on K-12 Students' Academic Achievement: Findings of Two Second-Order Meta-Analyses," *Review of Educational Research* (2016), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44668238>.

PRE-DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM

C.M. Callahan, T.R. Moon, S. Oh, A.P. Azano and E.P. Hailey, "What Works in Gifted Education: Documenting the Effects of an Integrated Curricular/Instructional Model for Gifted Students," *American Educational Research Journal* (2015), <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831214549448>.

M.K. Gavin, T.M. Casa, J.L. Adelson, S.R. Carroll and L.J. Sheffield, "The Impact of Advanced Curriculum on the Achievement of Mathematically Promising Elementary Students," *Gifted Child Quarterly* (2009), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986209334964>.

J. VanTassel-Baska, B. Bracken, A. Feng, and A. Brown, "A Longitudinal Study of Enhancing Critical Thinking and Reading Comprehension in Title I Classrooms," *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* (2009), <https://doi.org/10.1177/016235320903300102>.

Promising Research Base

ENRICHMENT

E.A. Hany and C. Grosch, "Long-term Effects of Enrichment Summer Courses on the Academic Performance of Gifted Adolescents," *Educational Research and Evaluation* (2007), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13803610701785972>.

M. Kim, "A Meta-analysis of the Effects of Enrichment Programs on Gifted Students," *Gifted Child Quarterly* (2016), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0016986216630607>.

S.M. Reis, D.B. McCoach, C.A. Little, L.M. Muller and R.B. Kaniskan, "The Effects of Differentiated Instruction and Enrichment Pedagogy on Reading Achievement in Five Elementary Schools," *American Educational Research Journal* (2011), <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831210382891>.

Weak Research Base

SELECTIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

A. Abdulkadiroğlu, J. Angrist, J and P. Pathak, P, "The Elite Illusion: Achievement Effects at Boston and New York Exam Schools," *Econometrica* (2014), <https://doi.org/10.3982/ECTA10266>.

W. Dobbie and R.G. Fryer Jr, "The Impact of Attending a School with High-achieving Peers: Evidence from the New York City Exam Schools," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* (2014), https://scholar.harvard.edu/sites/scholar.harvard.edu/files/fryer/files/dobbie_fryer_shs_07_2013.pdf

C.E. Finn Jr and J.A Hockett, *Exam schools: Inside America's Most Selective Public High Schools*, Princeton University Press (2012).

IN-CLASS DIFFERENTIATION

H. Hertberg-Davis, H, "Myth 7: Differentiation in the Regular Classroom Is Equivalent to Gifted Programs and Is Sufficient: Classroom Teachers Have the Time, the Skill, and the Will to Differentiate Adequately," *Gifted Child Quarterly* (2009), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986209346927>.

T. Loveless, S. Parkas and A. Duffett, "High-achieving Students in the Era of NCLB," Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2008), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED501703>.

