

Transcript: FCPS School Board Work Session TJ Admissions 10-6-20

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FgTgmNYUw88>

Dr. Brabrand 1:03:48

Thanks, Abrar. Let me try a couple and then let Mr. Smith or Mr. Shughart respond as well. Well on the timeline, I do have to submit a letter to the Secretary of Education by October 12, around our plan.

Now, it is true that I can share what we are already agreeing on if there's agreement, for example, that we're not going to do the Quant Q test this year, that we're not going to have an application fee, and say that we're developing or finishing the lottery, the hybrid lottery, or something else, and that that will be done by (inaudible) so we have an initial response on the 12th of what our plans are, but our plans could be a multi-step process.

So I will propose that we take a quick poll, if we are in favor of removing the assessment that has been articulated to be a barrier, both in this presentation and the previous.

I would like for hands to be raised to that.

Karen Keys-Gamarra 2:40:29

Madam Chair, may I just ask for clarification?

Ricardy Anderson 2:40:32

Yes, ma'am.

Karen Keys-Gamarra 2:40:34

You're calling it an assessment and I believe you're talking about the test. And I think that that's how the community hears it. So I just want to clarify that that's what we're talking about.

Ricardy Anderson 2:40:44

This is what we're talking about, the test. The test that we've been talking about, that has been the barrier for many of our students. So in terms of trying to give some feedback to the superintendent.. Yes, ma'am.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 2:40:56

I apologize. Just to clarify, Miss Keys-Gamarra. You're talking about the currently used test, the Quant Q test, correct? I just want to make sure we're clear on exactly what test we are talking about.

Ricardy Anderson 2:41:06

That is exactly right. I believe this will be helpful for the superintendent as he prepares his statement to the state that is due October the 12th. So this is the removal of the Quant Q test. I'm sorry, whoever it is, go ahead.

TRANSCRIPT

Ricardy Anderson 0:00

Okay, we're just at 7:25 and we're hoping to be consumed before we start our work session. I will now like to have a roll call to ensure that all of our school board members are with us. Miss McLaughlin?

Ricardy Anderson 0:17

Miss Meren?

Ricardy Anderson 0:22

Miss Sizemore Heizer?

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 0:25

I'm here.

Ricardy Anderson 0:27

Thank you. Miss Tholen?

Elaine Tholen 0:32

I'm here. Thank you.

Ricardy Anderson 0:34

Miss Derenak Kaufax?

Ricardy Anderson 0:39

Miss Corbett Sanders.

Karen Corbett Sanders 0:41

Glad to be here.

Ricardy Anderson 0:43

Miss Keys-Gamarra

Ricardy Anderson 0:49

Miss Pekarsky

Stella Pekarsky 0:51

I am here

Ricardy Anderson 0:53

Miss Omeish

Ricardy Anderson 0:59

Miss Cohen

Ricardy Anderson 1:05

Mr. Frisch

Karl Frisch 1:08

I'm here.

Ricardy Anderson 1:09

Thank you. Miss McLaughlin.

Megan McLaughlin 1:13

Already said yes.

Ricardy Anderson 1:15

Oh, thank you. I missed you the first time around. I apologize. Miss Meren.

Ricardy Anderson 1:23

Miss Derenak Kaufax?

Ricardy Anderson 1:29

Miss Keys-Gamarra.

Ricardy Anderson 1:35

Miss Omeish

Ricardy Anderson 1:40

Miss Cohen

Laura Jane Cohen 1:43

Here.

Ricardy Anderson 1:44

Okay, we're missing three folks but it is time and we do have forums so we are going to go ahead and get started. The motion to convene closed. I'm sorry, to certify closed. Certification.. In order to comply with section 2.2-3712D of the Code of Virginia, it is necessary for the board to certify that the Fairfax County School Board convened a closed meeting on October 6 2020. To the best of each members knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from Open Meeting requirements and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting or heard discussed or considered by the board during the

closed meeting. We have someone to move the motion. Thank you Miss Omeish, seconded by Miss Cohen. All in favor. We have Miss Omeish, Miss Cohen, Miss Corbett Sanders, Miss Sizemore Heizer, Miss Meren, Miss Tholen, Miss Keys-Gamarra, Miss McLaughlin, Mr. Frisch. Let me write it down here. Miss Pekarsky and myself. Thank you. Are there any nos?

Ricardy Anderson 3:10

Please lower your hands if you voted.

Ricardy Anderson 3:16

Miss McLaughlin, I believe you already voted.

Ricardy Anderson 3:20

Thank you. Anybody abstaining?

Ricardy Anderson 3:26

Thank you. At this point, we will begin with our work session. Miss Pekarsky and I will be serving as meeting managers. We'll be toggling back and forth a little bit with this. But we will start with Dr. Brabrand because we are very mindful of our time. We do apologize for anybody, for everyone, who were waiting for us as we came out of our closed session. Dr. Brabrand, please go ahead.

Dr. Brabrand 3:57

Chairman Anderson and members of the Fairfax County School Board, to our Fairfax County Schools community, thank you for giving me the opportunity to be here tonight and talk about our merit lottery proposal and some of the additional revisions that we have for you. I'm joined by our Chief Operating Officer Marty Smith and our Director of TJ Admissions, Jeremy Shughart, and they will be working with me this evening for the presentation. If we could have the folks put up the presentation, we'll get started.

Marty Smith 4:39

And Dr. Braband, Dr. Bonitatibus is with us as well.

