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# Cascadia Advocacy 2020

— Background and Goals —

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# PTA Advocacy

PTA is largest child-focused advocacy agency in the nation.

- 1897: National Congress of Parents and Teachers founded by Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst
- Better the lives of children in education, health, and safety
- 1926: National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers
- 1970: Two congresses signed a Declaration of Unification and merged
- Goal to make a difference for **Every Child**

# PTA Advocacy

- ★ Creation of Kindergarten classes
- ★ Child labor laws
- ★ Public health service
- ★ Hot and healthy lunch programs
- ★ Juvenile justice system
- ★ Mandatory immunization
- ★ Arts in Education
- ★ School Safety

# PTA Advocacy

- powerful voice for all children;
  - *Cascadia Advocacy must consider students outside our current enrollment*
- relevant resource for parents; and
  - *Cascadia Advocacy must educate and empower parents*
- strong advocate for public education
  - *Cascadia Advocacy must focus on improving **public** education for all students*

# Advocacy vs. community engagement

Advocacy is NOT the same thing as community engagement.

Cascadia PTA has an inclusion office (Fernando Gonzalez) who focuses on

- Welcoming environment
- Build relationships within Cascadia community
- Attract and increase diversity and inclusiveness
  - Within PTA representations
- Representation for each affinity group
- Coordinates with school race & equity team

# Other things Advocacy can not do

Sadly, we can't

- Directly affect who gets identified
- Change curricula
- Add SpEd programming
- Enforce desires for PD
- Endorse political candidates

# Proposed Advocacy Foci

- Respond to immediate Covid issues
  - Need to ensure that HiCap AND SpEd are served
- School Funding
  - State: support Washington's Paramount Duty (SpEd funding, nurses)
  - [Federal: support Covid relief funds](#)
- District reporting and accountability
  - Request and support efforts to ease reporting methods
  - Request stronger investigative response
  - Request written records from first offense
- HiCap
  - Better identification methods
  - Strong guarantee of enhanced and accelerated instruction
  - Respond to immediate threats to curricula

# Background: Highly Capable Education

## Why HiCap?

*"The term "gifted and talented", when used with respect to students, children, or youth, means students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities. (Title IX, Part A, Section 9101(22), p. 544)" (From the No Child Left Behind Act.)*

Pragmatically defined as ~2 standard deviations (98%+) outside the norm on cognitive measures. In Seattle - 98%+ on both verbal and math subscores.

Studies show that this cognitive atypicality comes with other traits, such as asynchronous development, heightened sensitivities

OSPI says *"Students who are highly capable learners often have advanced levels of academic performance; however, their academic needs often are not adequately met in the traditional classroom. Programs for highly capable students are needed to challenge these students to meet their academic potential."*

<https://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/what-giftedness>

<https://www.waetag.com/>

<http://www.nwgca.org/>

[https://www.hoagiesgifted.org/gifted\\_101.htm](https://www.hoagiesgifted.org/gifted_101.htm)

<https://www.sengifted.org/>

[http://www.nwgca.org/uploads/1/2/0/1/12018395/what\\_educators\\_need\\_to\\_know\\_about\\_smart\\_kids\\_2019.pdf](http://www.nwgca.org/uploads/1/2/0/1/12018395/what_educators_need_to_know_about_smart_kids_2019.pdf)



# HiCap - Achievement or Cognitive Trait?

Naive understanding of HiCap learners confuses this with 'High Achieving'

Expert understanding recognizes a variation in cognitive development:

**"Giftedness is asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching and counseling in order for them to develop optimally."**

HiCap learners can under-achieve, have disabilities, struggle with social-emotional development, lack leadership or study skills, or otherwise see limited achievement.

# HiCap: The challenge of 2E

*The term **twice-exceptional** was coined by James J. Gallagher to denote students who are both gifted and have disabilities.<sup>[59][60]</sup> In other words, twice-exceptional students are those who have two special needs. For instance, they might have gifted learning needs and a **learning disability**. Or, they may be a gifted learner and have a **developmental disability**, such as **autism spectrum disorder**.*

Notoriously hard to identify: Giftedness can mask disability, and disability can mask giftedness

General education strategies are uniquely ill-suited to these students.

