|  |
| --- |
| PAI 897: Fundamentals of Policy Analysis |
| Increasing Access to Gifted Education Programs for Underrepresented Students in Virginia |
| Addressing inequitable inclusion of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in gifted and talented programs in public schools |

|  |
| --- |
| Vicki Javier, Lauren Lawless, and Dionne Williams  Fall 2019 |

# Executive Summary

We examine potential methods for increasing the proportion of underrepresented Black and Hispanic students in gifted and talented programs in Virginia’s public schools. While there were significant desegregation efforts in the immediate years following *Brown v. Board of Education*, the lack of diversity in modern U.S. classrooms remains a significant concern, especially in gifted and talented programs where the lack of representation of Black and Hispanic students is more pronounced. Gifted education plays a significant role in ensuring that gifted students are challenged and engaged in their classrooms, and having diverse gifted classrooms is crucial from an equity standpoint. Thus, it is important to understand how certain policies can create obstacles for qualified Black and Hispanic students, who traditionally have been underrepresented in gifted programs, to receive education that is appropriate for their aptitude. We have examined the racial representation of gifted programs in several geographies across the U.S. to contextualize the extent of racial disparity in these programs and have delved more deeply into the conditions and factors at play in Virginia’s disproportionate racial and ethnic composition of these programs to offer prospective policy solutions.

Below, we present three policies available to Virginia education administrators as potential means for increasing the representation of Hispanic and Black students in gifted programs. The first describes the current policies in place in Virginia, which have done little to correct for significant levels of inequitable distribution of access to gifted programming for at least the last several years. The second policy presented, the implementation of a robust referral and screening mechanism, focuses on the referral and screening aspects of the general identification of gifted students. It comprises of three specific recommendations: first, translation of materials on gifted programs and characteristics of giftedness in order to inform parents who have limited English proficiency; second, universal screening of students to identify any students who may have otherwise been excluded from the group of students being considered; and third, requisition of the use of students’ portfolios as one of the criteria used to determine giftedness. The final policy, addressing teacher bias and diversity, focuses on diversification of the teacher workforce through recruitment efforts and the training of educators in gifted and talented education standards and in implicit bias and cultural competence. These professional learning plans lead to the more equitable referral of potentially gifted students of color.

There are considerable costs related to the two policy alternatives, as they involve allocation of funding for translating materials and screening a greater number of students or for providing anti-bias trainings for teachers and potentially hiring a diversity coordinator within each division. Additionally, there are opportunity costs associated with an anti-bias professional development training requirement for school faculty and staff, who could be pursuing any number of alternative endeavors, including receiving professional development training on another relevant topic.

Notwithstanding the cost implications, these policies may help shed light on the potential mechanisms for effectively diversifying gifted and talented programs in Virginia. While we do not specifically recommend one policy over another, we are able to recognize the benefits and drawbacks of each. The policy related to screening and referral would essentially correct for negative biases in the decisions related to identifying potentially gifted students and selecting them for gifted services, whereas the policy related to teacher bias and diversity would address the root of those decision biases by attempting to correct the biases themselves. The former policy is specifically tailored to the issue of underrepresentation in gifted programs, which is the problem focus of this paper, but the latter policy, while potentially having a less direct impact on gifted student representation, would likely also positively affect non-gifted students by reducing bias in their education experiences. By providing evidence of how certain policies have worked in other geographies, we have highlighted their effectiveness as potential tools for consideration by Virginia policymakers who are interested in ensuring that gifted programs in their jurisdictions are representative of the communities and students they serve.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 1

Introduction 6

Problem Analysis: Understanding the Problem 11

Stating the Problem 11

Framing the Problem 15

Government Failure 15

Modeling the Problem 17

Outcome Variable 17

Impact Variables 19

Gifted Student Identification Process: Screening and Referrals 19

Teacher Diversity 20

Professional Development 20

Parent Involvement and Access 21

Solution Analysis: Choosing a Policy Alternative 22

Policy Goals and Constraints 22

Equitable Distribution 22

Fairness to Underrepresented Groups 22

Fairness to Overrepresented Groups 22

Efficiency 23

Political Feasibility 24

Parent Reactions 24

Teacher/School Administrator Reactions 24

Community Leaders 24

Effect on Budget 25

Policy Alternatives 25

Status Quo 25

Relation to Goals and Constraints 28

Equitable Distribution 28

Fairness to Underrepresented Groups 28

Fairness to Overrepresented Groups 29

Efficiency 29

Political Feasibility 29

Parent Reactions 29

Teacher/School Administrator Reactions 30

Community Leaders 30

Effect on Budget 30

Policy Alternative 1: Robust Referral and Screening Mechanism 30

Translation of Outreach Materials 31

Universal Screening for Eligibility for Gifted Services 32

Implementation of Portfolio Component to Determine Eligibility 33

Relation to Goals and Constraints 34

Equitable Distribution 34

Fairness to Underrepresented Groups 34

Fairness to Overrepresented Groups 35

Efficiency 35

Political Feasibility 35

Parent Reactions 35

Teacher/School Administrator Reactions 36

Community Leaders 36

Effect on Budget 36

Policy Alternative 2: Addressing Bias and Diversity among Teachers 37

Professional Development 38

Cultural Competence 38

Gifted and Talented Training 39

Recruitment of Diverse Teacher Workforce 39

Relation to Goals and Constraints 43

Equitable Distribution 43

Fairness to Underrepresented Groups 43

Fairness to Overrepresented Groups 43

Efficiency 43

Political Feasibility 44

Parent Reactions 44

Teacher/School Administrator Reactions 44

Community Leaders 44

Effect on Budget 44

Summary 46

Conclusion 47

Limitations 50

State- vs. District-Level Analysis 50

Long Term Diversity Recruitment 50

Intersectional Student Experiences 50

Cost-Benefit Analysis 51

Appendix A: Available Geographies’ Local and Gifted and Talented Demographics 52

Appendix B: Virginia Comparative Student Demographics, 2010-2016 53

References 54

# Introduction

Statistics from the Virginia Department of Education show long-standing inequity in access to the state’s public schools’ gifted and talented programs for some racial and ethnic minority segments of the student population. We present first the history of gifted and talented education in the United States, followed by a discussion of how the federally-established definition of giftedness has informed the way programs are implemented at the state and local levels and how systemic racism and implicit bias have impacted the lack of diversity of gifted and talented programs across the country. Our primary driving questions relate to what factors contribute to this inequity and what state-level policies may be changed or enacted in order to remedy it. Finally, we present state-level policy options for local desegregation of gifted programs in Virginia.

Gifted and talented students have been a part of the conversation in American education policy as early as the 1930s with the introduction of the Section of Exceptional Children and Youth. This program is considered to be the first program to address and allocate federal funding to gifted and talented students (Jolly & Robins, 2016). The interest in the academic capabilities of American students continued with the implementation of the National Science Foundation Act and America’s fixation on the Space Race in the 1950s. It was believed that these students would help keep America at the forefront and maintain our place of dominance in the world.

Following the launch of Sputnik, the government placed an even more concentrated focus on science and mathematics education and the identification of high-ability students. To support these efforts, in 1958, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act to provide more strategic federal funding for public education. With a billion dollars in funding, American educators were tasked with understanding and identifying giftedness and classifying students who should be provided additional resources and services. “More importantly, NDEA reinforced the enhancement of values such as quality, ability, or giftedness in education at the expense of competing values such as equity or equality” (Urban, 2010, p. 174). Gifted students were given a higher priority, as it became apparent how the increased quality of their education could improve America’s global standing.

This focus continued to influence the American education sector for the next decade as the Department of Education and its commissioner, Sidney P. Marland Jr., approved a study to accomplish three major goals in better understanding gifted and talented education:

* To understand the value of educational and enrichment programs and the benefits they provide to students identified as gifted and talented;
* To identify and assess the effectiveness of the education and enrichment assistance programs being provided by the federal government; and
* To propose new programmatic initiatives necessary to support these students.

Subsequently, these findings identified programmatic deficiencies and common misconceptions about gifted and talented students in the 1972 *Education of the Gifted and Talented: Report to Congress*, unofficially, the Marland Report. Among the most prevalent findings of this report were the identification of approximately 2.5 million gifted and talented students, the fact that minority and disadvantaged students were already being actively excluded, and the inconsistencies between federal, state, and local entities about how services should be administered (Reynolds, Vannest, & Fletcher-Janzen, 2014). The Marland Report set the standard for the federal government’s input on the education sector, specifically the gifted and talented sector, over the next two decades. Despite this proposed focus, most Presidents during this period showed limited interest in making lasting improvements, as continued allocation of federal funding to gifted and talented education became less of a priority.

To understand and address this challenge, President Ronald Reagan’s National Commission of Excellence in Education published the findings of a new study, which highlighted the need for U.S. public schools to raise standards to increase student achievement (United States Department of Education, 1983). The report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, definitively sounded the alarm and informed Americans of the bleak status of the current education system and results. While *A Nation at Risk* confronted the issues of all student classifications in the education sector, it acknowledged the need for differentiation in educational approaches for all classifications and shifted focus back to the needs of gifted students:

“We must emphasize that the variety of student aspirations, abilities, and preparation requires that appropriate content be available to satisfy diverse needs. Attention must be directed to both the nature of the content available and to the needs of particular learners. The most gifted students, for example, may need a curriculum enriched and accelerated beyond even the needs of other students of high ability” (United States Department of Education, 1983).

With the passing of the Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Act of 1988, the American government set out to fix the system that was impeding the academic development of the nation’s highly capable students. The Javits Act, with significantly less funding than the Marland Act, set out with similarly ambitious goals. The Javits Act, however, tried a different approach by including funding for a research center dedicated to understanding, developing, and implementing programming and services for gifted and talented students (Russo, 2008). The National Research and Development Center for the Education of Gifted and Talented Children and Youth functions as the foremost research leader on all aspects of gifted and talented education, including programmatic data collection and analysis that provides additional guidance. The research center also focuses on properly and inclusively defining “gifted and talented” to ensure that all students can be identified, assessed, and educated. “The program focuses on students who may not be identified through traditional assessment methods, including economically disadvantaged individuals, those with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities” (Riley, 1997). This push toward continuity and inclusivity led to the following definition created by the federal government, which has been used as a basis for states and local districts since:

“Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contributions to self and society” (Stephens & Karnes, 2000, pp. 219-220).