Dr. Brabrand 4:42

Oh, thank you so much, Mr. Smith. I had forgotten to include Dr. Bonitatibus, who is the principal at TJ. Thank you for joining us for the presentation. If we can go to the next slide, I want to go over the agenda very briefly we're going to talk tonight. We can go to the next slide, the background, the original merit lottery proposal that I shared just a bit ago, the revised merit lottery proposal that I have for you tonight, and I have both of them on the table for your review. I also want to talk a little bit about the student outreach plan and our Caring Culture supports.

If we look at background, I just want to remind folks in our community and our board, the mission of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology is to provide students with a challenging learning environment focused on Math, Science and Technology to inspire joy

at the prospect of discovery and to foster a culture of innovation based on ethical behavior, and the shared interest of humanity. This is a broad based background and that reflects the really the original mission from TJ in 1985, which was around designing an exemplary and unique high school program with superior preparation for access to collegia mission and other post secondary educational opportunities, and to really enhance opportunities for students to get advanced skills in sciences and high technology specialties.

Dr. Brabrand 6:13

In 1985, that was the vision. And it's been a vision to bring joy to challenge students, but if we go to the next slide, we can see that over the last several years, really over a decade, we're seeing continued flat applicants for our African American and Hispanic students and we're seeing even declining applicants among our white students. Offers continue to go in disparate (inaudible) and the gaps continue to grow over time from the applicant pool to the offer pool.

Dr. Brabrand 6:57

Looking at that history, looking at the fact that we made multiple attempts through different superintendents and school boards to make a change, I brought an original merit lottery proposal to you back on September 15th. And (inaudible) to remind everyone this evening and the community that this is a merit-based lottery proposal. You know, the reality is we are looking and we looked in the merit lottery proposal at upping the GPA from 3.0 to 3.5, and continuing to have a set of assessments to make sure that our kids would be of merit and have the merit necessary to be successful at TJ. Then after determining that they were meritorious, we would initiate a lottery. I want to remind folks too, that we've had lotteries in Fairfax County Public Schools for decades. We have a lottery for our elementary students to do foreign language immersion, which is another specialty program that gives kids a unique and spectacular experience. It's been good for our elementary kids, and a lottery can be good for our high school kids as well. I want to remind folks that this original merit lottery was part of ideas from FCPS employees, including our TJ admissions, our region's instructional services, including our advanced academics office or middle school principals and the principle of TJ.

Looking at this, reviewing this proposal, as we reviewed lottery systems and other magnet schools, and we mentioned those in reference those earlier before and the reference in the next steps. I want to share with you again the elements of the original merit lottery proposal. A merit lottery proposal had the application requirements of the 3.5 GPA and an Algebra, also the filling out of the student portrait sheet to include a questionnaire and a problem solving demonstration. And then, when we determined those kids have merit, we would apply a merit lottery on all applicants with 500 total seats, 70% for FCPS, and 30% for the other regions. The goal of the merit lottery is to bring the diversity of TJ closer to FCPS diversity. And the goal of the merit lottery is to encourage underrepresented students who may be believed before they never had a shot at TJ that now they could and should apply, and they'll have an equal opportunity along with other students of merit to become a part of the TJ family.

This process that we shared keeps rigor in the application, while eliminating the testing component that squeezed out talent and squeezed out diversity in our system. There are other

ways beyond the test to be sure that we can support making sure students can be successful at TJ.

The benefit of this lottery too, is that students and parents would no longer have to spend their time or money on test preparation.

We also eliminated the teacher recommendation, responding to the AAP study, noted that the teacher recommendations can exacerbate disproportionality. I want to just remind folks here as we do this process that we hire for the problem solving survey part, experienced test writers and content experts to develop our questions and that essay response and we have a rubric model that's designed so that our evaluators can properly assess that work. And during the training that we've done for years, our evaluators have and will continue to get deep training on how to make sure that there is good inter-rater reliability.

The advantages, again to the merit lottery, statistically should provide the greater increase in admittance for underrepresented groups among the two proposals, the one again, we'll show it to you in a moment. It also provides the greatest geographic diversity for FCPS students. Some concerns, some have shared this statistically may prevent some top performers from gaining entry into TJ, that the region representations not proportional to student enrollment, and introduces the most change to the process among the two proposals, again, often is part of your perspective taking whether the advantage or the concern as we have shared is that for you. I'm going to let Jeremy spend just a moment explaining the proportional representation piece that we recommended in the original lottery. Jeremy?

Jeremy Shughart 12:13

Yeah, if you can go to the next slide, please.

Jeremy Shughart 12:18

So one of the adjustments that we made in terms of proportional representation for Fairfax County, in the original proposal, the regions and the regional pathways were set at 70 students per region. When we went back and reevaluated this, we evaluated this based upon student enrollment in the schools that were in those regions. So this accounted for the increase or the larger size of some schools, it accounted for six schools in Region two, as opposed to five schools in the other regions. And so what we did was we went through and we looked at proportionality within those regions, and applied that to the 350 students that were in Fairfax County. And so you can see that there's an updated number for each of the regions listed here for Fairfax. This did not change the proportionality for our participating jurisdictions of Loudon, Arlington, Falls Church, and Prince William. And that was based upon a 70%/30% model, where 70% of the students would be coming from Fairfax County and 30% of the students would be coming from, per se, participating jurisdictions. And that also for the participating jurisdictions is based upon the student enrollment, and there's divisions, and that is how their seats were allocated to their proportion of the overall number of students being admitted to TJ.

