



Peeling the Onion: Equity in Highly Capable (HiCap)

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Agenda

- ▶ Why HiCap matters
- ▶ Current equity situation
- ▶ Identification
 - ▶ Outdated practices
 - ▶ What would be better
- ▶ Access to services
 - ▶ Outdated practices
 - ▶ What would be better
- ▶ Funding
- ▶ Root cause

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HiCap = Special Needs Students

- ▶ Kids don't develop grit, perseverance, or growth mindset if school is always "easy" (Duckworth, 2013)
- ▶ Delayed development of executive function
 - ▶ Brain maturation 4 year delay when IQ > 121 (Shaw, 2006)
- ▶ Emotional, sensory "super-sensitivities" in the brain
 - ▶ fMRI: "Brains on fire" (Eide, 2007); (Karpinski, 2017)
- ▶ Social development is on a different timeline and stalls without access to peers on a similar timeline (Gross, 2002)
- ▶ "Dumbing down" is common in girls
 - ▶ As early as Kindergarten, or middle school

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These challenges are magnified when the HiCap student is also:

low income
a person with a disability
an English language learner (ELL)
a student of Color
experiencing homelessness
migrant or foster family

Behavior problems, disengagement, underachievement, dropout, depression, suicide, school shooters, prison pipeline...

This is a social justice issue.

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The Equity Problem



SEE ME!

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. CHILDREN DESERVE FAIR IDENTIFICATION STRATEGIES.

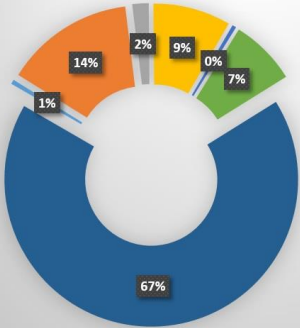


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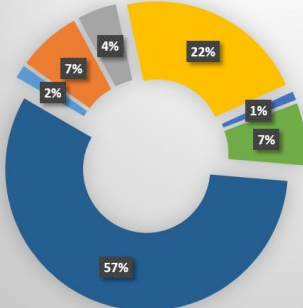
The Equity Problem – WA State

HiCap Student Pop.



Race	Percentage
White	67%
Asian	14%
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	9%
Two or More Races	7%
Black/African American	2%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%

District Student Pop.



Race	Percentage
White	57%
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	22%
Asian	7%
Two or More Races	7%
Black/African American	4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1%

OSPI data: <http://www.k12.wa.us/HighlyCapable/HiCapPLUS/DemographicsPieChart.xlsx>

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The Equity Problem – WA State

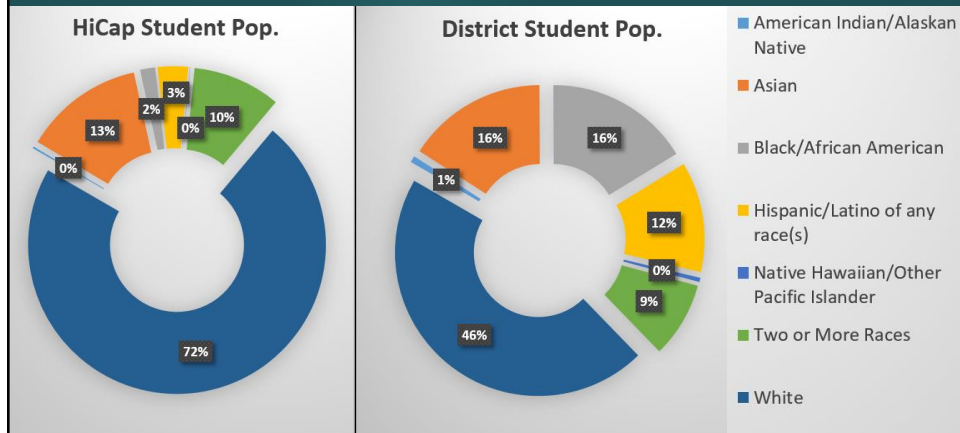
	% of Statewide Enrollment	% of HiCap Enrollment
Free or Reduced Price Meals	45.0%	21.2%
Section 504	2.7%	3.7%
Special Education	13.4%	2.4%