The spirit of the Javits Act has endured to present day through the introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in early 2002, which addressed the need for increased funding and research for gifted and talented programs that would inevitably impact all students. “Funds can be used for programs and projects to meet the educational needs of gifted and talented students, for the training of personnel, and for serving all students using services, materials, and methods developed for gifted and talented students” (Office of the Under Secretary, 2002). This legislation has continued to impact the lives of millions of public-school students, both gifted and talented and general education.

Across the country, students of color—primarily those from Black and Hispanic backgrounds—are granted access to gifted and talented education at rates significantly lower than their White and Asian counterparts.

“According to the literature (Moore, Ford, & Milner, 2005a, 2005b), African Americans have traditionally been underrepresented in such courses or programs at all levels of schooling (i.e., elementary, secondary, and post- secondary), which leads to a noticeable loss of talent” (Henfield, Owens, & Moore III, 2008, p. 293).

As a nation, we limit our progress and development when all members of society are not offered the same educational resources and opportunities.

# Problem Analysis: Understanding the Problem

## Stating the Problem

The 1954 landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* asserted that state laws establishing school segregation were unconstitutional. Despite significant desegregation efforts in the years immediately following this decision, the lack of diversity in modern U.S. classrooms remains a significant concern. In fact, according to a report from the Economic Policy Institute, “initial school integration gains following *Brown* stalled and black children are more racially and socioeconomically isolated today than at any time since data have been available (1970)” (Rothstein, 2014). A recent study by the nonprofit EdBuild shows that more than half of U.S. school children are in “racially concentrated” school districts, where over 75 percent of the district’s students are either all White or all non-White (EdBuild, 2019).

De facto segregation has profound cost associations. The same EdBuild study claims that predominantly non-White school districts receive significantly less funding than White districts: in all, “non-White school districts receive approximately $23 billion less [in funding] than White districts despite serving the same number of students” (EdBuild, 2019). This disparity is given greater context by the statistic that the average funding amount per student in predominately White districts is $13,908 compared to $11,682 per student in non-White districts, a 16% decrease for non-White districts (EdBuild, 2019).[[1]](#footnote-1) While a large part of this discrepancy may be attributable to wealth concentration among White families in segregated communities, which fund schools through property taxes, states are generally responsible for ensuring equitable funding across their school districts, and many states do not adequately support high-need districts (Lieberman, 2016).

Studies show that diversity in schools is closely linked to benefits for students from all racial and ethnic categories (Mickelson, 2016). According to an NPR segment, racially diverse settings can make white individuals more empathetic and smarter, which are crucial skills in the workforce (Kamenetz, 2015). Moreover, according to a federal report released in 2015, white student achievement is not impacted by whether white students are in an overwhelmingly white school or an overwhelmingly black one (United States Department of Education, 2015).

The U.S. exhibits varying degrees of success in having proportional racial representation among states and cities. Below, we examine five interest cases: a mix of geographies that shows both normal and extreme cases of inequitable representation of four primary racial and ethnic groups in gifted and talented programs compared to state- or city-wide demographics as well as some exemplary cases of relatively equal racial distributions.

Figure 1: (United States Census Bureau, 2019; Fertig & Lewis, 2015; National Association for Gifted Children, 2015)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 1**: Selected Geographies’ Demographic Disparities between State and Gifted and Talented Student Populations | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | White, non-Hispanic or Latinx | | | Asian | | | Hispanic or Latinx | | | Black or African American | | |
|  | State | G&T | % Diff | State | G&T | % Diff | State | G&T | % Diff | State | G&T | % Diff |
| Arkansas | 72.2% | 72.2% | 0.0% | 1.7% | 2.4% | 38.2% | 7.7% | 6.4% | -16.4% | 15.7% | 16.5% | 5.4% |
| Mississippi | 56.5% | 71.0% | 25.7% | 1.1% | 2.0% | 81.8% | 3.4% | 2.0% | -41.2% | 37.8% | 25.0% | -33.9% |
| New York City | 32.1% | 36.4% | 13.3% | 14.0% | 36.2% | 158.8% | 29.1% | 11.3% | -61.1% | 24.3% | 11.0% | -54.6% |
| Texas | 41.5% | 40.8% | -1.7% | 5.2% | 8.9% | 71.2% | 39.6% | 41.0% | 3.5% | 12.8% | 6.4% | -50.0% |
| Virginia | 61.5% | 64.3% | 4.6% | 6.9% | 11.9% | 72.5% | 9.6% | 7.1% | -26.0% | 19.9% | 11.0% | -44.7% |

Table 1: (United States Census Bureau, 2019; Fertig & Lewis, 2015; National Association for Gifted Children, 2015)

**Figure 1** and the accompanying data in **Table 1**, above, show that in Arkansas, the racial demographic proportions of gifted and talented programs are relatively representative of the demographic proportions of the state population.[[2]](#footnote-2) In Mississippi, there is a 25.7% overrepresentation of non-Hispanic or Latinx White (hereinafter also referred to as White) students in gifted and talented programs compared to the state population, a 41.2% underrepresentation of Hispanic or Latinx students (hereinafter also referred to as Hispanic), and a 33.9% underrepresentation of Black or African American students (hereinafter also referred to as Black). New York City shows overrepresentation of Asian students by 158.8%, underrepresentation of Hispanic or Latinx students by 61.1%, and underrepresentation of Black or African American students by 54.6%.[[3]](#footnote-3) Texas exhibits near-proportional representation of White students and Hispanic or Latinx students in gifted and talented programs, with little variation from the state demographic proportions of approximately 40% each, but there remains overrepresentation of Asian students by 71.2% and underrepresentation of Black or African American students by 50.0%. Finally, Virginia shows gifted and talented program demographic proportions representative of the rest of the geographies with reported data available, having slight overrepresentation of White students, high overrepresentation of Asian students, and underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic students.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Since we consider Virginia to be representative of the issue of racial inequity in gifted and talented programs across the country, we take this as the status quo—the jumping off point from which we will suggest improvements able to be made at the state level. With Virginia as the representative case, we anticipate that given the success of the recommended policies, these policies can be implemented uniformly at the state-level to increase racial equity.

## Framing the Problem

### Government Failure

We believe the issue here is failure by state and local governments to equitably provide gifted and talented programming opportunities to students with a diversity of racial and ethnic backgrounds. The evidence in the previous section suggests that there is significant overrepresentation in these programs of Asian and White students coupled with significant underrepresentation of Hispanic and Black students.

A robust discussion of the relationship between overrepresentation for some groups and underrepresentation for others requires that we discuss public and private goods. Because of its codification in federal law as non-rivalrous and non-excludable, we recognize that public education is generally considered a true public good. The appropriation of gifted and talented programs through public schools, however, is exclusive by design—not all students can directly benefit from the provisioning of these programs; as such, gifted and talented programs are either club goods or private goods, depending on the extent to which such programs are rivalrous in specific states and school districts.

In the 2014-2015 State of the States in Gifted Education published by the National Association for Gifted Children, 35 of the 37 states that responded to the question “Is there a maximum number or percentage of students that a district may identify for gifted programs and services in your state code or policy?” (Q68) said that there was no maximum, with the other 2 of 37—Connecticut and Maine—reporting the limit to be 5%.[[5]](#footnote-5) Given this mixed statistic combined with the ability of local programs to self-impose restrictions on the number of students in gifted programs, we must assume that gifted and talented programs are publicly provisioned as private goods in some geographies and as club goods in others.

With this conclusion established regarding provisioning of gifted and talented programs as either a rivalrous or non-rivalrous good, we must introduce nuance into our discussion to address each case, since, although the symptoms of disproportionate demographic representation in these programs are similar across several geographies, the underlying causes and conditions often differ.

When provisioned as rivalrous, the government failure could simply be inequity as the result of a shortage of gifted and talented programming combined with implicit bias involved in the gifted student identification process, in which case effort should be made to redistribute programming more equitably among different racial and ethnic groups.

When provisioned as non-rivalrous, the government failure is more complex: although there is no restriction on the number of participating students in this case, as previously stated, gifted and talented programs are designed to be exclusive, and attempts are made to avoid overcrowding so that participating students have appropriate learning environments. For geographies with no specific limits on student participation, there is theoretically no shortage constraint acting on the identification of students as gifted, so improvements can be made in pursuit of Pareto efficiency; that is, students in underrepresented groups can be given access to programs without reducing access by the currently overrepresented groups. In reality, however, budgetary constraints and perceived lack of resources, such as gifted program educators, may act upon student identification in a similar manner to the shortage constraints in the case of rivalrous provisioning. This case is also still vulnerable to bias in identification processes as those responsible for identification attempt to conserve resources.

## Modeling the Problem

### Outcome Variable

The set of variables of concern in this problem context is the percent difference between at-large population racial representation in each geography and the racial representation in gifted and talented programs of the geography. A positive percent difference represents overrepresentation, and a negative percent difference represents underrepresentation. **Table 2** shows the summary statistics for the percent differences in representation for each racial or ethnic group in all geographies with available data, excluding outliers:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 2**: Summary Statistics for Percent Differences in Representation by Racial or Ethnic Group | | | | |
|  | White | Asian | Hispanic or Latinx | Black or African American |
| Mean | 6.7% | 77.8% | -28.5% | -42.4% |
| Median | 4.3% | 71.6% | -28.1% | -45.5% |
| Mode | -1.5% | 50.0% | -29.6% | -50.0% |
| Standard Deviation | 8.2% | 53.3% | 15.8% | 17.0% |
| Minimum | -5.1% | -77.8% | -61.1% | -62.3% |
| Maximum | 25.7% | 193.3% | 5.4% | 5.4% |
| Count | 22 | 22 | 22 | 22 |

Table : (United States Census Bureau, 2019; Fertig & Lewis, 2015; National Association for Gifted Children, 2015)

We see here the statistics that allow us to define Virginia as representative: high overrepresentation (very positive mean and median values) of Asian students, and high underrepresentation (very negative mean and median values) of Hispanic and Black students.

