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WSPTA's vision is to make every child's potential a reality. WSPTA recognizes that for those identified, access to highly capable programs is part of their basic education. Demographic data show that school districts are not implementing best practices for equitably identifying highly capable students.

Background

HiCap programs are a vital "whole child" intervention for unique students who would likely not be successful with a conventional approach. HiCap students have challenges in social development, emotional regulation, delayed development of executive function, and are at significant risk of not developing grit or a growth mindset if schoolwork is always "easy" for them. Behavior problems and underachievement are rampant – and start early in elementary school. Talented students are getting lost in the system. Some of our state's most vulnerable children are habitually overlooked for HiCap programs, which makes this inequity that much more painful. This is a social justice issue.

	Washington Total Enrollment	Identified HiCap Students
Black/African American	4%	2%
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	22%	9%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1%	0%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	1%
Two or more races	7%	7%
White	57%	67%
Asian	7%	14%
Free or Reduced Price Meals	45%	21%
Section 504 & Special Education	16%	6%

LESS THAN HALF as many students of color identified

EVEN FEWER for low-income & students w/disabilities

Source: OSPI^{8,9}

Proposed Solutions

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that achieve proportional, equitable, and full representation of all demographic groups in Washington state public school highly capable programs, especially: low-income students, students with learning disabilities, English Language Learners, and students of color.

School Districts must CHANGE outdated practices to remove systemic bias¹⁰

Outdated District Practices		Better Practices
Teacher or parent referral required; complex, online referral forms; minimal parent communication		Universal screening: ALL students in a grade level do a 30-minute non-verbal reasoning activity ^{11,12}
Saturday "cattle call" testing sessions		All screening happens during the school day, in the home school, no parent transport needed
Requiring a minimum report card grade or teacher recommendation		No subjective data preventing students from being considered
Assessments in English only		Provide assessments in Spanish and/or use non-verbal assessments
Students must qualify on EVERY assessment given ("multiple hurdles")		Students can demonstrate need for HiCap services in multiple ways ("multiple pathways")

For More Information

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**For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our website (www.wastatepta.org)*