OSPI data: <http://www.k12.wa.us/HighlyCapable/HiCapPLUS/2014-15StudentReport.xlsx>

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The Equity Problem - Seattle

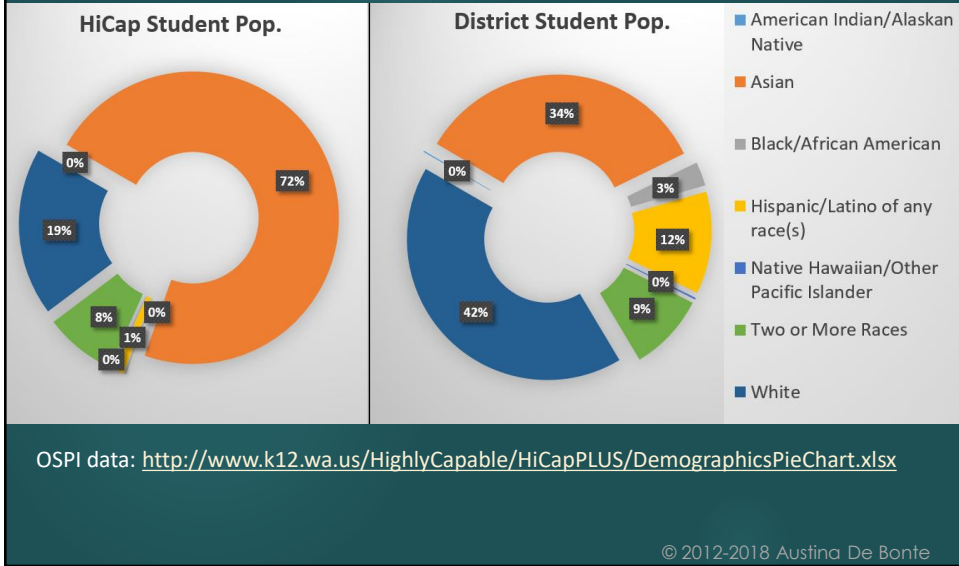


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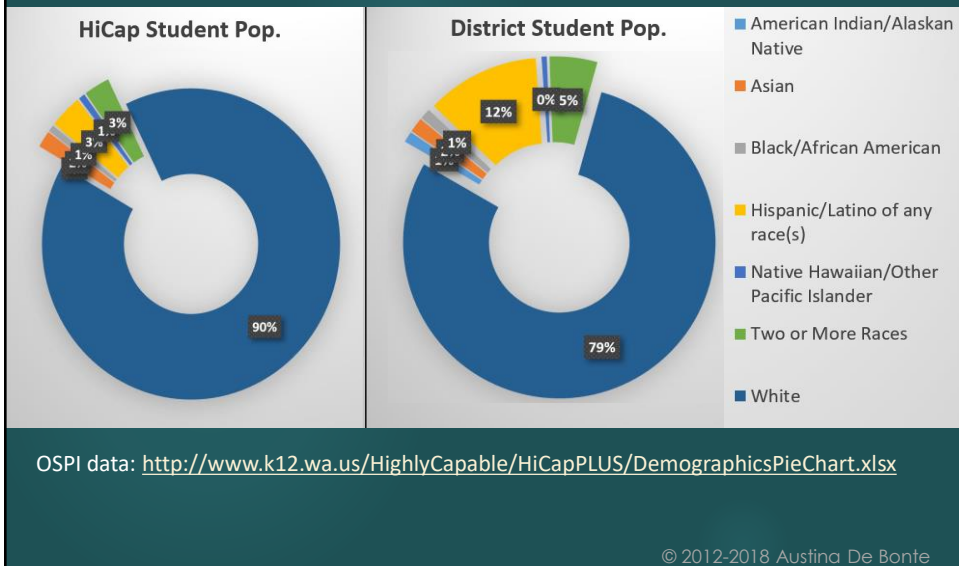
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Across the lake: Bellevue