**Figure 2**, below, shows the percent differences between Virginia’s student population demographics and the state’s gifted student population demographics for the school years 2010-11 through 2016-17. We see relatively consistent numbers in each year with only slight fluctuations, meaning that, when accounting for likely year-over-year differences in the overall student racial and ethnic demographics, the identification of Black and Hispanic students for gifted and talented programs remains statistically low while that of White and Asian students is high. Without extensive extrapolation, we see that the state of Virginia’s gifted and talented student demographic makeup has been chronically inequitable for at least the last decade.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Figure : (Virginia Department of Education, 2017; Virginia Department of Education, 2017)

### Impact Variables

The following sections identify and discuss the variables that may impact the over- or underrepresentation of different racial and ethnic groups in gifted and talented programs.

#### Gifted Student Identification Process: Screening and Referrals

Perhaps the most diversity between state policy exists in the indicators that are required (or not required) at the state level to be used for identifying students. According to the 2014-2015 State of the States survey results, to determine eligibility for gifted programming, states use various combinations of the following criteria:

* IQ scores (13 states of 42)
* Achievement data (13 of 42)
* Nominations or referrals (12 of 42)
* Multiple criteria model (19 of 42)
* Behaviors or characteristics data (7 of 42)
* Performance or portfolio (8 of 42)
* Range of state-approved assessments from which local education authorities (LEAs) may select (9 of 42)

There are inherent issues of bias with most of these criteria. For example, it has been repeatedly studied and documented that racial bias exists in high-stakes, standardized testing, that teacher race and ethnicity plays an important role in student performance and achievement, and that students whose race or ethnicity does not match that of their teachers are more likely to have certain types of behaviors misinterpreted due to differences in cultural backgrounds (Au, 2015; Jacoby-Senghor, Sinclair, & Shelton, 2016; Grissom & Redding, 2016). It follows that gifted student identification using these indicators is impacted by bias.

#### Teacher Diversity

The previous discussion leads us to a second point: the lack of diversity among educational faculty is a problem in itself. Racial “mismatching” between students and faculty often leads to poorer evaluations of classroom behavior for students of color due to implicit teacher bias, so in schools that rely heavily on teacher referrals to gifted and talented programs, students of color are less likely to be recommended by their White teachers than their White peers (Downey & Pribesh, 2004). In an educational system where the diversity gap for public school teachers is actually growing—even as diversity in the U.S. increases—we can only expect the effects on students of color to be compounded over time (Hansen & Quintero, 2019; Chappell, 2017).

#### Professional Development

Again, our previous argument leads to yet another level of impact: the need for professional development (PD) training for teachers on their implicit biases. Attempting to recognize teacher biases against students whose racial and ethnic backgrounds do not match their own, many school districts have begun implementing PD programs that change the typical format of diversity trainings from ones that “[focus] on understanding the behavior or characteristics of students who come from different backgrounds than their teachers” to programs that instead “[ask] teachers to critically examine how their own identities have shaped their experiences” (Schwartz, 2019, p. 5). Districts taking this approach must make decisions regarding whether the trainings would be optional or mandatory, each option having its own set of benefits and drawbacks. Ultimately, Schwartz suggests it should be up to the district, which knows its teachers best.

#### Parent Involvement and Access

Of the states surveyed by the NAGC in 2014-15 who responded to the question “Does your state require parent/guardian involvement in gifted and talented identification and service decisions?” (Q51), half (21 of 42) responded yes, including all four of the states previously highlighted (Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia) (National Association for Gifted Children, 2015). This inclusion of parent input may be beneficial for some students who are at first overlooked by whatever identification process is employed by the school, as the parent is able to act as an advocate for the student; however, this benefit may end up excluding children whose parents may not be able to read materials relevant to the program if the materials are only provided in English, which we would expect to disproportionately affect students from limited-English-speaking backgrounds.

# Solution Analysis: Choosing a Policy Alternative

## Policy Goals and Constraints

### Equitable Distribution

#### Fairness to Underrepresented Groups

The primary goal is to increase access to gifted and talented programs for traditionally underrepresented groups—in this case, Hispanic and Black students. This effort should improve fairness to these students, as, ideally, they will be appropriately admitted to these programs without the influence of inherent biases in standardized testing, teacher perspective, or other student identification methods.

#### Fairness to Overrepresented Groups

Ideally, fairness to the typically overrepresented groups (White and Asian students) should remain unchanged. This may or may not be a feasible goal, as we have previously discussed the effect of seat-limiting in gifted and talented programs. If seats are not limited in number, then increased inclusion of the underrepresented groups should have a minimal impact on the number of students in the programs for the overrepresented groups. If, however, seats are limited to a number that is less than the number of students who would qualify for admission, as they are in New York City, then competition between qualifying gifted students will result in exclusion of some students from overrepresented racial and ethnic groups as a result of inclusion of students from underrepresented groups.

Fairness to overrepresented groups should also be considered through the lens of gifted program size. In a review of an experiment on class size conducted in Tennessee in the years 1985 through 1989, then Master of Public Policy candidate Darian Woods discusses the evidence that smaller class sizes in grades K-3 have been empirically shown to have a positive effect on student learning and achievement, but Woods also cautions against some outstanding questions not addressed by this study: the most relevant being that Tennessee is a below-average state for education, so there may have been greater differences between the subjects of this study than there might have been in a higher-performing state (Woods, 2015). The implication of this argument to our discussion on gifted and talented programs is that while gifted students may still benefit from smaller class sizes, the relative impact of larger classes might be less than what is shown in mainstream classes. Nevertheless, increased class size is potentially unfair to students in the overrepresented groups in schools where there is no seat limit and where class sizes may increase as a result of increasing underrepresented groups’ participation.

### Efficiency

In the interest of efficiently allocating resources, we would like to optimize the identification process such that students who are gifted and would benefit from gifted and talented programming are identified and provided with program access, and students who are above average performers but who do not truly meet the definition of giftedness are not mistakenly identified as gifted.

These two components of efficiency are inherently at odds with one-another, and there is much room for error, as the student identification processes are often subject to much bias. Since our primary goal is to increase equitable access and the goal of allocative efficiency is secondary to that, we would prefer more type I false positive errors for gifted student identification than type II false negative errors where truly gifted students continue to be unidentified by those responsible for doing so.

### Political Feasibility

#### Parent Reactions

In communities with seat limits in gifted and talented programs, we expect that the parents of students who benefit from current policies would protest to changes that may jeopardize their child’s access to services. Obviously, we would like to avoid this type of resistance, as it imposes a constraint on the political feasibility of implementing changes, but it is likely inevitable where some students may lose access. A generic solution would be to consider including a grandfathering clause to effectively phase in any changes by temporarily increasing the seat limits so that no students lose access, but of course this would require more resource expenditure to accommodate the additional students.

#### Teacher/School Administrator Reactions

Any alternative policy would need to be embraced by teachers and school administrators as important, which would require the acknowledgment that the goal is worth achieving, as these are the individuals who would be on the frontlines of implementation of new policy.

#### Community Leaders

Assuming a new policy would be established at the state level, implementation would also require the cooperation of community leaders, especially school board members, who would likely be responsible for enforcing and ensuring compliance by schools, teachers, administrators, staff, and parents.

### Effect on Budget

As many schools are already impacted by chronic underfunding, any policy proposal must consider additional expenses that would be incurred by schools due to the implementation of a new policy. Of course, an ideal component of a policy recommendation would be cost neutrality, but some alternatives may require shifts or cuts in school or district budgets in order to accommodate the necessary changes.

## Policy Alternatives

### Status Quo

School divisions, as Virginia’s school districts are called, are required to establish at the division level, “uniform procedures for screening, referring, identifying, and serving” K-12 students for placement in the gifted program (Virginia Board of Education, 2012, p. 3). The screening process requires teachers to review current data on each K-12 student annually (Virginia Board of Education, 2012). The referral process must permit student referrals by “parents or legal guardians, teachers, professionals, students, peers, self, or others” any time between kindergarten and 12th grade (Virginia Board of Education, 2012, p. 4).

A committee reviews information on referred students for identification and placement into the program (Virginia Board of Education, 2012). This committee must include “classroom teachers, assessment specialists, gifted program staff, school administrators, or others with credentials or experience in gifted education” and must review information “from multiple sources selected and used consistently within the division to assess students’ aptitudes in the areas of giftedness the school division serves,” and they may review verified comparable data from another Virginia division for a previously identified-as-gifted transfer student (Virginia Board of Education, 2012, p. 4).

Student identification must be based on multiple criteria, and the process must include at least three points of reference from the following groups:

1. "Assessment of appropriate student products, performance, or portfolio;
2. “Record of observation of in-classroom behavior;
3. “Appropriate rating scales, checklists, or questionnaires;
4. “Individual interview;
5. “Individually administered or group-administered, nationally norm-referenced aptitude or achievement tests;
6. “Record of previous accomplishments (such as awards, honors, grades, etc.); or
7. “Additional valid and reliable measures or procedures” (Virginia Board of Education, 2012, pp. 4-5).

The identification committee must seek out students for identification even in the case that “identification may be affected because they are economically disadvantaged, have limited English proficiency, or have a disability,” but it does not include race or racial bias as one of the potentially confounding factors that could prevent appropriate student identification. (Virginia Board of Education, 2012, p. 4)

Parents must be notified of the committee’s decision regarding their child’s referral, and the parents may appeal the decision, but there is no language diversity requirement at the state level for these parent communication materials. (Virginia Board of Education, 2012, p. 6)

Each division school board is to submit a comprehensive plan for gifted education to the Department of Education, which must assure that “the selected and administered testing and assessment materials have been evaluated by the developers for cultural, racial, and linguistic biases” (Virginia Board of Education, 2012, p. 7). While this policy is certainly commendable for addressing the previously discussed issue of racial bias in standardized testing, it is not adequate in addressing racial biases often involved in the preceding stage of identification of which students should be screened for eligibility.

The school board plan must also include evaluative procedures for “[reviewing] the effectiveness of the school division's gifted education program, including the review of screening, referral, identification, and program procedures toward the achievement of equitable representation of students” (Virginia Board of Education, 2012, p. 8).

The division “may establish a local advisory committee composed of parents, school personnel, and other community members who are appointed by the school board,” which conducts an annual review of the local gifted program and the extent to which it was implemented in the previous year and must “reflect the ethnic and geographical composition of the school division” (Virginia Board of Education, 2012, p. 8). The state of Virginia does not mandate the establishment of this committee.