Endnotes

- 1 J.A. Grissom and C. Redding, "Discretion and Disproportionality: Explaining the Underrepresentation of High-Achieving Students of Color in Gifted Programs," *AERA Open*, 2(1), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2332858415622175>; Researchers Christopher Yaluma and Adam Tyner estimate that 60 percent of American public elementary and middle-school students have no access to advanced or accelerated learning during the school day, after school or on weekends: C.B. Yaluma and A. Tyner, "Is There a Gifted Gap? Gifted Education in High-Poverty Schools," Thomas B. Fordham Institute (January 2018), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED592389.pdf>.
- 2 U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, "Percentage of Public School Students Enrolled in Gifted and Talented Programs, by Sex, Race/ethnicity, and State: Selected Years, 2004 through 2017-18," *National Center for Education Statistics Digest of Education Statistics* (March 2022), https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22_204.90.asp.
- 3 Interviews with researchers Jonathan Plucker, Johns Hopkins School of Education; Scott Peters, NWEA; and Jason A. Grissom, Vanderbilt University.
- 4 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), "Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), 1995, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019," <https://nces.ed.gov/timss/results19/index.asp#/math/trends>.
- 5 American Immigration Council, "Foreign-born STEM Workers in the United States" (June 2022), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/foreign-born-stem-workers-united-states>.
- 6 E. Huffaker, S. Novicoff, and T.S. Dee, "Ahead of the Game? Course-Taking Patterns Under a Math Pathways Reform," (EdWorkingPaper: 23-734), Annenberg Institute at Brown University, <https://edworkingpapers.com/sites/default/files/ai23-734.pdf>; S. Randazzo, "In the Battle Over Early Algebra, Parents Are Winning," *The Wall Street Journal* (February 4, 2024), <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/education/in-the-battle-over-early-algebra-parents-are-winning-9f52ea5f>
- 7 J. Firmender, S. Reis, and S. Sweeny, "Reading Comprehension and Fluency Levels Ranges Across Diverse Classrooms: The Need for Differentiated Reading Instruction and Content," *Gifted Child Quarterly* (December 2013), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0016986212460084>.
- 8 S.R. Cohodes, "The Long-run Impacts of Specialized Programming for High-Achieving Students," *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 12(1), 127-66 (February 2020), <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.20180315>.
- 9 "Official Coalition for TJ," <https://coalitionfortj.net/>.
- 10 P. Granitz, "San Francisco Voters Recall 3 School Board Members," *National Public Radio* (February 16, 2022), <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/16/1081035770/san-francisco-voters-recall-three-school-board-members>; S. Randazzo, "In the Battle Over Early Algebra, Parents Are Winning," *The Wall Street Journal* (February 4, 2024), <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/education/in-the-battle-over-early-algebra-parents-are-winning-9f52ea5f>.
- 11 Chicago Board of Education, "Resolution Regarding Values and Parameters for New Five-Year Transformational Strategic Plan, SY25-SY29" (December 14, 2023), <https://www.cpsboe.org/content/documents/23-1214-rs3.pdf>; The Editorial Board, "The Equality of Failure in Chicago," *The Wall Street Journal* (December 18, 2023), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/chicago-selective-enrollment-schools-school-board-teachers-union-brandon-johnson-a830454d>.
- 12 M.A. Ahern and S. Bremer, "Aldermen, Lawmakers Criticized Chicago Board of Education Over Selective Enrollment in Private Briefings, Newly Obtained Videos Show," *NBC Chicago* (February 19, 2024), <https://www.nbcchicago.com/investigations/aldermen-lawmakers-criticized-chicago-board-of-education-over-selective-enrollment-in-private-briefings-newly-obtained-videos-show/3360537/>.
- 13 Schools use 1,2,3,4 to signify minimally proficient, partially proficient, proficient and highly proficient. Arizona Department of Education, "English Language Arts Grade 4 Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)," https://www.azed.gov/sites/default/files/2021/11/English_Language_Arts_Grade_4_PLD.pdf; Arizona Department of Education, "Math Grade 4 Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)," https://www.azed.gov/sites/default/files/2021/11/AASA_Math_PLD_Grade4.pdf.
- 14 "Mayor Adams, Chancellor Banks Announce Expansion of Gifted and Talented Programs Citywide," *NYC.gov* (April 14, 2022), <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/203-22/mayor-adams-chancellor-banks-expansion-gifted-talented-programs-citywide#/0>.
- 15 E. Shapiro, "How the Mayor's Big Decision Could Upend N.Y.C. School Admissions," *The New York Times* (September 9, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/09/nyregion/nyc-schools-gifted-education.html>.
- 16 E. Shapiro, "Only 8 Black Students Are Admitted to Stuyvesant High School," *The New York Times* (April 29, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/29/nyregion/stuyvestant-black-students.html>; New York City Public Schools, "DOE Data at a Glance," <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/doe-data-at-a-glance>.
- 17 S. Edelman, "The Racially Diverse, High-achieving Schools of NYC's Past Have Vanished," *New York Post* (March 23, 2019), <https://nypost.com/2019/03/23/the-racially-diverse-high-achieving-schools-of-nycs-past-have-vanished/>.