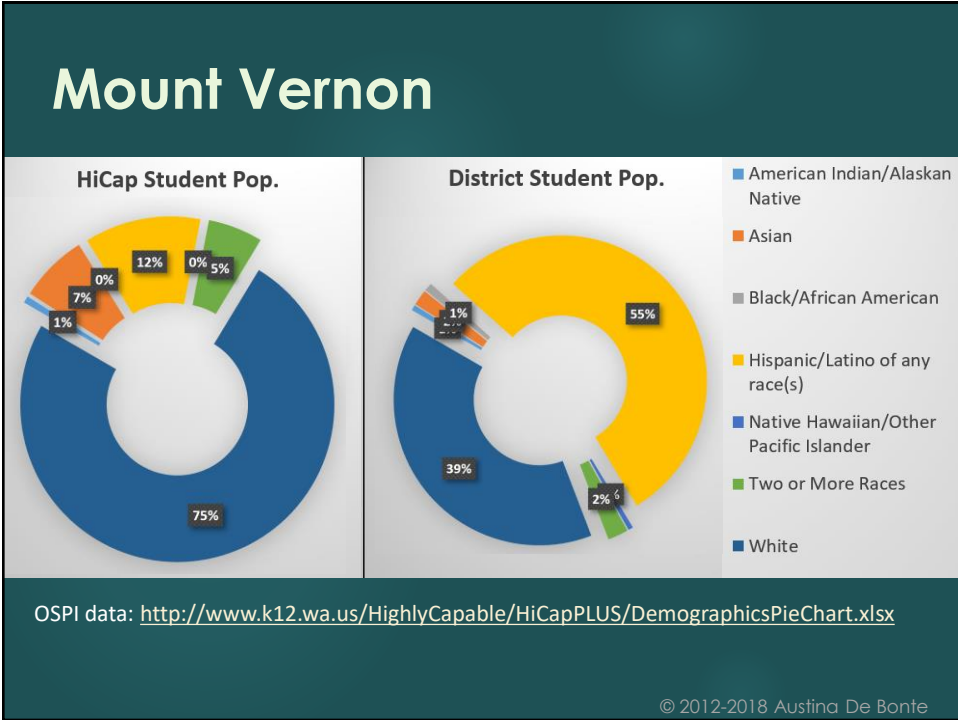


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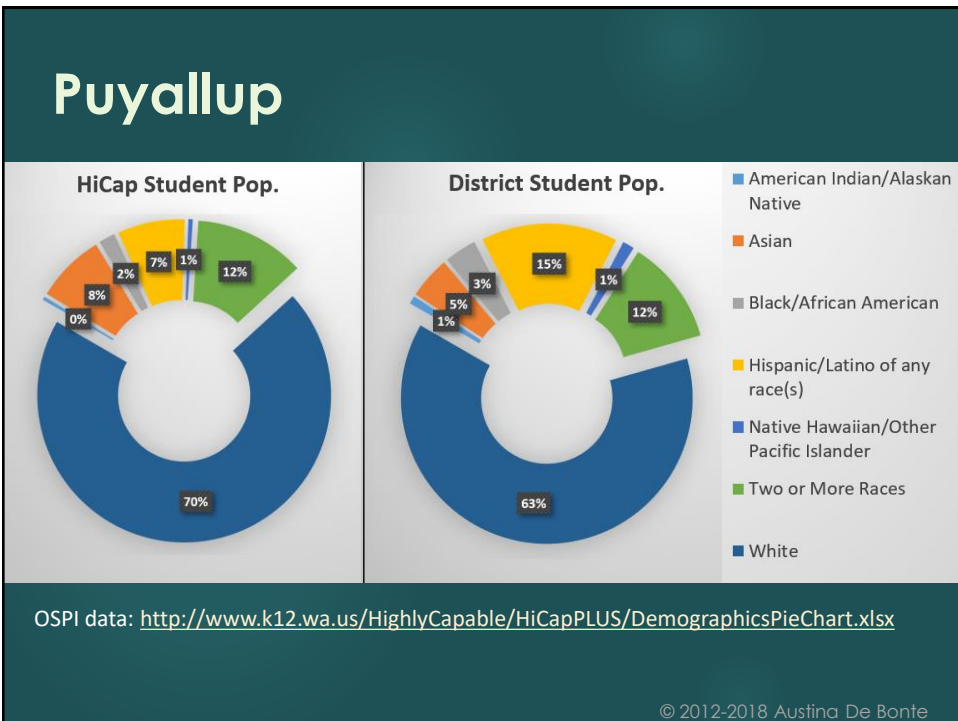
Arlington



