“Gifted children in poverty and from minority groups are 2.5 times less likely to be identified for, and in, gifted and talented programs in schools.” –National Association for Gifted Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Program</th>
<th>WA Total Enrollment</th>
<th>Highly Capable Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>46.42%</td>
<td>19.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>11.70%</td>
<td>1.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education/Section 504</td>
<td>19.50%</td>
<td>8.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OSPI Report to the Legislature, 2019

Why is under-identification happening in Washington state?
- A parent or teacher must refer a student in order to be considered for highly capable (HiCap) services. **Most students are never considered.**
- Testing is often scheduled on Saturdays or afterschool, at an unfamiliar or distant location. **Discriminates against families without transportation.**

Why fix under-identification?
- Identifying low-income students with high potential **early on closes the opportunity gap.**
- HiCap students disengage, underachieve, or have behavior problems when under-challenged.
- **Students of color are more likely to be referred for special education than highly capable.**
- When school is too easy, students don’t develop study skills, persistence, or a solid work ethic.

How to fix under-identification?
- The #1 research-based practice is to **universally screen every student in a grade level.**
- Can use **existing assessments** (like Smarter Balanced) or administer a screener.
- Non-verbal, cross-culturally equitable screening tools take **as little as 30 minutes**, assess reasoning skills (not math or reading), and serve as a valuable critical thinking exercise for all students.
- **Do not rely on teachers to refer HiCap students.** This is a major cause of under-identification.

Proposed Solutions
The Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that achieve equitable representation of all demographic groups in highly capable programs, regardless of zip code, especially low-income students, students with disabilities ("twice exceptional"), English Language Learners, and highly mobile students by universal screening:
- All students by 2nd grade, and again by 6th grade; and
- At students’ school of attendance, during the regular school day; and
- Using unbiased screening instruments.

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


10. Manoatl (2019). Aurora Public Schools’ pilot program centers equity in GT identification, finds many more gifted black and Hispanic/Latino students who were previously overlooked. https://www.coloradokids.org/aurora-public-schools-pilot-program-centers-equity-in-gt-identification-finds-many-more-gifted-black-and-hispanic-latino-students-who-were-previously-overlooked/