The Virginia Department of Education does not require teachers to receive training in diversity or implicit bias topics before licensure (Licensure, 2019). The Department of Education Professional Development Calendar lists a professional development conference called “Recognizing and Overcoming Implicit Bias and Microaggression (K-12)” that was hosted on October 23, 2019 in Charlottesville, but attendance was not mandatory for all Virginia teachers (2019).

Locally, some divisions are implementing implicit bias training programs under pressure from their communities. A social-group-turned-advocacy-organization called Black Parents of Arlington have demanded “mandatory implicit bias training, more teachers of color, [and] movement on closing achievement or opportunity gaps” in the Arlington school division, which has since hired a chief diversity officer (Truong, 2019). Elsewhere, after a February 2019 incident involving a controversial Underground Railroad “game” in a Loudoun County elementary school, the county superintendent announced a plan to “[address] racism, cultural insensitivity, and inequity throughout the school division” by, among other things, diversifying the teacher workforce and organizing mandatory cultural competence and implicit bias training for teachers and administrators, which was previously optional (Loudoun County Public Schools Office of the Superintendent, 2019).

#### Relation to Goals and Constraints

##### Equitable Distribution

###### Fairness to Underrepresented Groups

Fairness of the current policy for underrepresented groups is low, as equity in gifted education is relatively minimal. It is not outrightly prioritized by current policy and is only explicitly addressed in the requirement that testing materials used for gifted student identification be evaluated by their developers, making accountability for equitable representation external to the selection process.

Although the state offers a remedy for implicit bias in student identification by means of professional development, the program is elective, and local mandatory programs appear to often be reactive to community pressure, which is not equally present in all divisions that experience inequity in their gifted and talented programs.

###### Fairness to Overrepresented Groups

While students in overrepresented groups benefit from current policy, the fairness of the policy to them is neutral, as greater benefit does not equal greater fairness.

##### Efficiency

The current process is not efficient, since students who should be included in gifted programming are not because of the various factors discussed above. We have no evidence to claim that students are being identified for gifted services who should not be.

##### Political Feasibility

###### Parent Reactions

There are parent groups currently advocating for school divisions to address inequity in access to gifted programming and to close achievement and opportunity gaps. The parents of students in the overrepresented groups are likely to be anywhere from neutral to content with current policy, since their children are benefitting from access to gifted programs, although some parents may recognize the privilege afforded to their children and would like to see the same extended to other groups.

###### Teacher/School Administrator Reactions

Teachers and school administrators may be content with continuing current policy, but, like parents, some may recognize the inequity in their schools’ gifted and talented programs and are also wanting for change.

###### Community Leaders

Some community leaders currently experience pressure from parent constituents to address inequity and have already made localized decisions to do so. Standardized state policies to address racial and ethnic inequities in education may be welcomed by local community leaders so that they have a basis for more specific local policy.

##### Effect on Budget

Continuation of current gifted policy would likely have little to no impact on school and school division budgets, as costs can be anticipated relatively accurately, using data from previous years and projected student enrollment.

### Policy Alternative 1: Robust Referral and Screening Mechanism

This policy alternative focuses on incorporating several features in both the referral and screening processes to address the distributional problem of gifted seats. Specifically, this policy option entails the adoption of the following measures:

1. Translating outreach materials to increase awareness of gifted programs among parents who have limited English proficiency;
2. Universal screening for eligibility for gifted services; and
3. Provisioning of a weight or requirement assigned to the component of portfolio assessment to identifying giftedness in general intellectual aptitude.

#### Translation of Outreach Materials

Parents and guardians play a crucial role in the education of their children and can be strong advocates for their children to be screened for or to receive gifted services. According to the National Education Association, English learner students are the fastest-growing student population, and many of their parents benefit from language access services to navigate the school system (McKeon, 2005). School districts have a legal obligation to provide translation and interpretation services to parents. The U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education released a joint statement affirming parents’ right to receive information about school services and programs, including gifted and talented programs, in their native language (2015). However, many states’ plans do not include components identified by this federal requirement. For example, an in-depth study on underrepresented groups in gifted programs in the metropolitan region of Colorado showed that several districts failed to provide information on giftedness with parents in their native language (Stargardter, 2016). As Stargardter points out, “several district program plans referred to parent involvement, but did not mention the accommodation of having the information in the parent or student’s native language” (2016, p. 33). As previously mentioned, Virginia’s state-level plan does not explicitly require language access considerations for their divisions’ gifted plans. It is not readily clear to what extent Virginia school divisions provide information on gifted programs in their parents’ native language. This information asymmetry may prevent limited-English-proficient families from realizing the full benefit of the information about gifted programs at their disposal.

It would be beneficial for Virginia school divisions to uniformly provide parents and guardians with information in their native language about the characteristics linked to giftedness, the purpose of gifted programs, and how parents can take part in the identification process. A look at the websites of the largest and most racially diverse divisions in Virginia indicate that, while the majority do provide translated forms for parents to refer their children for evaluations for gifted eligibility, there is a paucity of translated information regarding gifted characteristics and programs. These findings are summarized in **Table 3**, below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 3:** Do selected Division websites provide information in other languages | | | |
| **Virginia School Division** | **On gifted programs & referral forms?** | **On gifted characteristics?** | **On identification process?** |
| Fairfax County Public Schools | Not apparent. | Not apparent. | Not apparent. |
| Prince William County Public Schools | Yes. ([Link](https://www.pwcs.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=340225&pageId=3981680)) | Not apparent. | Yes. ([Link](https://www.pwcs.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=340225&pageId=3981680)) |
| Loudoun County Public Schools | Yes. ([Link](https://www.lcps.org/Page/211705)) | Yes. Provides [link](https://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources-parents/recursos-para-los-padres-de-familia) to information in Spanish from the National Association for Gifted Children. | Not apparent. |
| Virginia Beach County Public Schools | Not apparent. ([Link](https://www.vbschools.com/academic_programs/gifted)) | Not apparent. | Not apparent. |
| Chesterfield | Yes. ([Link](https://mychesterfieldschools.com/curriculum/gifted-education/)) | Yes. | Yes. |
| Arlington | Yes, on programs. ([Link](https://www.apsva.us/instruction/curriculum-instruction/program-of-studies/))  Not apparent with referral forms. | Not apparent. | Yes. ([Link](https://www.apsva.us/instruction/curriculum-instruction/program-of-studies/)) |
| Alexandria | Yes. | Yes. ([Link](https://www.acps.k12.va.us/domain/55)) | Yes. ([Link](https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/409)) |

Table : various sources, linked

#### Universal Screening for Eligibility for Gifted Services

Implementing a universal screening program may broaden participation in gifted programs. A recent study looked at the changes in demographic composition of a gifted program in a school district after the district introduced a universal screening program for second-grade students (Card & Giuliano, 2016). The researchers found that screening all second-grade students resulted in a substantial increase in the proportion of free/reduced price lunch participants, Blacks, Hispanics and English learner students (Card & Giuliano, 2016).

It is worth mentioning that despite the promising effects of this method, universal screening as an instrument to increase diversity entails substantial costs. The school district that was the subject of Card and Giuliano’s research had to conduct an additional 1,300 screening tests to screen all of its second-grade students (2016). These tests, which typically take three hours to complete, were conducted by school psychologists who were paid overtime. This particular district decided to eventually cut the screening program in 2011 amid ongoing budget constraints. Not surprisingly, there was a substantial drop in the proportion of students placed in gifted programs once the universal screening ended (Card & Giuliano, 2016).

#### Implementation of Portfolio Component to Determine Eligibility

Although a universal screening program can help with increasing underrepresented identification, there are limitations to states depending on a single assessment to determine eligibility (Ford, 2015; Persons, n.d.; Ramos, 2010). Researchers have suggested using several culturally appropriate methods for identification (Ford, 2015; Ramos, 2010; Ryser, 2011).

Many states currently require their school districts to incorporate multiple criteria in their identification process. As previously mentioned, however, many studies have pointed to potential biases toward underrepresented groups in traditional assessments to determine eligibility (Yoon Yoon & Gentry, 2009; McBee, 2006). As such, this policy option suggests the use of multiple methods of identifying potentially gifted students and specifically to include factors other than traditional assessments, such as classroom projects and reviews of students’ portfolios, as suggested by many researchers (Ramos, 2010).

Focusing on the underrepresentation of low-socioeconomic Latino students, for example, Ramos suggests that identification variables such as “non-verbal tests, observation instruments, grade-to-grade portfolios, performance projects, and extensive interviewing” are promising alternatives for increasing Latino representation in gifted programs (2010, p. 151). Although Virginia requires that multiple factors, including portfolio assessments, be considered to determine giftedness, it leaves the decision up to divisions on which combination of factors to consider.

It is worth mentioning that for identifying giftedness in the area of general intellectual ability, Virginia requires that one for the factors used to determine eligibility be a “nationally norm-referenced aptitude test” as one of any three criteria (Virginia Board of Education, 2012, p. 5). Based on the current criteria set by Virginia, a student, for example, could be assessed by the following factors: aptitude test, behavior record, and individual interview. It has been established that standardized tests have been shown to have cultural biases and that the latter two factors can be subject to educators’ inherent bias. Thus, this policy would have the Virginia Department of Education give greater weight to or require that the portfolio assessment be included as factor to determine giftedness in any area. While portfolio assessments are still subject to educator bias, this component, as Ramos attests can increase participation of underrepresented groups (2010).

#### Relation to Goals and Constraints

##### Equitable Distribution

###### Fairness to Underrepresented Groups

Fairness of the proposed policy for underrepresented groups is high, as translations of promotional materials, universal screening, and portfolio-based eligibility assessments have all been linked to higher participation of underrepresented groups in gifted programs.

###### Fairness to Overrepresented Groups

While students in underrepresented groups benefit from this policy alternative, the fairness of the policy to overrepresented groups is potentially neutral, as seats to gifted programs in Virginia are largely non-rivalrous.

##### Efficiency

The proposed process is efficient, since students who should be included in gifted programming will most likely be identified by the abovementioned recommendations.