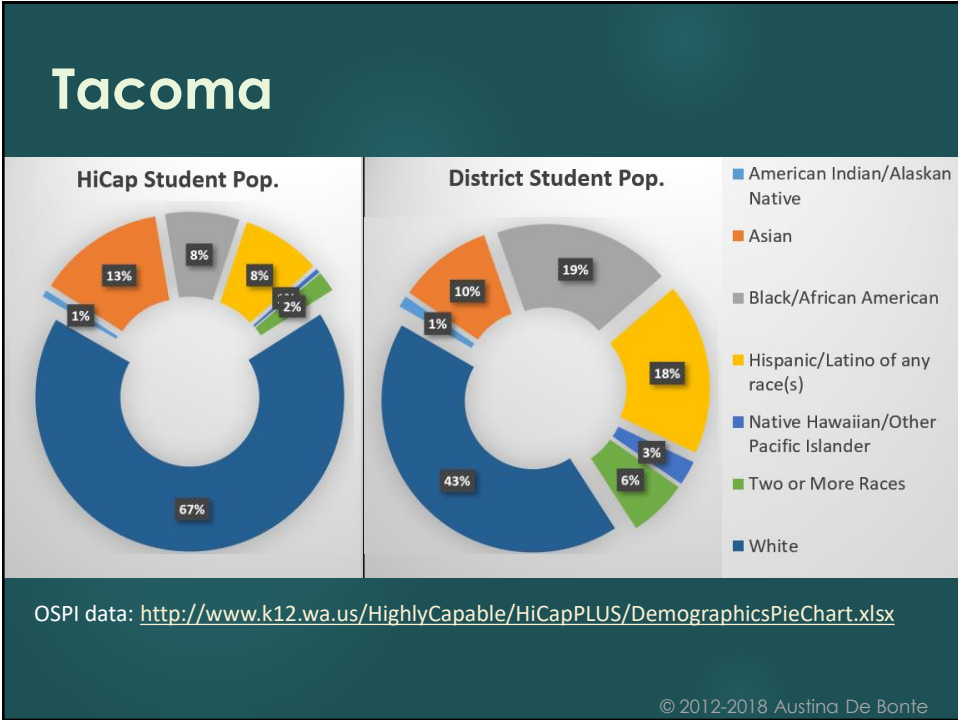
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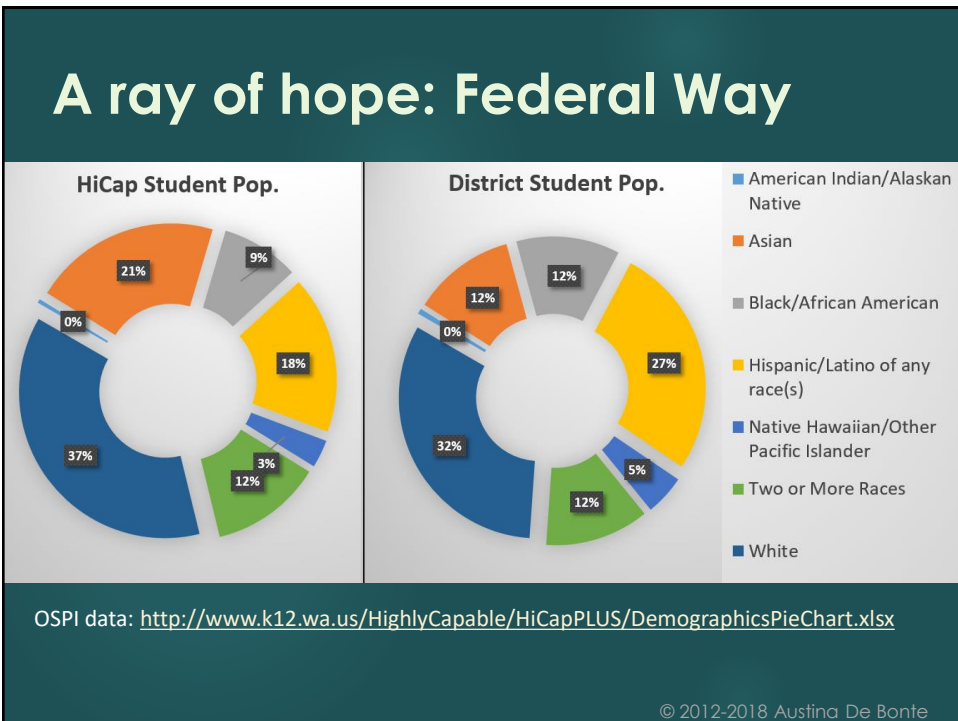
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What is Federal Way Doing Differently?