Jeremy Shughart 13:52

If you can go to the next slide.

Jeremy Shugart 13:55

Mr Smith, I believe you have something to say. Yeah, go ahead. Sorry.

Marty Smith 13:58

Thanks Mr Shugart and good evening, Madam Chair and good evening to the board. I want to talk a little bit about the holistic review. And so the first few builds refer to the original proposal. The last bullet will be a precursor of what we'll be talking about with the revised proposal. To be accepted in the lottery, students would need to meet the minimum requirements and then be randomly selected within their pathway. And again, that pathway is based on the current demographic or the current makeup of TJ based on Fairfax County and our sending jurisdictions of 70/30 breakdown. The second bullet talks about the student portrait sheet. It was referred to as the student information sheet in the past, where we would be looking at different areas that students would be able to show strengths as it relates to Portrait of a Graduate and 21st Century Skills. So providing students an opportunity to weigh in on their ability, as collaborators, communicators, to show innovative thinking, to show leadership, to show problem solving, which then goes into that third goal of the problem solving essay, which is a Math or Science based problem with multiple variables. The response would be an essay format, but it would also provide the student an opportunity to not only provide the right answer, but show us how they got to that right answer and really talk that through. A new piece that will take us into the new process that we'll be talking about this evening, is this consideration of Experience Factors. And so while this wasn't part of the process that we proposed the other evening, we would be considering experience factors of students with regard to their special education status, their role as an English language learner, whether or not they were economically disadvantaged, or whether or not they attended an under-represented FCPS school. And we identify those underrepresented schools at TJ, of those where three or fewer students were offered admissions over the last three years.

Marty Smith 16:16

Next slide. So now let's talk a little bit about the newly revised merit lottery proposal.

Marty Smith 16:24

So the application process would remain unchanged from the original proposal that Dr. Brabrand mentioned earlier this evening. The revisions would be that the highest evaluated students in the process would be offered an opportunity to fill 20% of those available seats based on holistic review of their application. And those remaining 400 seats would be filled by the merit lottery. Our FCPS regions slots would be proportional to student enrollment, and we would keep the rolling admissions to keep the class of 500. Next slide.

Marty Smith 17:02

So to provide a little more detail to be accepted, again into that Revised Merit Lottery, students would need to meet those minimum requirements. And we would look holistically at the student portrait sheet, they're answering the problem solving essay, and consider those experience

factors. Then those highest evaluated students would be offered admissions. And the remaining students can be selected randomly within their pathway, which would include the region pathway, as well as the sending jurisdiction pathway. I'm going to let Mr. Shughart talk a little bit about the caps that we have for sending jurisdictions and also talk a little bit about how this is different from our current process.

Jeremy Shughart 17:46

So the caps for the sending jurisdictions remained unchanged from the previous proposal. That had to do with, it's based around what's the current enrollment at TJ, and trying to keep it consistent with current enrollment from within Fairfax County as well as our participating jurisdictions as a whole. And modeling and using that as kind of the baseline is where we settled with the 70/30 split in terms of percentages. With this new approach in terms of the revised merit lottery approach, and looking at the top 100 students receiving an offer to go to TJ, one of the things that does is adjust the numbers of students that are coming from or potentially coming from each of the regional pathways within Fairfax County. What that means is, if we assume based upon the previous numbers that were presented, and just a handful of slides ago, of the overall regional pathway approach with the slight adjustments from the 70 to the other numbers, if all 100 students were to come from Fairfax County, how would that end up looking for Fairfax. So that's where the regional approach here with these numbers has much lower numbers exist. And it would actually be the four if all 100 students came from within Fairfax. Now, that's unlikely but we did want to at least allow for and show how that would be impacted. So the 100 students would come from within and then the regional approaches would be still proportionate to the remaining seats that are available. For our sending jurisdictions, those 100 students would actually come out of their overall total number within their pathway. And so the remaining seats that would be available for that particular jurisdiction would be what would be filled within the lottery portion or the random selection portion. So that way, overall, Fairfax County is still not exceeding the 350 maximum number of seats available, and the participating jurisdictions combined are not exceeding the 150 students available. Next slide.

Marty Smith 20:17

Thanks, Jeremy. Again, the advantages some see to this plan is, statistically, it should provide some increase in admittance for under-represented groups. It allows those who score highest through the holistic process entry into TJ and regional representation is proportional to student enrollment. Some of the concerns of this proposal would be a two-tiered admissions process having unintended impacts on the carrying culture we're striving to create at TJ. It may continue to admit more students from a few of the top performing middle schools that are already over-represented at TJ, and concerns that this is only a moderate change to the process as we're seeking a more diverse Thomas Jefferson.

Marty Smith 21:14

Now we want to talk about some next responses that came from the previous meeting. And Jeremy, I believe you have the next slide.

Jeremy Shughart 21:29

Okay, so one of the questions that came up was about our targeted outreach. And this is really broken down into kind of four primary areas in terms of the outreach approaches that we would be using. And let me go into a little bit more detail on each of these but just kind of a high level is the admissions office will be conducting and presenting information to every public school, not only within Fairfax County, but also within our participating jurisdictions. These presentations will be available to parents and even the community in evening sessions. Some of these may actually be held during the school day, as appropriate as what works out for individual schools. One of the other things that we're going to add is sending recruitment emails and letters to all eligible students, so we'll be able to go through and identify those students based upon math level, and be able to invite them, specifically invite them to TJ. We're working on creating a virtual open house, which would include a virtual tour information from individual students, teachers administration, even within the admissions office to be able to share information from a virtual environment for TJ, and then conduct targeted recruitment of our under-represented students, with input from our liaison counselors and other school counselors and staff at their schools. Can go to the next slide, please.