##### Political Feasibility

###### Parent Reactions

With the parents of underrepresented student populations currently pressuring school divisions to address inequity in their gifted and talented programs, we expect that this pressure would be at least somewhat alleviated by the implementation of the proposed policy. The parents of students in the overrepresented groups are likely to exhibit either neutrality or opposition.

In the case of seat-limited programs, parents would likely react poorly if their child lost access to gifted programming, and even in the case of unlimited gifted seating, parents may oppose the additional expense of screening the entire student population and then serving a potentially larger number of gifted students. Again, a way to combat some of the seat-limited opposition would be to grandfather in those students who would otherwise lose access to gifted programming, absorbing the temporary cost of serving more students.

###### Teacher/School Administrator Reactions

It is unclear whether teachers and school administrators may be generally displeased or content with the proposed policy. Teachers may be negatively impacted by the potentially additional work of ensuring materials are provided in parents’ language and by the additional work that comes with universal screening.

###### Community Leaders

As discussed, some community leaders currently experiencing pressure from parent constituents to address educational inequity may welcome such standardized state policies.

##### Effect on Budget

Universal screening involves substantial costs since it would require divisions to conduct a substantially greater number of evaluations. Additionally, divisions would have to dedicate additional funding for translations of materials and interpretation services. The requirement to include portfolio assessments as an eligibility criterion is not expected to substantially increase costs as this component is currently an optional criterion under Virginia policy. Overall, the estimated cost for this policy alternative is $1.7 million, which includes an estimated cost of $1.7 million for evaluations and $5,000 for translations of materials.[[7]](#footnote-7) The relative cost of this policy is 3.67% of the 2014-15 state funding for gifted and talented education (National Association for Gifted Children, n.d.).

### Policy Alternative 2: Addressing Bias and Diversity among Teachers

This policy focuses on directly addressing the teacher workforce and its role both in a fair and equitable identification and selection process and in the effective and efficient implementation of gifted and talented educational standards for properly identifying eligible students. Specifically, this policy entails the adoption of the following measures:

1. Mandating professional development programming across divisions and schools for educators on:
   1. Cultural competence, student equity, and implicit bias and
   2. Understanding the educational needs of gifted students and effectively identifying gifted learners; and
2. Establishing an explicit plan for recruitment of a more diverse teacher workforce, focusing on:
   1. In service teachers by actively recruiting teachers of color from other states and countries and
   2. Pre-service teachers:
      1. By recruiting undergraduate students of color to enter the teacher workforce upon graduation and
      2. By recruiting professionals from other fields with an interest in education.

These policy components are ordered from most to least immediately actionable, meaning that, while the state should put equal effort into the implementation of each item, professional development training can be adopted to train existing teachers in the school divisions while longer-term efforts are made to recruit a more diverse teacher workforce.

#### Professional Development

##### Cultural Competence

The Virginia Department of Education is dedicated to the development of the states’ teachers. Educators have access to a wealth of professional resources provided by the state Department of Education, which is complemented by the expectation that school administrators, with the support of school divisions, will mandate and provide specific professional development and learning opportunities throughout the year.

To actively address the underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic students in gifted and talented programs, we propose that school staff and administrators must attend ongoing cultural competence and diversity professional learning sessions. These sessions should be structured to include all staff, to provide opportunities for recognizing and flagging implicit biases, and to teach strategies to effectively change thinking and policies that negatively impact students and staff of color. Organizations like the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Education Association provide guidelines for and access to this type of professional development for our nation’s schools. To effectively meet this goal, Virginia administrators must utilize these resources for their benefit.

The question has been raised about the practicality of mandating PD and how to measure the benefits and impact. To ensure that staff and administrators are invested in this process and making progress, measurable goals must be set, and teachers and administrators must be held accountable. School divisions can implement cultural competence evaluations and verification processes for teachers and schools (Hanover Research, 2014). Implementing these evaluation policies will maintain a level of accountability that will prompt administrators to adjust programming specifically to the needs of their schools and educators.

##### Gifted and Talented Training

Per the National Association of Gifted Children, gifted and talented educators are expected to meet seven standards of teacher preparation to be considered prepared to effectively teach gifted and talented students. Teachers should be able to understand and adjust strategies and teaching methods to address the myriad capabilities, needs, and backgrounds of the gifted student population. Additionally, gifted and talented educators are expected to work in cooperation with their fellow educators, administrators, families, and community advocates to learn and engage in methods that push achievements in the gifted community forward (Knowledge and Skill Standard in Gifted Education for All Teachers, 2014). School administrators must recognize and nominate their high-performing teachers for participation in development opportunities to meet and exceed these standards on an ongoing basis. Teachers who are abreast of the latest techniques and strategies are more likely to understand the educational and social needs of gifted and talented students; thus, a more informed lens will better equip teachers to identify, nominate, and serve these students and their families.

#### Recruitment of Diverse Teacher Workforce

We have previously discussed the issue of race-matching between students and teachers and the inequitable effect that it has on teacher referral of students for gifted services. One of the reasons this issue is so pervasive is that as of 2016, 80% of teachers in the United States are White, even though the preK-12 student population in the same school year was only 49% White (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.; National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). The most direct way to address race-matching and to make referrals of potential giftedness more representative of student demographics is to increase racial and ethnic diversity among teachers.

As we seek to confront the lack of diversity in Virginia’s public schools, we must first address the state’s ongoing teacher shortage. In recent years, the Commonwealth has struggled to find qualified professionals to fill the 1,000+ teaching positions that have remained vacant (Office of the Governor, 2017). This issue isn’t limited to Virginia, however, as states across the nation struggle to hire and retain teacher workforces that match the racial and ethnic demographics they serve.

There are several reasons for this nationwide shortage, from reduced interest in the teaching profession to limits in compensation and career trajectories. Teaching has become a last resort profession for many people of color, as they choose to pursue other career opportunities (Madkins, 2011). Underlying these current issues are the residual effects of legislation that was originally proposed to increase equity for people of color in the United States.

The decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*was intended to desegregate the public-school system, but its execution resulted primarily in the closing of segregated schools attended by students of color. This caused Black teachers and administrators to lose their jobs at an alarming rate due to discrimination and racism, the very issue *Brown* was supposed to eradicate. Administrators of newly integrated schools were not incentivized or even expected to hire and retain teachers of color. The post-*Brown v. Board* era has seen a dramatic decrease in teachers of color. As recently as 2016, it is estimated that Black teachers and administrators only account for eight and 10 percent of the education sector, respectively (Goings, Hotchkins, & Walker, 2019).

The education sector is not alone in this looming issue of lack of diversity. There has been a recent shift across all sectors to actively pursue diversity and inclusion to ensure that the workforce accurately reflects the communities being served. Hiring managers are now expected to actively recruit and retain qualified candidates of color. In the education sector, administrators must work to correct these consequences of *Brown* and to recruit and retain Black teachers in order to properly serve the student community. According to research by C. D. Gist, teachers of color are currently less likely to be hired and to retain their jobs due to consistent injustices in the hiring and evaluation processes at the school level. Additionally, teachers of color are more likely to leave their positions due to lack of professional opportunities and issues of racially and culturally insensitive environments and relationships (Gist, 2018). Recruitment must start by changing the narrative about the teaching profession and identifying talented individuals and providing the support and resources needed for them to successfully persist in the education field.

Virginia has begun the process of addressing the lack of diversity among its teacher workforce by conducting research and convening various legislative working groups to identify the pain points and propose solutions. The Virginia Department of Education estimates that the teacher shortage has reached an all-time high with over 1,000 vacant positions. (Office of the Governor, 2017) Although this issue is widespread, these vacancies are concentrated in higher-poverty divisions, where teacher recruitment is becoming is increasingly difficult (Preliminary Report from the Advisory Committee on Teacher Shortages, 2017).

In 2017, the Taskforce on Diversifying Virginia’s Educator Pipeline published a report addressing the three challenges administrators are facing across the state in school divisions. These challenges include lack of resources and incentives for prospective teachers, limited awareness of and interest in the teaching profession for non-education or undeclared majors and expectations around certifications and licensing for current teachers (Office of the Governor, 2017) . With the recent passing of HB 2037 (Diversifying Teacher Workforce Act), the Virginia legislature is attempting to address the licensure and certification requirements to increase access for candidates and pre-service teachers who may not have the resources or interest in securing these credentials previously.

This legislation, while potentially helpful, may not have a direct impact on the target demographic: teachers of color. Virginia administrators cannot assume that the new law will automatically prompt Black teachers to pursue these additional credentials, and they must instead actively engage teachers of color in the licensing and hiring process. After successful gains have been made in the areas of recruitment and hiring, the focus must shift to retention policies. It is imperative that Virginia’s divisions ensure that teachers have the compensation, career opportunities, and other supports necessary to remain and grow with the division. This will directly impact the teacher shortage issue and guarantee stability for the student population and school community.

#### Relation to Goals and Constraints

##### Equitable Distribution

###### Fairness to Underrepresented Groups

This policy addresses fairness to underrepresented groups of both students and teachers. With active diversity recruitment and focused professional development, students benefit from increased exposure to same-race teaching staff, which is known to be value-adding in the educational experience of students of color, specifically relating to identification of gifted students of color.

There is an additional positive externality for teachers of color, who are provided with access and resources to increase their participation as professionals in the education field.

###### Fairness to Overrepresented Groups

It is likely that having more teachers of color will contribute to the cultural awareness of the overrepresented student groups previously served by a primarily White teacher workforce. They are unlikely to suffer in terms of gifted education due to increased teacher diversity.

Due to the shortage of teachers nationwide, an increased focus on recruitment and certification for teachers of color should have no negative impact on teachers from overrepresented groups; however, increased diversity in the school community and mandatory implicit bias training for staff is a positive externality for teachers and other school staff.

##### Efficiency

Both primary policy components lead to reduced racial and ethnic bias in identification of gifted students, theoretically creating a process where students are evaluated for gifted services within a more equitable context. This combined with training specifically on identifying giftedness will contribute to significantly improved efficiency in gifted student identification.

##### Political Feasibility

###### Parent Reactions

Parent groups are expected to be neutral toward if not supportive of these changes within their schools’ administrative policies. Since access will become more equitable, parents of underrepresented students will be receptive to the policy. As recruitment policies and professional development offerings are not usually under the influence of parent groups, administrators can make decisions as they see fit. It is important to be transparent and to share these changes and their associated impacts with parents in order to ensure their buy-in.