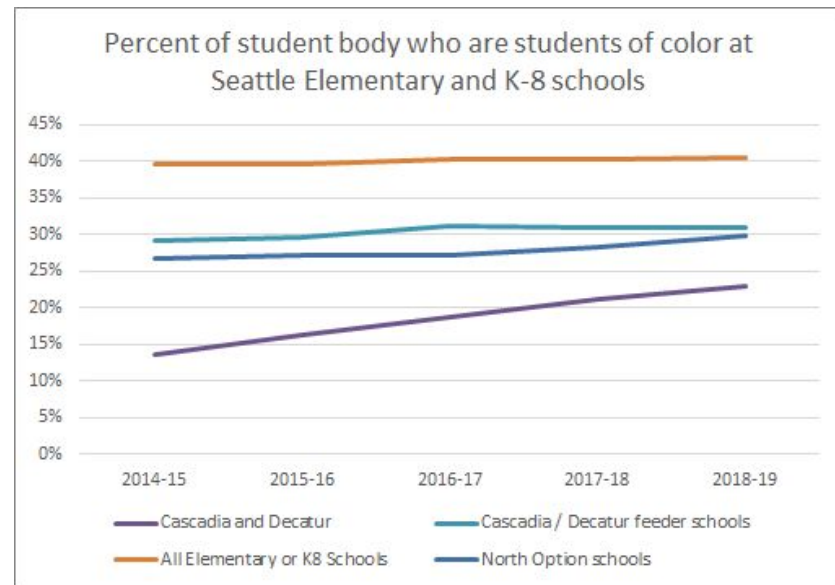
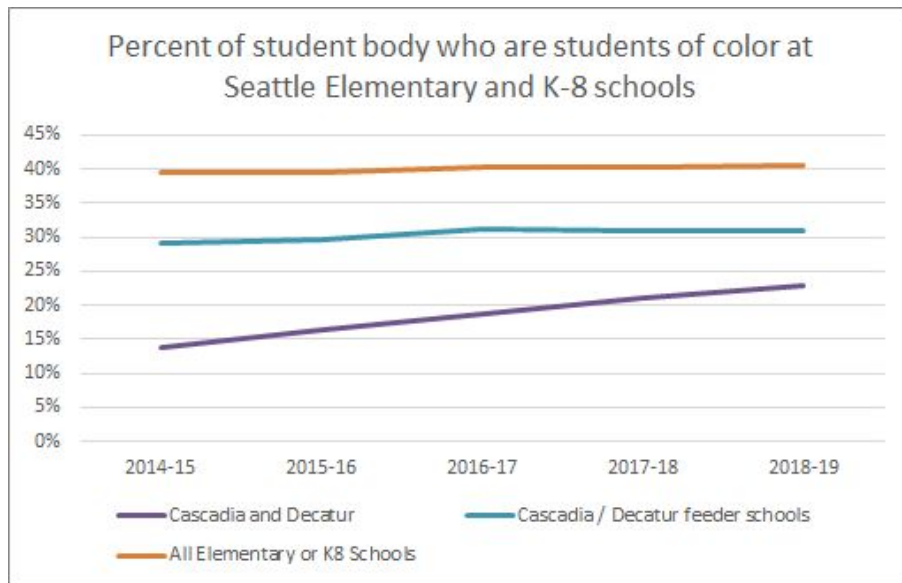
Other variations: Tw(y)ce Exceptional (gifted and otherwise minority), 3E (gifted, disabled, otherwise marginalized).

# Background: Highly Capable Education

The problem:

Gifted programs, nation-wide, suffer from inequitable participation. Gifted programs are often associated with large disparities in offerings between schools, and perceived to be racist and elitist.

# There is a representation problem



# Challenge: Is HiCap needed for equity?

Legally required:

OSPI says “The legislature finds that, for highly capable students, access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction is access to a basic education.”

[http://www.nwgca.org/uploads/1/2/0/1/12018395/accelerated\\_learning\\_and\\_enhanced\\_instruction\\_2020.pdf](http://www.nwgca.org/uploads/1/2/0/1/12018395/accelerated_learning_and_enhanced_instruction_2020.pdf)

*“A **racial justice agenda** in education must be committed to the full liberation of Black minds. This means that there need to be more, not fewer gifted and talented program opportunities in schools serving high numbers of students who are typically denied access. More, not fewer, advanced academic offerings at all middle and high schools serving large numbers of Black students. Equity means that education systems shift their focus to serving all students to unlocking the excellence of each student.”*

<https://www.nagc.org/blog/black-lives-matter-black-minds-matter-too-case-prioritizing-equity-gifted-education-urgent>

# Background: Highly Capable Education

## State of the district

State mandates HiCap identification and service. Does not specify how these students are served.

