

Underrepresentation and District-Initiated Nominations of Students Demonstrating High Academic Performance

Each year, Advanced Learning reviews available test scores for students grades 1 through 7 to identify those students whose performance in reading and mathematics is within the range that could potentially qualify them as eligible as students who are academically gifted/highly gifted.

Through collaboration with Research and Development, we secure the names and home addresses of students with DRA, ITBS, and WASL scores that place them in the 87th or above percentile range (the academic achievement threshold score for eligibility as academically gifted).

Advanced Learning sends individually addressed letters to families of students with scores at or above this performance threshold. The letters are supported with written translations. We also work collaboratively with Communications and staff at the Bilingual Family Center to provide phone calls to parents, in their native language, to address any questions families may have concerning the nomination process.

This group of students represents those students in SPS with scores that, if combined with cognitive ability scores at threshold, would be eligible for services through APP and Spectrum programs.

This year's group of district-initiated nominations is as follows:

1. Total number of students identified through this process = 1966

2. Ethnic/Racial breakdown:

Asian	379 students or 20% of the group (District-wide, Asian students make up 23% of our student population))
Black	229 students or 12% of the group (District-wide, Black students make up 22% of our student population)
Latino	120 students or 6% of the group (District-wide, Latino students make up 12% of our student population)
Native American	35 students or 2% of the group (District-wide, Native students make up 2% of our student population)
White	1203 students or 61% of this group (District-wide, White students make up 42% of our student population)

What these data indicate is that even if every student in this pool applied, we would still experience a significant underrepresentation of students who are Black and Latino and a significant

12/28/2005

overrepresentation of students who are White. Although the District is making great gains in closing the achievement gap, these data indicate that at the highest levels of achievement, the gap continues.

Given this, we will most likely not see a significant change in the racial/ethnic make-up of the APP and Spectrum programs this coming year, even with changes/efforts made in recruitment and testing processes.

We do hope, however, our efforts in recruitment and testing will make a difference on an individual student level and that those students who are traditionally underrepresented in programs who do demonstrate the level of achievement needed for eligibility will apply and that our adjustments to the testing process (e.g., inclusion of nonverbal as a component of the cognitive ability testing; providing second testing opportunities for students who qualify for the free/reduced lunch program and/or are bilingual students) will make the process more responsive to them as learners.