- ▶ Universal screening in 2nd grade in ALL schools
- ▶ District data-sweep (and call downs)
- ▶ Many years of investment in more rigorous curriculum – starting in elementary
 - ▶ And learning from some false starts... Just putting kids in AP classes in high school isn't enough

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Law Updates – 2017 & 2018

“prioritize equitable identification of low-income students”

- ▶ “Using multiple objective criteria to identify highly capable students” means that **multiple pathways** for qualification are available, and that **no single criteria shall eliminate a student from identification.**
- ▶ Highly capable selection decisions are based on consideration of criteria benchmarked on **local norms**, where local norms shall not be used as a more restrictive criteria than national norms at the same percentile;
- ▶ Subjective measures such as **teacher recommendations or report card grades** shall not be used to screen out a student from assessment. These data points may be used alongside other objective criteria during selection to support identification, but **may never be used to disqualify a student from being identified;**
- ▶ To the extent practicable, **screening and assessments shall be given in the native language of the student**, or non-verbal assessments are used.

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Dr. Donna Ford
Vanderbilt University

“We cannot close the achievement gap or address the over-representation in special education of our subgroups -

until we address their under-representation in highly capable programs.”

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Equity: A complex problem with many layers...



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1st Layer: Outdated, biased identification practices



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Identification Practices

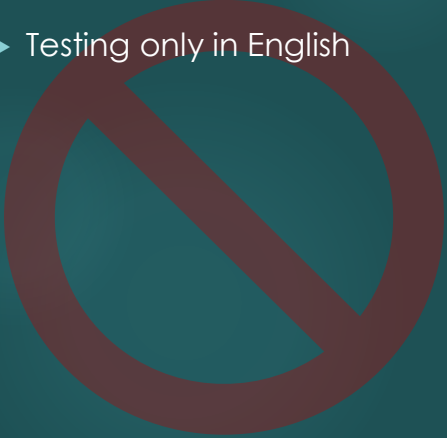
Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Relying on parents, community members and/or teachers to refer students for testing ▶ Using the words “Nominate” or “Application” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Universal screening ALL students in a grade level ▶ District “data sweep” ▶ Referrals are the backup plan ▶ Example: Federal Way, Northshore ▶ Use value-neutral language: “Refer” “Referral” “Placement”

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Identification Practices

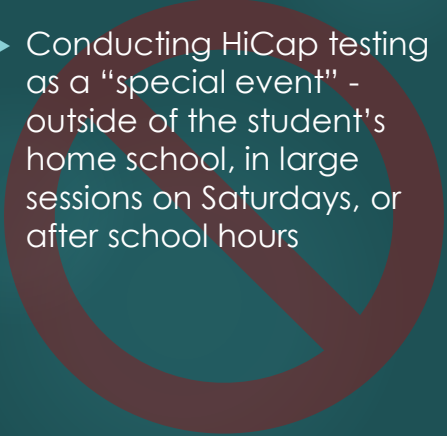
Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Testing only in English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Administer screener & tests in student's native language ▶ Consider fast rate of language acquisition as a valid HiCap identifier for ELL students (ELPA)

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Identification Practices

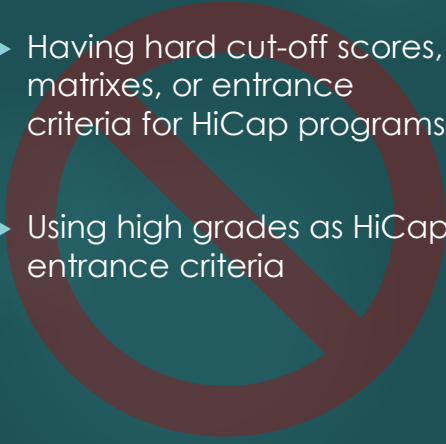
Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Conducting HiCap testing as a "special event" - outside of the student's home school, in large sessions on Saturdays, or after school hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Conduct HiCap screening and testing during the school day, in their classroom or in their home school.