Highly Capable students score top 2% on national tests, but represent about 6% of the district. This representation is not racially or SEC proportionate.

Cohort programs exist in 3 (or 4) elementary schools, with pathways to 5 middle schools, and pathways (but no service) to 2 (or 3) high schools.

District claims AL is provided at every school, but there is no evidence of that.

# Background: Highly Capable Education

## State of the district

~ 2013 last stand-alone Spectrum program ended. Despite claiming that AL is served in all schools the quality of service varies greatly and is often non-existent.

~ 2018 Mandated adoption of new curricula (science, ELA) reduced acceleration in HCC elementary

Today: Middle school reductions in Math & Science acceleration in progress. HC ELA and History are being integrated with gen-ed. Middle school AL officially ended 2020.

District proposes 'rolling up' elementary program starting 2021

# Challenge: Is Cohort necessary for service?

## Cons

- Segregated schools
- Single domain not served
- Harder to co-locate SpEd
- Transportation

## Pros

- Cheaper (\$, time, complexity)
  - Efficient to program with colocated students
- *Access to peer group (for students)*
- Access to colleagues (for teachers)
- Comprehensive education - not enrichment
- Least restrictive environment for 2E (often)



# ALTF Recommendations

*The (last) Advanced Learning Task Force met for approximately a year culminating last December. This group had diverse representation, but reached consensus on a number of recommendations including:*

- Funding to ensure equitable and ongoing delivery of HC services
- Prioritize resources to under-represented groups (ELL, FRL, etc)
- Seek out and support on-going PD around gifted ed
- Students have equal access to SpEd and HC services
- Multi-disciplinary selection committees / use local norms
- Multiple pathways to identification including universal screening
- Single domain identification
- Strengthen service at neighborhood schools / pilot program first
- Retain smaller self-contained programs

# Cascadia's Response to ALTF

The Cascadia PTA advocates for the recommendations from the task-force:

- **Opt-out (not opt-in) evaluation.** All students should be assessed in their current school during regular school hours.
- **Factors beyond test scores:** Factors outside of solely academic achievement or cognitive scores should be allowed to identify students who may otherwise have been missed. (Per [WAC 392-170-055](#), "There is no single prescribed method for identification of students among the most highly capable.")
- **Accessible communications:** All families should be made aware of the program offerings in an accessible manner.
- **Training:** Teachers should be trained to recognize cognitive atypicality in underrepresented populations.
- **Develop potential in underrepresented communities:** Programs should be developed to support students from historically underrepresented communities who show potential for high achievement.

**Backup slides follow**

# Special ed, ELL also under-represented

**Table 4: Percentages of Students Served in 2018–19 as Categorized by Special Program Group**

Special Program	Statewide Enrollment	Highly Capable Enrollment
English Language Learner	11.70%	1.10%
Free & Reduced Lunch	46.42%	19.28%
Section 504	4.42%	5.39%
Special Education	15.08%	2.90%

**Source:** Program enrollment demographics reported by districts for the 2018–19 school year and pulled from CEDARS as of August 22, 2019.