Jeremy Shughart 22:58

So what we would provide to our students and parents in the community, is being able to address our 95 participating public middle schools and over 100 private schools. Have presentations for all of these schools, as we, you know, move through. And part of that is providing information about what the school is, an information and opportunities to understand a little bit more about TJ demystifying TJ to some degree, in addition to also providing information about the admissions process. So what does that look like? When would those important dates and deadlines be? What would be the expectations of students throughout that process and how would that look? So it's really taking these elements or the expected elements and moving forward and sharing that information with them. This information would be coordinated with the school leaders. We would also be able to put out information not only on the admissions website, but also share this through FCPS's Facebook and Twitter. This information would go out in email correspondence through News You Choose. So the idea is to be able to provide this information out to the community so that that way they are able to be aware of those sessions and be able to be in attendance. If you can go to the next slide, please.

Jeremy Shughart 24:24

So those recruitment efforts would be sending out in terms of emails and letters, we would be sending out an email to all those eligible students that we talked about and their parents encouraging them to apply to TJ, providing them with links to other important information, whether that be the virtual link, providing a link to the application, the admissions website, a listing of all of the presentations and when they would be able to gain access to an evening or daytime presentation whichever is appropriate for them. For the non FCPS schools, both from a regional or a county and city standpoint, as well as even our private schools, being able to provide them with this same information to distribute to their students in their communities. Again, whether that's from a school level approach or even from a division wide approach. The idea is that we're targeting these students, and being able to get this information specifically into the students hands. If you can go to the next slide, please.

Jeremy Shughart 25:26

Now, the virtual open house is something that the admissions office would be coordinating with the high school itself. The idea is that we will be showcasing the school, the highlights, the unique features that TJ offers. We want to be able to discuss and provide visual opportunities to see what research labs, what the school looks like. Because sometimes, we want students to be able to envision themselves being at the school and that is a powerful statement for those individual students. We want students to be able to talk about the backgrounds and the skills and what it's like to be at TJ, we want to be able to have them share what TJ is like for them. We want students and staff to be able to share information about the programs at the school. We want the staff to be able to potentially share information about uniquenesses or maybe unique courses or opportunities around what's offered at TJ. And at the same time, we want them to be able to provide information about potentially what is the same at TJ. So an idea in terms of virtual open houses is to be able to provide a lot of information that is easily digestible, and even in chunks manner, so that that way you can pick and choose what you would see. And that's followed up by also the administration and even admissions office interviews and information that they can share. And that we would be able to provide this in a format that students and families would be able to go and be able to consume either all at once or even in chunks. Go to the next slide please.

Jeremy Shughart 27:09

So targeted recruitment. This is actually continuing efforts to provide outreach to our under-represented students in terms of our STEM programming. The intention here is to generate that excitement of learning Math and Science, these STEM skills that are already out there. We want to be able to provide students with an opportunity and an option to be able to see TJ as a high school opportunity or an option for them. So these enrichment activities can include after-school or summer programs. Those may be in robotics or computer programming, field trip opportunities, such as the Think-a-Bit Labs held at Virginia Tech, Chesapeake Bay Foundation where students are able to actually go out into the bay, family engagement activities. These things are supported through opportunities at the school, such as the TJ Diversity Open House, or even the Techstravaganza events that have been held in previous years at the school. The idea is to be able to provide these engagement opportunities for students to be able to provide them with experiences that they may not have had, whether it's at their school or even just within the community. And then finally providing them an opportunity and putting out what we call as our STEM Times newsletter. This is a quarterly newsletter where we provide information about upcoming events and highlight different options and opportunities around STEM. Whether that be interesting facts or events, potentially even opportunities where students can go and engage in activities that may not be something that's held within Fairfax County Public Schools, but maybe in the surrounding jurisdictions. Next slide, please.

Jeremy Shughart 29:00

I believe Marty or Dr. Brabrand. I'll turn this back over to you guys.

Marty Smith 29:06

I believe this is Dr. Bonitatibus' slide.

Jeremy Shughart 29:10

Oh, yes. Sorry.

Dr. Ann Bonitatibus 29:13

It is. Thanks, Jeremy. Good evening, Madam chair and the board. Thank you to Dr. Brabrand, school board members, district leadership on the entire TJ admission staff in addition to our broader community for really recognizing how TJ can be more accessible, (inaudible) talented student body that more closely aligns with the representation in FCPS, Northern Virginia. As part of our caring culture.

I always like to say that in TJ, our students are more than a GPA. To them, we're GPS. We guide our students on their journey. We help them navigate the detours, we help put them in acceleration lanes, speed pass, and they all take different routes and at different speeds and they always successfully reach their destination. As you take a look at some of the supports on the slide. Because we've listed many here, I would like to share my strong belief, which is informed by experiences in multiple public education leadership roles, that a shift in demographics does not automatically translate to a shift in talent. Assumptions that students in a new admissions process could be less qualified or less talented at TJ, really, I hope can be reconsidered.

As a community I really want us to place trust in our students, our parents, and our teachers, who really support our students each and every day. Over the past three decades, we've had multiple changes in TJ admissions processes and student demographics. TJ has remained a vibrant STEM community where students have excelled in a rigorous program of study. I have to be honest though, that the rigor at our school has sometimes come at the expense of wellness, emotional, physical, mental.