###### Teacher/School Administrator Reactions

Teachers and school administrators are expected to be on board with the proposed policies. They are the group most directly impacted by implementation and execution of the policy and are expected to willingly adhere to the new PD standards to assist in the implementation of a culturally competent and equitable environment at the school.

###### Community Leaders

Community leaders are expected to have a similar reaction to the proposals as parents. Increased diversity and cultural competence, in addition to the influx of professionals to the area, are expected to have a positive impact on the community as a whole.

##### Effect on Budget

An increased focus on diverse recruitment will pose additional costs to school divisions as it requires divisions to update their human resource management strategies. This may include hiring diversity specialists and creating new recruitment materials and resources. Incorporating new and effective professional development sessions and teacher evaluation protocols will prove to be costly for divisions as well. These costs can be viewed as an investment and can possibly be offset by adjustments to the professional development options currently offered. Time and effort would be well spent pursuing private funding opportunities like grants and paid research studies that seek to address these issues of inequity for both students and teachers.

## Summary

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  | **Policy Options** |  |
| **Goal** | **Sub-Goal** | Status Quo | Referral and Screening Mechanism | Teacher Bias and Diversity |
| **Equitable Distribution** | Fairness to under-represented groups | *Low*.  Racial bias is not corrected in the student identification process. | *High.*  Racial and ethnic underrepresentation is targeted. | *High.*  Implicit bias that impacts racial and ethnic underrepresentation is addressed corrected. |
| Fairness to over-represented groups | *Neutral*. | *Mixed.*  Neutral without seat-limiting; seat-limiting requires additional effort in provisioning decisions. | *Neutral.* |
| **Efficiency** | Accurate student identification | *Low*.  Identification rates of gifted Black and Hispanic or Latino students are lower than for White or Asian students. | *High.*  Proposed components target current blind spots in divisions’ policies. | *High.*  Proposal for new mandated PD opportunities equip educators to more accurately identify qualified students. |
| **Political Feasibility** | Parent reactions | *Mixed*.  Parents of underrepresented students are advocating for change, but other parents are likely either indifferent to or approving of current policy, as it benefits their children. | *Mixed.*  Parents of underrepresented groups will mostly likely welcome this alternative. Other parents may be either neutral or opposed to potential budget impacts. | *Positive.*  Parents of underrepresented groups will welcome this change, while other parents will likely be neutral, as they generally have no participation in teacher hiring or PD.. |
| Teacher reactions | *Neutral*. | *Mixed.*  Teachers and administrators may be content but may also feel burdened by the additional work created by this policy alternative. | *Mixed.*  Teachers and administrators may initially push back on new PD materials but will likely recognize the benefit to students and school culture. |
| Community leaders | *Neutral*. | *Positive.*  Alternative addresses concerns previously raised by constituents. | *Positive.*  Increased diversity in the local teacher workforce positively impacts the community. |
| **Effect on Budget** | Impact on budgeting | *Neutral*. | *Minimal.*  There are costs associated with translating materials and conducting eligibility screening for all students. Approximately $1.7 million, or 3.67% of the 2014-15 gifted education budget. | *Substantial.*  Implementing new recruitment policies and practices, in addition to facilitating new PD opportunities is expected to be costly. |

# Conclusion

Gifted education plays a significant role in ensuring that gifted students are challenged and engaged in their classrooms, and having diverse gifted classrooms is crucial from an equity standpoint. Thus, it is important to understand how certain policies can create obstacles for qualified Black and Hispanic students, who traditionally have been underrepresented in gifted programs, to receive education that is appropriate for their aptitude. We have examined how racial representation looks in several geographies across the U.S. to contextualize the extent of racial disparity in these programs and have delved more deeply into the conditions and factors at play in Virginia’s disproportionate racial and ethnic composition in these programs. We have ultimately presented three policies available to Virginia education administrators as potential means for increasing the representation of Hispanic and Black students in gifted programs.

The first describes the current policies in place in Virginia, which have done little to correct for significant levels of inequitable distribution of access to gifted programming for at least the last several years.

The second policy presented, the implementation of a robust referral and screening mechanism, focuses on the referral and screening aspects of the general identification of gifted students. It comprises of three specific recommendations: first, translation of materials on gifted programs and characteristics of giftedness in order to inform parents who have limited English proficiency; second, universal screening of students to identify any students who may have otherwise been excluded from the group of students being considered; and third, requisition of the use of students’ portfolios as one of the criteria used to determine giftedness.

The final policy, addressing teacher bias and diversity, focuses on diversification of the teacher workforce through recruitment efforts and the training of educators in gifted and talented education standards and in implicit bias and cultural competence. These professional learning plans lead to the more equitable referral of potentially gifted students of color.

There are substantial costs related to the two policy alternatives, as they involve allocation of funding for translating materials and screening a greater number of students or providing anti-bias trainings for teachers and potentially hiring a diversity coordinator within each division. Additionally, there are opportunity costs associated with an anti-bias professional development training requirement for school faculty and staff, who could be pursuing any number of alternative endeavors, including receiving PD training on another relevant topic.

Notwithstanding the cost implications, these policies may help shed light on the potential mechanisms for effectively diversifying gifted and talented programs. By providing evidence of how some policies have worked in other geographies, we have highlighted their effectiveness as potential tools for consideration by policymakers who are interested in ensuring that gifted programs in their jurisdictions are representative of the communities and students they serve.

The opportunity cost of denying an adequately challenging education to children who would benefit from such is immeasurable, as it would involve quantification of lost opportunities, not just years, but decades into each child’s future: from lost scholarships or internships to a lifetime of decreased wages.

While we do not specifically recommend one policy over another, we are able to recognize the benefits and drawbacks of each. The policy related to screening and referral would essentially correct for negative biases in the decisions related to identifying potentially gifted students and selecting them for gifted services, whereas the policy related to teacher bias and diversity would address the root of those decision biases by attempting to correct the biases themselves. The former policy is specifically tailored to the issue of underrepresentation in gifted programs, which is the problem we would like to solve, but the latter policy, while potentially having a less direct impact on gifted student representation, would likely also positively affect non-gifted students by reducing bias in their education experiences. Ultimately, the decision is left up to policymakers, but the singular recommendation that we are comfortable making is that current policy should not persist.

# Limitations

## State- vs. District-Level Analysis

It would be desirable to perform a similar policy analysis at the city or district level, but New York City is particularly unique in the amount of data they publish on public programs, including in the field of education. The lack of access to robust data elsewhere makes it difficult to do analysis at the district level, which in turn makes it more difficult for us to provide recommendations for district-level policy improvements, which would theoretically be much more implementable provided that they satisfied statewide requirements for gifted and talented programs.

## Long Term Diversity Recruitment

It is understood that increasing the number of Black teachers in the workforce will be continuous work for school divisions and administrations. As such, Policy Alternative 2 focused on short- to mid-term options that would directly impact in-service teachers. To have a greater and longer-lasting impact on the teacher pipeline, policy should also target pre-service teachers. Implementing programs and policies to attract these future educators while they are still in college or when they are considering a career change is a viable option. However, due to time and resource constraints, it is outside of the scope of this discussion.

## Intersectional Student Experiences

While this discussion has focused on racial equity primarily in isolation, it cannot be ignored that there is also underrepresentation of low socioeconomic status students in gifted and talented programs. This underrepresentation compounded with race- and ethnicity-based underrepresentation means that students who fall into the underrepresented groups of both categories are less likely to be recommended for gifted services than even those students finding themselves in only one of the underrepresented groups. True equity in gifted and talented programming must also consider socioeconomic disadvantages, but that is outside the scope of our discussion here.

## Cost-Benefit Analysis

We could not calculate an accurate net present value of the benefits and costs associated with the different forms of implementation options given the paucity on quantifiable, monetized benefits of receiving gifted program services versus not, in addition to the non-time-limited nature of the proposed policy—ideally, any policy change would be implemented indefinitely, as we know that inequity is a chronic and wide-spread problem in gifted and talented programs across the country. We considered several categories of monetized costs, which included additional work hours required for staff who would be administering the universal screening, translations of materials, and training other faculty and staff.