# Minority groups over-represented in SpEd

## SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS DATA PROFILE: Demographics

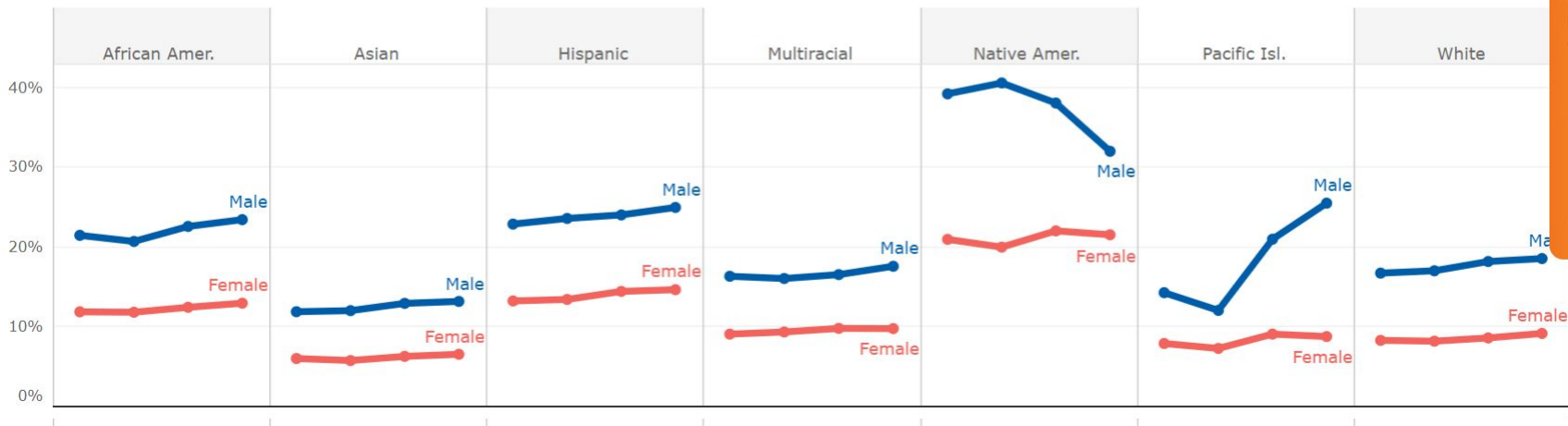
[Welcome](#)[Enrollment](#)[Enrollment Detail](#)[Free & Reduced Lunch](#)[FRL Detail](#)[Special Education](#)[Special Ed. Detail](#)[Bilingual](#)

### District Special Education Detail

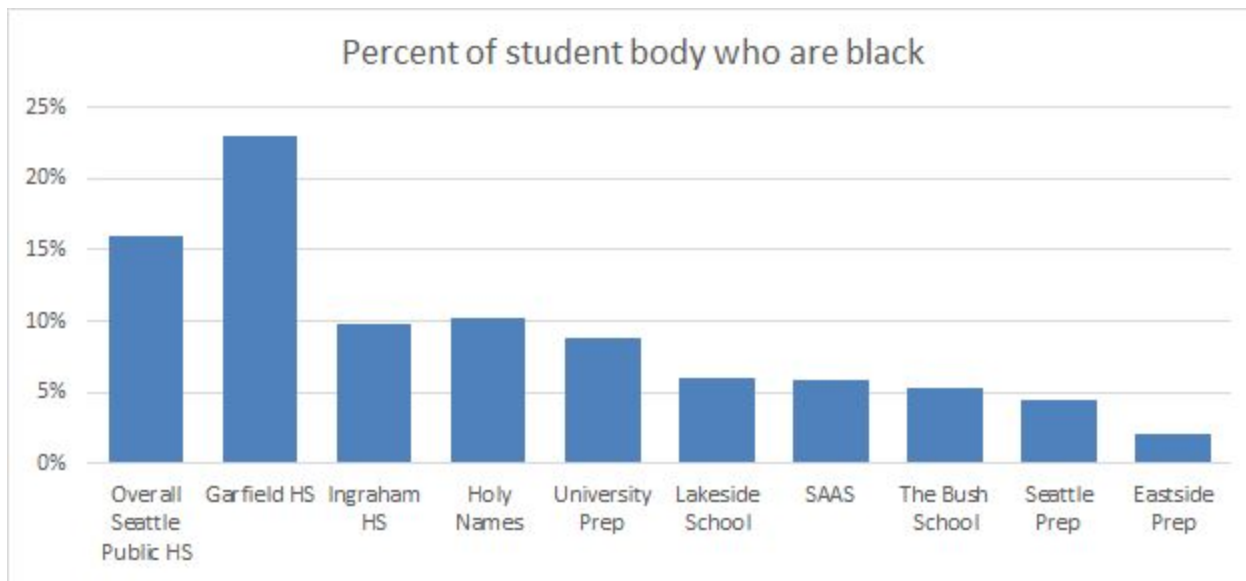
[Show/Hide Explanation](#)

Grade: **PK-5** 6-8 9-12 Gender: **Female** Male Race/Eth: **African Amer.** Asian Hispanic Multiracial Native Amer. Pacific Isl. White