For that reason, we have joined a network of schools known as Challenge Success that's noted on the slide in front of you. It's born out of Stanford University, and the program helps us redefine success beyond a GPA and the number of AP classes that are taken. We are focused on making personal connections, decreasing workload, increasing sleep, and teaching students how to advocate for their learning. Therefore, with the incoming freshman class, we will continue to offer academic and social emotional support, as noted on the slide in front of you. And as our students transition, we will work with our wonderful upper class students to continue to build a welcoming environment where their new peers are celebrated as members of the TJ community, not singled out or diminished based on how they entered TJ or their identity or their personal circumstance. And our staff will continue to explore ways to be culturally responsive, provide multi-tiered systems of support for students and continue to implement our challenge success strategies. We can go to our next slide, please.

Dr. Ann Bonitatibus 32:06

Many things here talk about our wrap-around supports for students and we are highly successful with our support at TJ. Maybe not a lot of people know this, but we are the only high school in FCPS that has a minimum GPA requirement to remain enrolled. If a student is not able to maintain a B average, we put academic supports in place. I'm happy to say that in the past three years at TJ, our retention rate has gone up significantly. Meaning that fewer students are leaving due to stress or academic struggles.

Annually, fewer than a dozen students out of over 1800 struggle to maintain the B average. And no student's family has been directed to meet with district leadership to consider an alternate placement at base school.

So regardless of the outcomes of the TJ admissions process, we will continue to develop talent and have students reach their potential and support them every step of the way. We will continue to build strong connections and relationships with our students and families, we're going to check in on them regularly, and I just have to share a story. At the beginning of the year, we had a student panel and they spoke to our teachers and staff. Our students told our teachers how much they love them.

Our students also told us that they, as students, are as invested in us as we are in them. There was not a dry eye in the house, we were brought to tears. This doesn't (inaudible) happen in (inaudible) culture so I am most proud of how we have grown as a caring and supportive community the past couple years. And this doesn't mean we still don't have room to grow, because we do have students share with us some of the hardships that they've experienced. We have multiple committees that are led by students, staff, parents, and our partnership fund, and they are focused on wellness, and diversity awareness, and on outreach. TJ is on a positive trajectory as a caring culture.

The incoming class of 2025 will add to the richness of our family. I am confident that they will contribute to the TJ mission that Dr. Brabrand reminded us of at the beginning and they will make a difference in the shared interests of humanity. We regularly tell our students "we are here for you." We are TJ, we got this. Marty, I think this turns back over to you.

Marty Smith 34:35

This does turn back over to me. I want to come visit TJ and I want to be part of the TJ freshman class after that, Dr. Bonitatibus. I want to talk a little bit about the timeline. We know that as we get into this process, though, we're on a bit more of a condensed timeline. So for the fall, we would certainly conduct outreach to all of our jurisdictions as Mr. Shughart shared earlier. We would prepare the virtual tour and the filming of the virtual tour and start to prepare what those outreach efforts look like with our school staff, and then contact all those qualified students. For early winter, we would conduct targeted outreach, we would engage our liaison counselors, and both FCPS and our sending jurisdictions, and then follow up with our targeted students to encourage them to apply and be part of the TJ application process. In late winter, we would continue those outreach efforts and open the application process. We have here a review of our Caring Culture supports, but we know that that's ongoing within the school. When students

arrive within TJ on that first day, and prior to the first day, they realize they're part of a caring culture.

So that's really an ongoing piece within the school. And then in the spring, we would conduct that holistic review and lottery. We would contact our selected students and we would initiate a rolling admissions process until the beginning of the year. So that is our timeline in a nutshell, and we'll allow Dr. Brabrand..Oh, there's one more slide before we allow Dr. Brabrand. We did have the many next steps that the board wanted answered prior to our meeting on the eighth. And so we've responded to those next steps and posted them in a separate document. So the board and the community may look at those. And we will also be posting those next steps that are in that document, as they're answered, posting the two board docs for the board and community to review.

Dr. Brabrand 36:43

Thanks, Mr. Smith. And as we wrap up the final slide, you see Fairfax County Public Schools there. And this year at our leadership conference, I talked at our leadership conference about putting equity at the center of all that we say and do. This has been a school year, unlike any other in our history, in our country's history. And we have had this moment caused us to pause and reflect on our reality, and how we move forward. The reality is if we are putting equity at the center of all that we do, that we have presented, I have presented to you and this team, to you tonight, two proposals that changed the status quo at TJ. And we must change the status quo. It has been decades and decades with no gains in the diversity of the admitting class of Thomas Jefferson. Merit is in the pool. And merit and talent is removed from the pool through the testing process.

I want to make one comment on the testing process. I know and receive feedback through my own town halls that I talked about pay-to-play and many perceived that those were comments against parents and students who did support as part of getting in TJ taking those tests.

I did not mean in any way to make comments that were disparaging against them at all. I do not support an industry that preys on the hopes and dreams of students and parents and requires thousands of dollars to be shelled out for students to be successful. But the students and their parents are simply playing by the rules, the rules that we set up here in Fairfax County.

Now it's time to change the rules and create a process where the true diversity of talent and merit is fully appreciated here at Fairfax County Public Schools for admittance into our class at Thomas Jefferson. I'm confident that either of these plans begins to lay the path forward for the diversity at TJ to represent the full glorious diversity that we have here and our northern Virginia school systems.