# Appendix A: Available Geographies’ Local and Gifted and Talented Demographics

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | White, non-Hispanic or Latinx | | | Asian | | | Hispanic or Latinx | | | Black or African American | | |
|  | State | G&T | % Diff | State | G&T | % Diff | State | G&T | % Diff | State | G&T | % Diff |
| Alabama | 65.4% | 75.5% | 15.4% | 1.5% | 2.5% | 63.3% | 4.4% | 3.1% | -29.1% | 26.8% | 16.1% | -39.8% |
| Arkansas | 72.2% | 72.2% | 0.0% | 1.7% | 2.4% | 38.2% | 7.7% | 6.4% | -16.4% | 15.7% | 16.5% | 5.4% |
| Colorado | 67.9% | 68.5% | 0.9% | 3.5% | 5.1% | 46.3% | 21.7% | 18.9% | -12.8% | 4.6% | 2.6% | -44.3% |
| Connecticut | 66.5% | 75.4% | 13.4% | 4.9% | 8.9% | 81.6% | 16.5% | 7.7% | -53.3% | 12.0% | 5.3% | -55.8% |
| Florida | 53.5% | 53.7% | 0.4% | 3.0% | 6.0% | 100.0% | 26.1% | 27.5% | 5.4% | 16.9% | 9.1% | -46.2% |
| Georgia | 52.4% | 62.0% | 18.3% | 4.3% | 9.0% | 109.3% | 9.8% | 7.0% | -28.6% | 32.4% | 18.0% | -44.4% |
| Idaho | 81.7% | 87.1% | 6.6% | 1.6% | 2.4% | 50.0% | 12.7% | 6.8% | -46.5% | 0.9% | 0.4% | -55.6% |
| Indiana | 78.9% | 83.0% | 5.2% | 2.5% | 4.0% | 60.0% | 7.1% | 5.0% | -29.6% | 9.8% | 4.0% | -59.2% |
| Iowa | 85.3% | 84.0% | -1.5% | 2.7% | 4.0% | 48.1% | 6.2% | 5.0% | -19.4% | 4.0% | 2.0% | -50.0% |
| Kansas | 75.7% | 78.7% | 4.0% | 3.1% | 6.7% | 116.1% | 12.1% | 6.8% | -43.8% | 6.1% | 2.3% | -62.3% |
| Kentucky | 84.3% | 80.0% | -5.1% | 1.6% | 2.5% | 56.3% | 3.8% | 9.8% | 157.9% | 8.4% | 4.0% | -52.4% |
| Louisiana | 58.6% | 64.7% | 10.4% | 1.8% | 5.3% | 193.3% | 5.2% | 4.1% | -21.2% | 32.7% | 23.8% | -27.2% |
| Maine | 93.1% | 93.2% | 0.1% | 1.2% | 2.5% | 107.5% | 1.7% | 1.1% | -33.5% | 1.6% | 1.6% | -2.5% |
| Mississippi | 56.5% | 71.0% | 25.7% | 1.1% | 2.0% | 81.8% | 3.4% | 2.0% | -41.2% | 37.8% | 25.0% | -33.9% |
| Missouri | 79.3% | 80.6% | 1.7% | 2.1% | 5.3% | 151.0% | 4.3% | 3.2% | -26.0% | 11.8% | 8.3% | -29.8% |
| Nebraska | 78.6% | 17.4% | -77.9% | 2.7% | 23.5% | 770.7% | 11.2% | 8.5% | -24.0% | 5.1% | 9.2% | 79.4% |
| New York City | 32.1% | 36.4% | 13.3% | 14.0% | 36.2% | 158.8% | 29.1% | 11.3% | -61.1% | 24.3% | 11.0% | -54.6% |
| North Carolina | 62.8% | 72.6% | 15.5% | 3.2% | 5.5% | 71.9% | 9.6% | 7.0% | -27.6% | 22.2% | 10.5% | -52.9% |
| South Carolina | 63.7% | 74.6% | 17.1% | 1.8% | 2.7% | 50.0% | 5.8% | 4.2% | -27.6% | 27.1% | 15.3% | -43.5% |
| Texas | 41.5% | 40.8% | -1.7% | 5.2% | 8.9% | 71.2% | 39.6% | 41.0% | 3.5% | 12.8% | 6.4% | -50.0% |
| Utah | 78.0% | 81.0% | 3.8% | 2.7% | 0.6% | -77.8% | 14.2% | 10.0% | -29.6% | 1.4% | 0.9% | -35.7% |
| Virginia | 61.5% | 64.3% | 4.6% | 6.9% | 11.9% | 72.5% | 9.6% | 7.1% | -26.0% | 19.9% | 11.0% | -44.7% |
| Washington | 68.0% | 67.0% | -1.5% | 9.3% | 15.0% | 61.3% | 12.9% | 8.0% | -38.0% | 4.3% | 2.0% | -53.5% |

(United States Census Bureau, 2019; Fertig & Lewis, 2015; National Association for Gifted Children, 2015)

# Appendix B: Virginia Comparative Student Demographics, 2010-2016

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Total Student Population** | | | **Students Referred for Evaluation of Giftedness** | | **Students Identified for Gifted Services** | | **Percent Difference between Total Students and Students Identified for Gifted Services** |
| **School Year** | **Race/Ethnicity** | **Number** | **Percent of Total** | **Number** | | **Percent of Total** | **Number** | **Percent of Total** |
| 2010-2011 | White | 678,026 | **54.1%** | 31,362 | | 60.0% | 121,669 | **62.6%** | **15.7%** |
| Asian | 73,236 | **5.8%** | 5,731 | | 11.0% | 24,481 | **12.6%** | **115.5%** |
| Hispanic | 142,655 | **11.4%** | 4,588 | | 8.8% | 15,963 | **8.2%** | **-27.9%** |
| Black | 301,192 | **24.1%** | 7,698 | | 14.7% | 22,119 | **11.4%** | **-52.7%** |
| Total | 1,252,266 | **-** | 52,283 | | - | 194,237 | **-** | **-** |
| 2011-2012 | White | 674,320 | **53.6%** | 34,360 | | 59.0% | 128,903 | **62.4%** | **16.4%** |
| Asian | 75,860 | **6.0%** | 6,699 | | 11.5% | 26,248 | **12.7%** | **110.8%** |
| Hispanic | 149,464 | **11.9%** | 5,574 | | 9.6% | 17,116 | **8.3%** | **-30.2%** |
| Black | 298,749 | **23.7%** | 8,250 | | 14.2% | 23,302 | **11.3%** | **-52.5%** |
| Total | 1,258,896 | **-** | 58,191 | | - | 206,663 | **-** | **-** |
| 2012-2013 | White | 669,575 | **52.9%** | 33,916 | | 59.2% | 123,886 | **61.4%** | **16.1%** |
| Asian | 77,997 | **6.2%** | 6,546 | | 11.4% | 27,640 | **13.7%** | **122.3%** |
| Hispanic | 157,744 | **12.5%** | 5,642 | | 9.8% | 17,936 | **8.9%** | **-28.7%** |
| Black | 296,704 | **23.4%** | 7,761 | | 13.5% | 21,273 | **10.5%** | **-55.0%** |
| Total | 1,265,277 | **-** | 57,283 | | - | 201,713 | **-** | **-** |
| 2013-2014 | White | 664,628 | **52.2%** | 30,447 | | 59.4% | 105,666 | **64.3%** | **23.2%** |
| Asian | 80,703 | **6.3%** | 5,293 | | 10.3% | 19,510 | **11.9%** | **87.4%** |
| Hispanic | 166,299 | **13.1%** | 4,652 | | 9.1% | 11,722 | **7.1%** | **-45.4%** |
| Black | 295,954 | **23.2%** | 7,728 | | 15.1% | 18,066 | **11.0%** | **-52.7%** |
| Total | 1,273,532 | **-** | 51,230 | | - | 164,289 | **-** | **-** |
| 2014-2015 | White | 656,739 | **51.3%** | 27,764 | | 56.9% | 104,289 | **63.7%** | **24.3%** |
| Asian | 82,785 | **6.5%** | 5,287 | | 10.8% | 19,173 | **11.7%** | **81.3%** |
| Hispanic | 177,306 | **13.8%** | 5,288 | | 10.8% | 12,137 | **7.4%** | **-46.4%** |
| Black | 294,639 | **23.0%** | 7,226 | | 14.8% | 18,320 | **11.2%** | **-51.3%** |
| Total | 1,280,370 | **-** | 48,768 | | - | 163,604 | **-** | **-** |
| 2015-2016 | White | 648,578 | **50.5%** | 27,731 | | 58.6% | 101,192 | **63.1%** | **24.8%** |
| Asian | 85,329 | **6.6%** | 4,971 | | 10.5% | 18,670 | **11.6%** | **75.1%** |
| Hispanic | 184,801 | **14.4%** | 4,712 | | 10.0% | 12,166 | **7.6%** | **-47.3%** |
| Black | 293,973 | **22.9%** | 6,829 | | 14.4% | 18,646 | **11.6%** | **-49.2%** |
| Total | 1,284,114 | **-** | 47,356 | | - | 160,473 | **-** | **-** |
| 2016-2017 | White | 640,328 | **49.7%** | 25,926 | | 57.2% | 102,832 | **61.7%** | **24.1%** |
| Asian | 87,654 | **6.8%** | 5,227 | | 11.5% | 22,907 | **13.7%** | **102.0%** |
| Hispanic | 194,647 | **15.1%** | 4,810 | | 10.6% | 14,050 | **8.4%** | **-44.2%** |
| Black | 291,008 | **22.6%** | 6,265 | | 13.8% | 16,427 | **9.9%** | **-56.4%** |
| Total | 1,288,033 | **-** | 45,350 | | - | 166,632 | **-** | **-** |

(Virginia Department of Education, 2017; Virginia Department of Education, 2017)

# References

Au, W. (2015, November 26). Meritocracy 2.0: High-Stakes, Standardized Testing as a Racial Project of Neoliberal Multiculturalism. *Educational Policy, 30*(1), 39-62.

Card, D., & Giuliano, L. (2016). Universal screening increases the representation of low-income and minority students in gifted education. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 113*(48), 13678-13683. doi:10.1073/pnas.1605043113

Chappell, B. (2017, June 22). *Census Finds A More Diverse America, As Whites Lag Growth*. Retrieved from National Public Radio: https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/06/22/533926978/census-finds-a-more-diverse-america-as-whites-lag-growth

Downey, D. B., & Pribesh, S. (2004, October). When Race Matters: Teachers' Evaluations of Students' Classroom Behavior. *Sociology of Education, 77*(4), 267-282.

EdBuild. (2019). *23 Billion*. Retrieved from EdBuild: https://edbuild.org/content/23-billion

Fertig, B., & Lewis, R. (2015, December 30). *New Data: White and Asian Children Far Outpace City Population in Gifted Programs*. Retrieved from WNYC: https://www.wnyc.org/story/city-data-shows-diversity-varies-greatly-across-within-schools/

Ford, D. (2015). *Recruiting & Retraining Culturally Different Students in Gifted Education.* Waco, Texas: Prufrock Press.

Gist, C. D. (2018). Human Resource Development for Racial/Ethnic Diversity: Do School Systems Value Teachers of Color? *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 345-358.

Goings, R. B., Hotchkins, B., & Walker, L. J. (2019). Examining the Preparation of School Human Resource Officers on Developing a Racially Diverse Educator Workforce Post Brown. *Journal of Research of Leadership Education*, 267-280.

Grissom, J. A., & Redding, C. (2016, January 18). Discretion and Disproportionality: Explaining the Underrepresentation of High-Achieving Students of Color in Gifted Programs. *AERA Open, 2*(1).

Hanover Research. (2014, August). *Strategies for Building Cultural Competency.* Retrieved December 14, 2019, from https://www.gssaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Strategies-for-Building-Cultural-Competency-1.pdf

Hansen, M., & Quintero, D. (2019, March 7). *The diversity gap for public school teachers is actually growing across generations*. Retrieved from The Brookings Institution: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2019/03/07/the-diversity-gap-for-public-school-teachers-is-actually-growing-across-generations/

Henfield, M. S., Owens, D., & Moore III, J. L. (2008). Influences of Young Gifted African Americans' School Succes: Implications for Elementary School Counselors. *The Elementary School Journal , Vol. 108, No. 5* , 392-406.