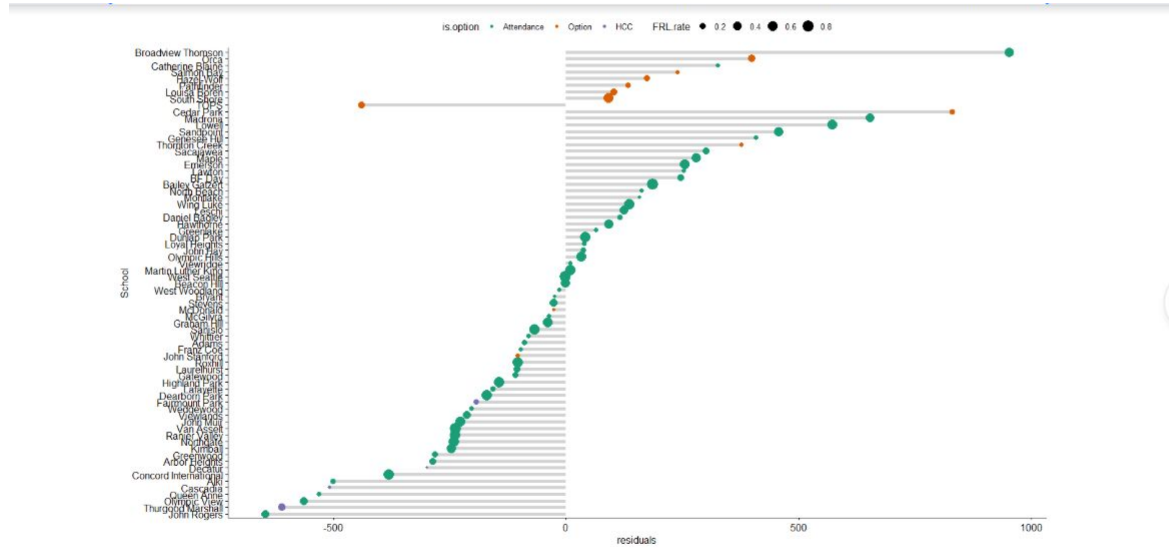
#### June Special Education Enrollment By Race/Ethnicity And Gender (Grade Level: All)

[Contact Central Office](#)

# Private schools aren't the (only) culprit

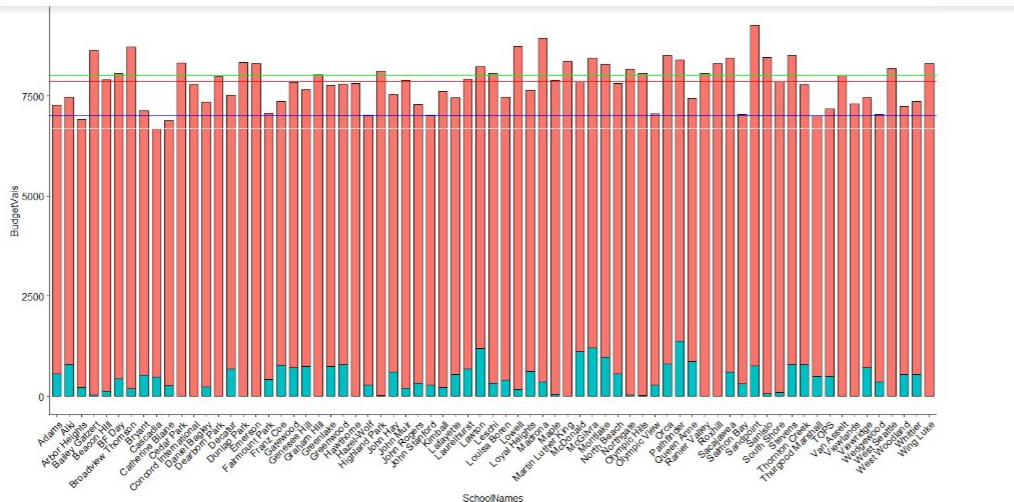


# HCC is not overfunded



*This plot looks at the differences between measurements and a predicted value. First, a plane was fit to the data under the assumption that the budgeted values were a linear combination of FRL rate and enrollment size. Then, the values plotted show how much the actual funding differs from the linear prediction. The idea is to show how much a school is over or under funded based on broad WSS standards. These results are interesting, but need to be examined through the lens of the linear assumption, which we know is incomplete.*

# PTA funding isn't major source of inequity



*This plot shows the stacked values for funding, so the total height is the district gen-ed funding plus the assumed PTA funding. A few lines have been added to help compare schools to the overall picture. (White = Cascadia total, Blue = Thurgood Marshall total, Red = McDonald total, Green = Van Asselt total. McDonald has abnormally high PTA funds due to supporting bilingual aids, and Van Asselt has the highest poverty rate of all the schools.)*