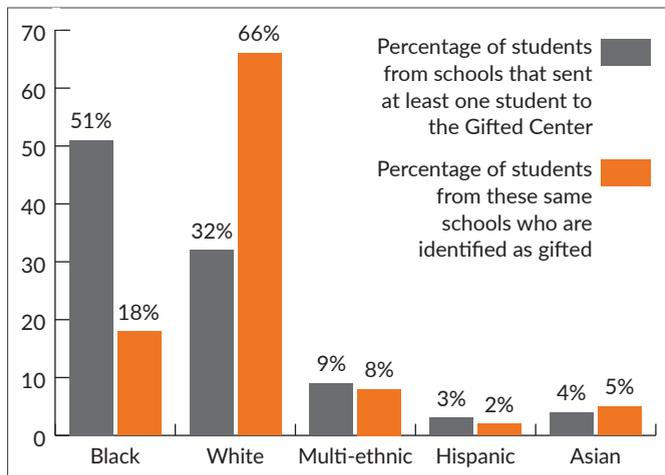


# Gifted education in Pittsburgh: Moving toward equity

Pittsburgh Public Schools' **Gifted and Talented Education program** supports unique educational opportunities for students who are identified as "gifted." The program aims to provide opportunities and experiences to help students extend their learning, develop individual potential, and become life-long, independent learners.

Many students have benefited from Pittsburgh's gifted programs. However, parents who work with A+ Schools and others have raised concerns about inequities in who is screened, identified, and supported to be part of these programs. **The numbers tell the story.** At the Pittsburgh Gifted Center in 2017-18, only 18% of students were black, while black students represented 51% of the schools that sent at least one student to the Center. Though white students made up 32% of these same schools, 66% of the students who attended the Gifted Center were white (see chart).



Gifted Center attendance by group

**We also see disparities in the numbers of students who are evaluated for the program by school.** A district analysis of schools with K-5 grades showed that the ten "bottom" schools identified a total of 33 students to be evaluated in the 2017-18 school year. The top ten schools identified 317 students—close to ten times more. Compared to the number of black students who were identified, almost twice as many were white.

**This fall, we took a step toward greater equity**, when the School Board approved a plan for a pilot program that will screen all second graders using different screening tools at Arlington, Arsenal, Banksville, Brookline, Langley, and Mifflin schools. Results from the pilot should provide critical information about how to eliminate bias in the current process.

A+ Schools staff, alongside parent advocates, will continue working to ensure that:

- The gifted screening process becomes more accessible for all families, specifically for students of color, English Language Learners, and students with exceptionalities;
- The quality of programming students receive in gifted classes meets the highest standard; and
- All students receive enrichment opportunities, regardless of gifted identification.

## For PPS parents/guardians: The basics of gifted education

Students can be gifted in many ways, not just by being high achievers on tests. The Pittsburgh district is moving toward better methods for identifying giftedness in students—for example, by using some tests that allow students to demonstrate reasoning skills regardless of how well they speak and write standard English.

As a parent/guardian, you can request that your child be evaluated for the gifted program as early as kindergarten. The evaluation may include a collection of your child's work (school work and/or creative work), a teacher's recommendation, one-on-one testing, grades and scores from other tests your child has taken, and information from you. You will be asked to sign a form giving permission for your child to be evaluated. The district is required to keep you involved and informed throughout the process.

**For more information, go to [www.pghschools.org/domain/1306](http://www.pghschools.org/domain/1306) or call the district's Gifted and Talented Office at 412-529-3021.**

**To get involved with our campaign to make gifted education more equitable, contact Amie Matson at [amatson@aplusschools.org](mailto:amatson@aplusschools.org) or 412-697-1298.**