Businesses from all over the country and the world had chosen to come here to Fairfax County for the talent. And our talent is diverse. And we are missing talent in our current TJ admissions process, we can do better and I believe we have two proposals tonight that will take us a step

forward in reaching our goals and putting equity at the center for all that we say and do. Thank you very much and we'll be glad to take any questions that you have this evening.

Ricardy Anderson 39:57

Turning on my microphone there. Thank you very much, Dr. Brabrand and all of the staff who presented just now. I do know that we'll have several school board members who will want to ask several questions regarding the proposals. We are going to start with Miss Keys-Gamarra. Just a reminder to our school board members, let's just really be mindful of when our time is up, you'll get a chance to complete your sentence, but not necessarily your thought. Miss Keys-Gamarra, go ahead.

Karen Keys-Gamarra 40:28

Thank you, and thank you to our staff for working to present these two proposals. I want to focus on a number of questions that we've received from the community so that we can facilitate that discussion and hopefully the community will feel more a part of this process. My first question goes to accountability measures on both of these proposals. How can we make sure that we are actually working toward greater diversity? How are we identifying metrics that we are reaching for? This should include the removal of the test which I fully support and I understand the research behind it, but I want the public to be able to hear that, and how the lottery enhances our efforts in achieving that diversity. I'd also like an explanation as to why we're looking at 100 top students, when typically, the percentage of gifted students is about 1.5% of the population. And I think I mentioned the clear metrics, as we think about reaching out to our middle schoolers. I'd like to see a more comprehensive way of communicating with them, that is in line with how students communicate, including social media, and possibly a video to introduce these new opportunities. And I'll stop there.

Dr. Brabrand 42:07

Thank you Miss Keys-Gamarra. I'm going to start and let Mr. Smith and Mr. Shughart respond. The accountability metrics begin with the lottery by having a very robust outreach effort to all of these schools, particularly under-represented schools, for kids to apply, that this is a new day, they have a fresh shot at getting in TJ, and we're going to work to do everything we can to increase the proportion of those schools that have not previously had kids apply to now apply. Because with the lottery, we were doing the modeling based on the current applications. We're hopeful as an accountability metric that will actually be able to outreach to get even more students to apply from all kinds of backgrounds, and from all kinds of schools previously did not feel they could partake. As far as the issue of the hybrid model and the holistic and the number. This was from feedback from many in our community, that there's just some kids that have to get in TJ. And so this hybrid approach, tries to get a process to identify those highest scoring kids, while still looking at plenty of kids that have the merit to be at TJ that aren't the highest scoring, that they have an opportunity to get in as well. And I will let Mr. Smith or Mr. Shughart respond to anything that I may have missed in your questions. Marty or Jeremy,

Marty Smith 43:54

To add to some of that, Dr. Brabrand. As we think about accountability and metrics, we'll certainly be looking at inviting every student in and doing a follow up on our return rate for those students who we've invited in, looking to see if we can increase those connections over time. This is something that we haven't done in the past and so we want to ensure that given our entire universe of students that we would invite in that we would want to have certain touch points where our counselors, teachers, and administrators are reaching out and having conversations with those students, and that it wouldn't simply be an invitation by mail or email.

Karen Keys-Gamarra 44:34

I just want to clarify that you're talking with me. I'm asking about accountability, and you're talking more about outreach. And accountability to me means that we are setting up structures to monitor our progress, and we have clear objectives to achieve.

Marty Smith 44:52

And so and I think we're talking about the same thing, I'm talking about outreach and one of those areas of ensuring that we're following through is that if we know that we've sent out invitations to a thousand students, but we haven't actually connected with those students as part of the process, we have to hold ourselves accountable to ensure that we are part of the process doing that outreach. I think that as we look at the process, we'll be clearly looking at the numbers of students who are applying over time, and going back to our schools to ensure that we have students who are applying in many of our regions, to encourage, again, those students being part of the process. The only way that we get more diversity within the school is to ensure that we have more students applying and being part of that process. We know that there's some things on the front end that we have to look at, as it relates to the pipeline. We shared some of that earlier about ensuring that students have access to TJ, ensuring that students have access to rigorous courses, and so we want to make sure that those are areas of accountability for us. So I apologize if I'm not getting all those areas for you but how I look at it, that's how we hold ourselves accountable.

Karen Keys-Gamarra 46:17

I think I'm asking more about data collection, and how we're what, what accountability measures as we implement this process to make sure we're actually hitting the target. And then what are those targets?

Marty Smith 46:32

Well, I think that since this is our baseline year, we would be looking to see what kind of diversity we would be generating at TJ with the first part of this process. We know that based on modeling, there are certain percentages that we'd be looking at. So we would look to see if the actual freshman class aligned with the modeling that we've done based on previous experience and again, if our numbers aren't where they are, that's where we focus on the process, perhaps changes to the process, and again, looking at our outreach efforts. I may be sounding like a broken record but we feel that outreach is a very important part of this process. There were also questions about those hundred students and Dr. Brabrand talked about that, As we looked at past experience of past application processes, we noted that students were clustering as part of

the evaluation process that the students who were performing the best as part of the process were in that hundred student range. And so that's why we are following down on this 20% because it aligns with past performance of students within the application process. Mr. Shughart, do you want to talk a little bit about the lottery process?