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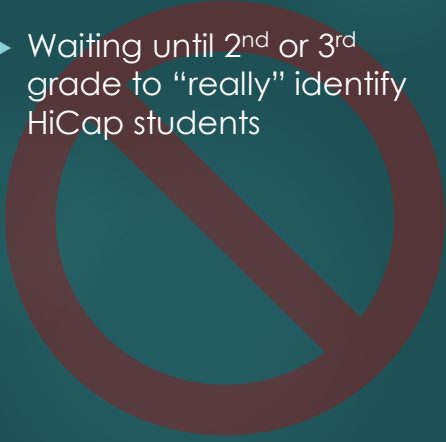
Identification Practices

Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Having hard cut-off scores, matrixes, or entrance criteria for HiCap programs ▶ Using high grades as HiCap entrance criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use a portfolio-based approach, 2-3 years of diverse types of data points ▶ Use professional judgment ▶ “OR” not “AND” criteria ▶ Multiple pathways for qualification ▶ Both age-normed and grade-normed scores ▶ Consider known biases in the tests being used

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Identification Practices

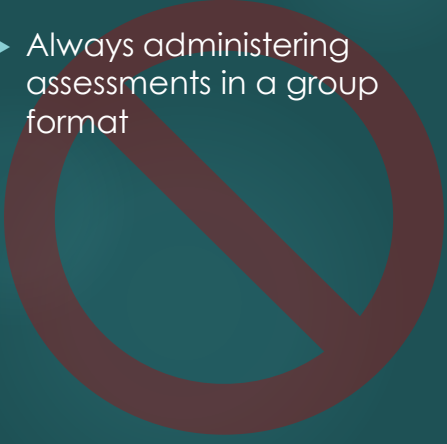
Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Waiting until 2nd or 3rd grade to “really” identify HiCap students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Prioritize identifying in early elementary grades to minimize further widening of the opportunity gap. ▶ Favor ability testing over achievement testing in young students ▶ Use performance-based assessments as a data point

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Identification Practices


Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Always administering assessments in a group format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Administer one-on-one whenever there is reason to believe a student might need it <p>(NOT just for IEPs/504s)</p>

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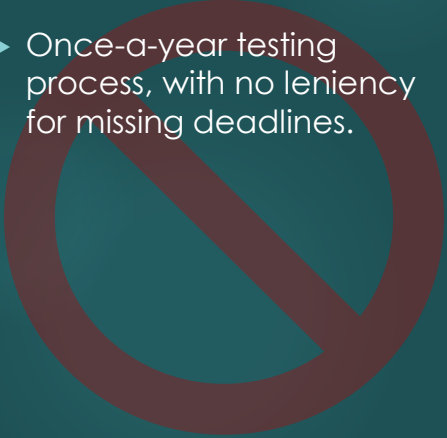
Identification Practices

Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Relying on appeals to catch mistakes in the identification process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Proactively gather more data when a student is "on the line." Do not rely on parents to appeal. ▶ Gather enough data to be confident when you decide "YES" or "NO"


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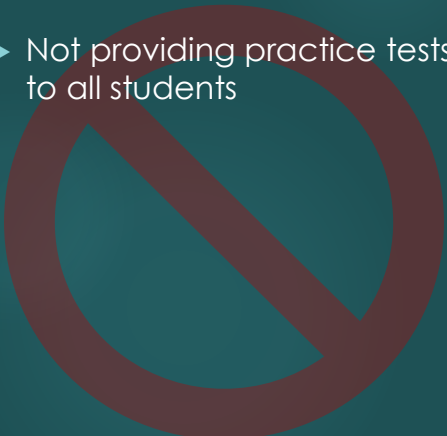
Identification Practices

Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Once-a-year testing process, with no leniency for missing deadlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Allow students to be referred at any time of year, and have a process for rolling admissions. ▶ Vital for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Migrant families ▶ Students experiencing homelessness


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Identification Practices

Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Not providing practice tests to all students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Have ALL students do a guided practice test before being screened or assessed. <p>(CogAT provides an extensive script for this)</p>


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Identification Practices

Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ “Public notice” style of communication about the Highly Capable program ▶ Minimal details, formal language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide community-specific communication to respect both language and cultural norms. ▶ Advertise the program(s) proactively. ▶ Help families understand the benefits of HiCap program(s) so that they actually accept HiCap placement.