Jacoby-Senghor, D. S., Sinclair, S., & Shelton, J. N. (2016, March). A lesson in bias: The relationship between implicit racial bias and performance in pedagogical contexts. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 63*, 50-55.

Jolly, J. L., & Robins, J. H. (2016). After the Marland Report: Four Decades of Progress. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 19.

Kamenetz, A. (2015, October 19). *The Evidence That White Children Benefit From Integrated Schools*. Retrieved December 4, 2019, from National Public Radio: https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/10/19/446085513/the-evidence-that-white-children-benefit-from-integrated-schools

Lieberman, A. (2016, January 15). *Equitable Funding: Which States are Leading the Way?* Retrieved from New America: https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/equitable-funding-states/

Loudoun County Public Schools Office of the Superintendent. (2019, February 22). Statement of Loudoun County Public Schools Superintendent Eric Williams In Partnership with The Minority Student Achievement Advisory Committee (MSAAC), Loudoun County Chapter of the NAACP, and The Loudoun Freedom Center. Retrieved December 6, 2019, from https://www.lcps.org/cms/lib/VA01000195/Centricity/Domain/12//2019%20News%20Archive%20PDF/Joint%20Statement%20of%20LCPS%20Superintendent%20Eric%20Williams%20and%20Community%20Leaders.pdf

Madkins, T. (2011). The Black Teacher Shortage: A Literature Review of Historical and Contemporary Trends. *The Jounral of Negro Education, 80 (3)*, 417-427.

McBee, M. (2006). A descriptive analysis of referral sources for gifted identification screening by race and socioeconomic status. *Journal of Secondary Gifted Education, 17*, 103-111.

McKeon, D. (2005). *Research talking points on English language learners.* Retrieved December 1, 2019, from http://www.nea.org/home/13598.htm

Mickelson, R. A. (2016, October). *School Integration and K-12 Outcomes: An Updated Quick Synthesis of the Social Science Evidence.* Retrieved November 24, 2019, from The National Coalition on School Diversity: https://school-diversity.org/pdf/DiversityResearchBriefNo5Oct2016Big.pdf

National Association for Gifted Children. (2014, September). *Knowledge and Skill Standard in Gifted Education for All Teachers*. Retrieved from National Association for Gifted Children: http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/national-standards-gifted-and-talented-education/knowledge-and

National Association for Gifted Children. (2015, November). *2014-2015 State of the States in Gifted Education.* Retrieved from National Association for Gifted Children: https://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/gifted-state/2014-2015-state-states-gifted-education

National Association for Gifted Children. (n.d.). *Gifted By State: Virginia*. Retrieved December 13, 2019, from National Association for Gifted Children: https://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/gifted-state/virginia

National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.). *Fast Facts*. Retrieved December 13, 2019, from National Center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=28

National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.). *Status Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups*. Retrieved December 13, 2019, from National Center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator\_rbb.asp

Office of the Governor. (2017). *A Commonwealth of Virginia Website.* Retrieved from https://www.education.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/secretary-of-education/pdf/final-acts-report.pdf

Office of the Under Secretary. (2002). *No Child Left Behind: A Desktop Reference.* Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbreference/reference.pdf

Persons, E. (n.d.). Strategies for Identifying Gifted and Talented Minority Students in North Carolina: Nurturing for a Bright Tomorrow (NBT). *Research on the Education and Development of Youth (REDY).* Retrieved November 23, 2019, from https://sites.duke.edu/nurturingforabrighttomorrow/files/2018/01/Strategies-for-Identifying-Gifted-and-Talented-Minority-Students-in-North-Carolina-Nurturing-for-a-Bright-Tomorrow-NBT.pdf

(2017). *Preliminary Report from the Advisory Committee on Teacher Shortages.* Richmond: Virginia Board of Education.

Ramos, E. (2010). Let us in: Latino underrepresentation in gifted and talented programs. *Journal of Cultural Diversity, 17*(4).

Regoli, N. (2019). Retrieved from Vittana.org: https://vittana.org/21-gifted-and-talented-programs-pros-and-cons

Reynolds, C. R., Vannest, K. J., & Fletcher-Janzen, E. (2014). *Encyclopedia of Special Education, Volume 1: A Reference for the Education of Children, Adolescents, and Adults Disabilities and Other Exceptional Individuals, 4th Edition.* Wiley.

Riley, R. W. (1997). *The New Teacher's Guide to the U.S. Department of Education.* United States Department of Education.

Rothstein, R. (2014, April 17). Brown v. Board at 60: Why Have We Been so Disappointed? What Have We Learned? Economic Policy Institute.

Russo, C. J. (2008). *Encyclopedia of Education Law.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Ryser, G. (2011). Fairness in Testing and Nonbiased Assessment. In *Identifying Gifted Students: A Practical Guide* (pp. 63-74). Waco, Texas: Prufrock Press.

Schwartz, S. (2019, May 15). The Power of Facing Our Unconscious Bias. *Education Week, 38*(33), 10-16.

Stargardter, J. (2016). *Underrepresentation of minorities in gifted and talented programs: a content analysis of five district program plans.* Honors Scholar Thesis, University of Connecticut. Retrieved November 23 2019, from https://opencommons.uconn.edu/srhonors\_theses/484

Stephens, K. R., & Karnes, F. A. (2000). State definitions for the gifted and talented revisited. *Exceptional Children, 66*(2), 219-238.

The New York City Department of Education. (2019). *Gifted and Talented: Visit G&T Programs and Apply*. Retrieved from The New York City Department of Education: https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enroll-grade-by-grade/gifted-and-talented

Truong, D. (2019, September 22). *Arlington schools were named best in Virginia, but a growing chorus of black parents is disrupting that narrative*. Retrieved from The Washington Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/arlington-schools-were-named-best-in-virginia-but-a-growing-chorus-of-black-parents-is-disrupting-that-narrative/2019/09/22/c014c126-d339-11e9-9343-40db57cf6abd\_story.html

U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education. (2015).

United States Census Bureau. (2019). *QuickFacts*. Retrieved from United States Census Bureau: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/AR,MS,newyorkcitynewyork,TX,VA/PST045218

United States Department of Education. (1983). *A Nation At Risk.* Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html

United States Department of Education. (2015). *School Composition and the Black–White Achievement Gap.* Retrieved December 5, 2019, from https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/studies/pdf/school\_composition\_and\_the\_bw\_achievement\_gap\_2015.pdf

United States Department of Justice & United States Department of Education. (2015). Retrieved November 15, 2019, from https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-lep-parents-201501.pdf

Urban, W. J. (2010). *More Than Science and Sputnik: The National Defense Education Act of 1958.* University of Alabama Press.

Virginia Board of Education. (2012, June). Regulations Governing Educational Services for Gifted Students. Virginia. Retrieved December 5, 2019, from http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted\_ed/gifted\_regulations.pdf

Virginia Department of Education. (2017, December 18). *Enrollment & Demographics: Fall Membership Reports.* Retrieved December 1, 2019, from Virginia Department of Education: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\_reports/enrollment/index.shtml

Virginia Department of Education. (2017, October 24). *Gifted Programs: Gifted Annual Reports.* Retrieved December 1, 2019, from Virginia Department of Education: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\_reports/gifted/index.shtml

Virginia Department of Education. (2019). *Licensure*. Retrieved from Virginia Department of Education: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/

Virginia Department of Education. (2019). *Professional Development Events: Department of Education Professional Development Calendar.* Retrieved from Virginia Department of Education: https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/pdc\_public/

Virginia State Department of Education. (n.d.). *EDUCATION WORKFORCE DATA & REPORTS*. Retrieved December 1, 2019, from http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/workforce\_data/index.shtml

Woods, D. (2015, September 23). *The Class Size Debate: What the Evidence Means for Education Policy*. Retrieved from Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California Berkeley: https://gspp.berkeley.edu/research/featured/the-class-size-debate-what-the-evidence-means-for-education-policy

Yoon Yoon, S., & Gentry, M. (2009). Racial and Ethnic Representation in Gifted Programs: Current Status of and Implications for Gifted Asian American Students. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 121-136. doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986208330564

1. In Virginia, the per-student funding in non-White districts is actually 2% more on average compared to predominately White districts, which is why we do not focus on inequity in funding in our Virginia-specific policies. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Asian students are overrepresented by 38.2%, but the percent change is small relative to other statistics, and the difference of less than 1 percentage point indicates that this level of overrepresentation is less notable than other examples. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The overrepresentation of White students in New York City gifted and talented programs by 13.3% is slight and negligible. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The measure of representativeness used was to compare overrepresentation and underrepresentation levels of the different racial and ethnic groups for individual geographies to the mean percent difference ± 0.1 and the median percent difference ± 0.1. Virginia is the only geography to satisfy these criteria for all four race and ethnicity groups. Relevant data for all geographies with available data can be found in **Appendix A: Available Geographies’ Local and Gifted and Talented Demographics**. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This question specifically addresses state code and policy gifted program requirements and does not include information on local district or school defined policies. There may be geographies that impose maximum identification levels that are not represented in the survey data. For example, New York City, not included in the survey of states, limits the number of available seats each year to fewer than the number of children taking the qualifying exam whose scores are 99 (out of a 99-point maximum) (The New York City Department of Education, 2019). Additionally, the selected states, none of which reported having state-wide limits on student participation, report the percentages of student populations identified as gifted as 12.9% (Virginia), 9.49% (Arkansas), 7.61% (Texas), and 6.44% (Mississippi) (National Association for Gifted Children, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The relevant statistics represented in this Figure are available in **Appendix B: Virginia Comparative Student Demographics, 2010-2016**. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. This cost estimate was determined by calculating the cost of overtime for screening staff to conduct follow-up IQ test screenings for approximately 15% of the 94,793 second-grade students attending Virginia public schools as of September 30, 2019. The Naglieri Non-Verbal Ability Test, the test typically used to determine giftedness, takes about 30 minutes to complete. This estimate assumes that teachers administer this test as part of the universal screening during regular class time and that any follow-up IQ tests are completed by school psychologists, whose average salary in Virginia is approximately $80,000. Assuming 15% of 2nd-graders take the IQ test, which typically takes three hours to complete, the overtime staff cost is approximately $1.7 million. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)