Jeremy Shughart 48:06

I'm sorry, I can talk about it. I'm kind of lost in terms of what to add into Miss Keys-Gamarra. Your question, I think in terms of.. I guess I'm trying to follow up in terms of your social media. Well, no, that doesn't have anything to do with it. Can you refresh the question for me?

Karen Keys-Gamarra 48:28

So I'm trying to lay out for the community, the thinking behind what we're doing, Right. I believe wholeheartedly, that we need to look at our student body and expand our diversity. But as a board member, I will need assurances that we have accountability measures in place, that we have defined targets, and that we are monitoring what we are doing as well as I mean, I think the community needs to understand what we're doing. I think there's a large percentage of the community that is behind this. And I just think we need to state our case more clearly. And I'm hearing primarily outreach, which is wonderful, but I think there should be more than that.

Dr. Brabrand 49:17

Yeah. Let me try, Jeremy, and then (inaudible) you can. So the first thing Miss Keys-Gamarra that we want to do, from the modeling, the applicant pool, right? The applicant pool found (inaudible) merit should match the admissions into TJ. Right, that's the first.

So when we did the modeling, we saw by taking out the test, we had qualified kids of merit, but then we applied the test and it shrunk the kids that were in were semi-(audible). Now the first thing, the first metric moving forward, the first goal is whatever the applicant pool of merit is, that percentage will match what gets in TJ. **And it should, because it's a lottery, right?** All these kids are merit, the percentage of kids that are African American, that are English language, that are free or reduced lunch. The lottery should apply equally to their opportunity to get in. So that's number one.

The second metric is to expand the outreach to get more kids who never even apply because they've given up thinking TJ is even in the realm of possibility, and then that diversifies the pool. And so longer term, the aspirational metric is that the TJ admittance class actually measures or reflects the diversity of Fairfax County Public Schools in the surrounding school divisions, which it does not. So there's this intermediate metric of just a pool matching the admissions. And we believe a lottery will do that if you do the merit, or the hybrid lottery, that those first 100 may not be (inaudible) as won't be randomly assigned, it may skew to a particular school or a particular demographic. And it may proportionally impact second language learners, the economically disadvantaged, but the rest of the spots would be done by the lottery. So those are the two metrics, the matching the pool with the admissions, and then bringing the actual results, and then ultimately getting the diversity of TJ's class senex the diversity of the school systems.

Karen Keys-Gamarra 51:45

I think that perhaps one of the next steps is taking additional steps to make sure we're defining those metrics, along with the clear accountability. So I'll stop there and let some of my colleagues have an opportunity. Thank you.

Dr. Brabrand 52:00

All right. Thank you.

Ricardy Anderson 52:03

Thank you Miss Keys-Gamarra. Miss Corbett Sanders, go ahead.

Karen Corbett Sanders 52:07

Yes, thank you. And thank you, Dr. Brabrand and all of your staff for your excellent hard work.

We very much appreciate the challenges that are before us, where we have a shared purpose or shared focus on transforming the opportunities available to students at TJ to ensure that there is both rigor but that the TJ student body reflects the diversity that we see here in Fairfax County and all of Northern Virginia.

Along those lines, I appreciate that you have gotten rid of the test, because we know that there are some biases associated with those tests.

And that you are delaying the admissions process, I would say, that we need to make sure that we have changes to the admissions process this year, starting in late January. I have concerns about the lottery as being a tool to actually get our diversity, to get the student body to reflect diversity, because as you have said multiple times is that that's the long term goal, but that you haven't actually modeled that we get to that diversity. And so I'm going to suggest that we do a pyramid or a Middle School by Middle School approach to the admissions process. And then as part of that, similar to what you've already put out there, that we have the merit based approach with multi facets, a holistic approach, which also includes problem solving contributions to the portrait of a graduate and those opportunity indexes similar to what all of the top universities in this country are moving towards. I would also suggest and request that you bring back to this board a more detailed plan on what that process would be and also bring back to the board a more detailed plan on any sort of proposal on the number of set-aside seats to one that is in line with the percentage of highly gifted students nationally normed and normed for Northern Virginia. Also asking that along Miss Keys-Gamarra's statement of the need to have measurable metrics and that we revisit them and so on an annual basis before we submit our diversity plan to the state that we would have a conversation here at this board and determine where we might have to make adjustments to that. I would also suggest that since we are only at 84% capacity at TJ, that we expand the opportunities of TJ to a higher level of capacity and, at a minimum, increase the admissions class from 500 to 550. And we will also, and I shared this with my colleagues earlier, that we will bring a regional governing board to teach it.

Ricardy Anderson 55:29

Dr. Brabrand, go ahead.

Dr. Brabrand 55:33

Well, let me work backwards. The regional governing board is a decision by the school board then of course, the administration has been working under the existing arrangements that I think go back 30 years. Expanding the number of blocks at TJ, I can certainly review that with our staff and take a look at an expansion of slots. I will have to review that with the team. I don't believe I can speak to that specifically tonight. I'm reviewing it each year. I completely support doing that. I think that's been part of the problem but we haven't reviewed it each year, we haven't collectively held ourselves accountable to see change happen. What I know is doing the same thing that we did last year isn't going to make any change. We're going to get the same results that we've always had. So I certainly don't mind doing that. We can work to do metrics but again, as you do anything new we've modeled, we've given you the best modeling that we can based on the data that we have for the lottery. And we can work to build goals around what that would look like. And we sort of did a little bit of that with the original proposal we share. But we sort of could do a bit more and share that. And as far as the set-aside seats, we could talk a little bit more about it. That's what we were trying to do in the hybrid plan. And as Mr. Smith said, the hundred seats were identified based on the number of kids, you know, that we're finding top success. I will say 20% is about what we find for center eligibility in our AAP centers is about 19%. So 20%, I know, gifted nationally is perhaps a lower percentage but I think here in Northern Virginia, we have a higher percentage of kids with extraordinarily strong academic talent.