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Identification Practices

Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Multi-disciplinary selection committees that do not reflect the district population, and do not have HiCap subject matter expertise ▶ Screening out Twice Exceptional (2e) kids from HiCap consideration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Members of the committee should represent the district population in gender, race, and ethnicity. ▶ All members of the committee must have sufficient expertise about HiCap and Twice Exceptional (2e) students, and be up-to-date on the best practices for identification.

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Identification Practices

Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Qualifying HiCap students based on available space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Create HiCap program space for every qualified student.

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We shouldn't be that surprised...

Our identification processes favor families who can navigate a complex system.

That is exactly who we see reflected in our HiCap programs.

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2nd Layer: Even if identification was perfect, equity of access...

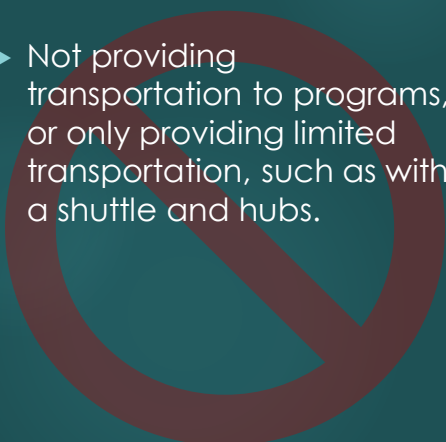


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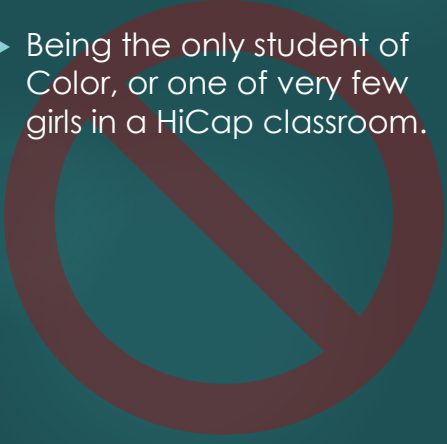
Access to Services

Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
<div style="position: relative; height: 100px;">  <p>▶ Not providing transportation to programs, or only providing limited transportation, such as with a shuttle and hubs.</p> </div>	<p>▶ Provide full transportation to all students.</p>


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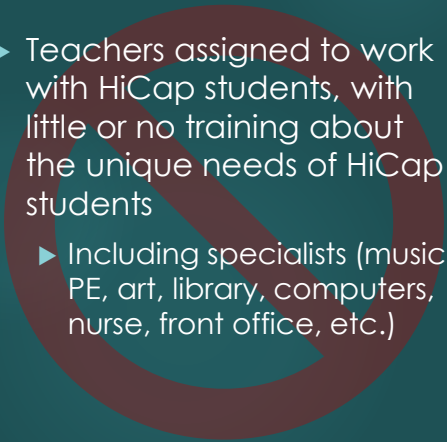
Access to Services

Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Being the only student of Color, or one of very few girls in a HiCap classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Schedule a big campaign for outreach and identification in an ethnic/racial/gender group all at once. Place cluster groups together. ▶ Only by identifying and placing minority cohorts together can we satisfy students' dual needs for community and acceptance.


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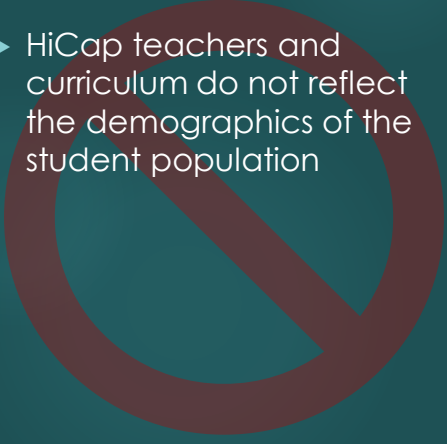
Access to Services

Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Teachers assigned to work with HiCap students, with little or no training about the unique needs of HiCap students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Including specialists (music, PE, art, library, computers, nurse, front office, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide baseline HiCap professional development for all building staff. ▶ Provide detailed HiCap professional development for all classroom HiCap teachers.