Endnotes (continued)

- 18 E. Shapiro and K.K. Rebecca Lai, "How New York's Elite Public Schools Lost Their Black and Hispanic Students," *The New York Times* (June 3, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/06/03/nyregion/nyc-public-schools-black-hispanic-students.html>; C. Gibson and K. Jung, "Historical Census Statistics On Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For Large Cities And Other Urban Places In The United States," U.S. Census Bureau (February 2005), <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2005/demo/POP-twps0076.pdf>.
- 19 Office of the Mayor, "Mayor Adams, Chancellor Banks Announce Gifted & Talented Application Opening, New Program Sites," *NYC.gov* (May 24, 2022), <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/329-22/mayor-adams-chancellor-banks-gifted-talented-application-opening-new-program-sites>.
- 20 Association for Education Fairness v. Montgomery County Board of Education, Civ. No. 8:20-02540-PX, United States District Court for the District of Maryland (September 15, 2021), <https://pacificlegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/AFEF-v.-Montgomery-County-Public-Schools-Memorandum-Opinion-on-D-MTDs-9.15.21.pdf>.
- 21 Association for Education Fairness v. Montgomery County Board of Education, Civ. No. 8:20-cv-02540, United States District Court for the District of Maryland (September 1, 2020), <https://pacificlegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/AFEF-v.-Montgomery-County-Public-Schools-Complaint.pdf>.
- 22 "CogAt", Riverside Insights, https://riversideinsights.com/cognitive_abilities_test.
- 23 Association for Education Fairness v. Montgomery County Board of Education, Civ. No. 8:20-cv-02540, United States District Court for the District of Maryland (September 1, 2020), <https://pacificlegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/AFEF-v.-Montgomery-County-Public-Schools-Complaint.pdf>.
- 24 *ibid.*
- 25 D. St. George, "U.S. Officials Probe Alleged Discrimination Against Asian American Students in Md.," *The Washington Post* (April 21, 2019), https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/us-officials-probe-alleged-discrimination-against-asian-american-students-in-md/2019/04/21/67ecc77a-46a6-11e9-8aab-95b8d80a1e4f_story.html.
- 26 C. Park, "Asian Students Are victims of Montgomery County's Achievement Gap," *The Washington Post* (May 6, 2022), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/05/06/asian-students-are-victims-montgomery-countys-achievement-gap/>; Association for Education Fairness v. Montgomery County Board of Education, Civ. No. 8:20-cv-02540, United States District Court for the District of Maryland (September 1, 2020), <https://pacificlegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/AFEF-v.-Montgomery-County-Public-Schools-Complaint.pdf>.
- 27 C. Park, "Asian Students Are Victims of Montgomery County's Achievement Gap," *The Washington Post* (May 6, 2022), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/05/06/asian-students-are-victims-montgomery-countys-achievement-gap/>
- 28 D. St. George, "U.S. Officials Probe Alleged Discrimination Against Asian American Students in Md.," *The Washington Post* (April 21, 2019), https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/us-officials-probe-alleged-discrimination-against-asian-american-students-in-md/2019/04/21/67ecc77a-46a6-11e9-8aab-95b8d80a1e4f_story.html.
- 29 Interim Superintendent of Schools M.B. McKnight to members of the Board of Education, "Centers for Enriched Studies and Secondary Regional/Countywide Application Program Admission Results," Office of the Superintendent of Schools, Montgomery Country Public Schools (August 18, 2021), <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1juVTe2K1F2T5cHVI5G6602nG4mgY6vY/view>.
- 30 Superintendent of Schools M.B. McKnight to members of the Board of Education, "Update on the Centers for Enriched Studies and Secondary Regional/Countywide Application Program Admission Results for Fiscal Year 2023," Office of the Superintendent of Schools, Montgomery Country Public Schools (August 16, 2023).

EXCELLENCE WITH EQUITY

THE CASE FOR RETHINKING GIFTED EDUCATION

Future*Ed*

Independent Analysis, Innovative Ideas