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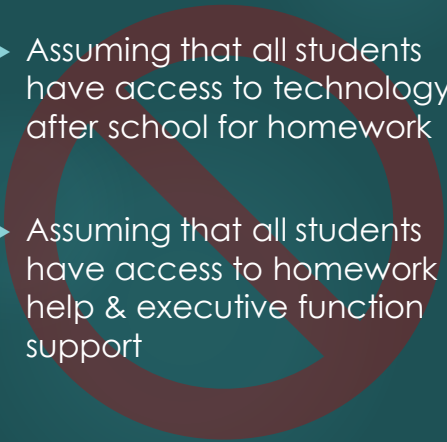
Access to Services

Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ HiCap teachers and curriculum do not reflect the demographics of the student population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recruiting & retaining HiCap teachers that reflect the demographics of the students. ▶ Use curriculum that reflects the demographics of the students. ▶ All teachers, including HiCap teachers, must be trained in cultural competency.

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Access to Services

Outdated Practices	What Would Be Better...
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Assuming that all students have access to technology after school for homework ▶ Assuming that all students have access to homework help & executive function support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide technology to low-income students, or ensure that teachers do not expect access to technology for homework. ▶ Teachers must be extra supportive of executive function for HiCap students, all the way through middle school.

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3rd Layer: Districts need Funding to Implement Equitable Practices



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State HiCap Funding

In 2016:

- ▶ State funded ~25,000 HiCap students
 - ▶ But **63,551** HiCap students were served
- ▶ HiCap was an unfunded (or severely underfunded) mandate
 - ▶ Not unlike Special Education
- ▶ Districts had been in a tight spot

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State HiCap Funding

- ▶ HiCap funding is primarily used for:
 - ▶ Identification
 - ▶ Professional Development
 - ▶ NOT: Staff, Transportation, Curriculum (usually)
- ▶ Equitable practices cost more
- ▶ **UNDER-FUNDING HiCap was DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR EQUITY PROBLEM**

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State HiCap Funding

- ▶ McCleary helped a lot:
 - ▶ Doubled state funding for HiCap to districts
 - ▶ Funding formula based on 5% instead of 2.314%
 - ▶ Districts charged to “prioritize equitable identification of low-income students”
- ▶ **Use the new funding for EQUITY**

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4th Layer: Why should we spend money serving HiCap kids?



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Why do we serve HiCap kids anyway?

- ▶ Too hard of a problem to solve?
 - ▶ Yes, it is a hard problem
 - ▶ But, it's the law
 - ▶ Districts must identify and serve K-12 HiCap students by law
- ▶ HiCap is an essential intervention for a special needs population

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“Equity” does not mean giving the same education to every kid

- ▶ Different kids are in different places
- ▶ Every kid should learn something new at school every day
 - ▶ Vygostky's Zone of Proximal Development
 - ▶ Not too easy, not too hard
- ▶ Not **MORE** work, **DIFFERENT** work
 - ▶ Not just more classwork on top of the “regular” stuff
 - ▶ Make sure the kid doesn't feel punished for being smart by giving them more work
 - ▶ Piles of homework is NOT the goal
 - ▶ Not a pressure cooker, just the right level to build grit

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Bottom line...

**Mismatch with
the environment**


Smart is NOT Easy

Emotionally – Socially – Academically

Grit – Executive Function

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Why do we serve HiCap kids?

- ▶ They are a special needs population
- ▶ Without intervention, they are at risk
- ▶ Nurturing the **WHOLE CHILD**
- ▶ **GOAL:** Functioning citizens in our community
- ▶ **NOT:**
 - ▶ To create eminent leaders (Einstein, Steve Jobs, ...)
 - ▶ To send more kids to Harvard, Stanford, MIT...
 - ▶ To nurture child prodigies
 - ▶ To increase our international math ranking
 - ▶ To improve the US economy

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HiCap is not a prize, it's a **WHOLE CHILD** intervention

We have a moral duty to identify **EVERY** HiCap student

Our most vulnerable populations need it the most

This is a social justice issue

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“When provisions are denied to the gifted on the basis that they are “elitist,” it is the poor who suffer the most.

The rich have other options.”

– Dr. Linda Silverman

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