Marty Smith 57:39

I'd like Mr. Shughart to talk a little bit about the middle school approach, because it's not the first time we've heard about it. And we've actually run numbers on the current process about looking at a middle school approach to bring students in. So Mr. Shughart, could you talk a little bit about that?

Jeremy Shughart 57:54

Sure. So a number of years ago, we ran that approach, looking at the top performing students. Certainly we weren't looking at a lottery portion at that point in time. But we're looking at the combination of the top performing students at each school, and how that would provide or what that would provide to TJ in terms of overall representation. While it would ensure some additional regional representation that we don't see currently certainly in Fairfax County and potentially in our surrounding jurisdictions. What we also didn't see is a dramatic shift in the composition of the students at TJ based upon the modeling that we had actually run at that point in time. And so what that did, basically the high level of this was going back and reevaluating the strongest applicants based on a school by school basis. And it didn't really change the demographics at the school at that point in time.

Marty Smith 59:02

And so with that, what we do know is..

Karen Corbett Sanders 59:04

Tonight, excuse me, Mr. Smith, if I can respond to that just quickly, which is that that was using the old metrics, which included the test, but you haven't run the model with the new approach that you've put forth, which gets rid of the test, but has more of a focus on a holistic approach.

Marty Smith 59:27

So we're thinking alike Miss Corbett Sanders, because we're I was going is that we had been able to run the model for the merit lottery so we know that that does provide additional diversity based on what we shared earlier with the board and the previous proposal. What we don't know is that we haven't captured some of these data points in the past to run modeling. And so within this first year, of course, with a hybrid model, we can see what those numbers would look like and what the additional diversity would look like. But we do know that looking at the number of students by region, based on the numbers of students who have applied in the past, and our ability to do more outreach and get more students applying from those schools would create more diversity at TJ than what we currently see. So you're right in noting that we don't have numbers based on the proposal for the holistic review at this point but it's not to say that we wouldn't have those numbers in the future, take another look at the process.

Ricardy Anderson 1:00:48

Did you have additional questions. Miss Corbett Sanders? You seem to have a little bit more time.

Karen Corbett Sanders 1:00:52

No, Dr. Anderson. My time went up. So I will reserve to possibly have a go-back.

Ricardy Anderson 1:00:59

Thank you, Miss Omeish.

Abrar Omeish 1:01:03

Thank you. I want to go a few steps back to what brought us here, in the beginning of this conversation. You know, I'd be remiss not to be honest, and offer short remarks here for my colleagues to think about, and then I have some questions. You know, as a board, it's really a shame to kind of be here and see that we failed to imagine what's beyond, what's familiar, or comfortable, and we didn't empower our superintendent to lead with what he knew was best for the division and what the staff have been working on this for years, know what's best.

1:02:00

I mean, we all know doing what's right was never easy. It was never celebrated, especially not when it was happening. But frankly, maintaining clarity in the face of that expected disruption would simply have meant for us to be leaders. In any case, I want to come back to the central point that's been lost in a lot of this, which is ultimately what's good for kids, which is really the reason why we're here. So in trying to salvage this, and I appreciate answers or responses to the feasibility of some of the following. First, I found the region's approach I mentioned before, and I mention again, that a school by school approach would allow us to have more diversity, more proper outreach. And it's not really just having diversity to Mr. Smith's point about the

region selection, but doing it right. And if we think about what is it that's going to effectively reach every child and make sure there's representation, that's a key point. And I would add that it should be proportional to the population numbers, not just by middle schools.

Second, the opt in idea of the law for the lottery, not to require students to go by any means. I know it's not a right fit for a lot of people, but at least so that they're not disadvantaged by lack of awareness, or whatever barriers may exist to signing up.

Third, I'd love to hear an evaluation of the anticipated consequences of centering the process around an essay. And finally, I'd appreciate some clarity on the timeline. I know there's been conversation about votes we might be having to take and, you know, what the decision process is gonna look like in terms of what we're hearing from staff. And, of course, you know, related to that is the conversations around AAP, how we're going to equip students to be in a place to have the writing abilities, and the preparedness that we know inevitably will be the case for many other kids. And then, you know, thinking around young scholars and the various dimensions that were discussed before as to the long term pieces of this, but that'll be all from me right now. I'll hear responses and see if I have time left.

Dr. Brabrand 1:03:48

Thanks, Abrar. Let me try a couple and then let Mr. Smith or Mr. Shughart respond as well. Well on the timeline, I do have to submit a letter to the Secretary of Education by October 12, around our plan.

Now, it is true that I can share what we are already agreeing on if there's agreement, for example, that we're not going to do the Quant Q test this year, that we're not going to have an application fee, and say that we're developing or finishing the lottery, the hybrid lottery, or something else, and that that will be done by (inaudible) so we have an initial response on the 12th of what our plans are, but our plans could be a multi-step process.

And as Marty said, we have a few more months if we need to work on developing a particular piece (inaudible) thing here. The decision on the test is really sensitive to really, I would say, this week whether we're going to administer that test or not because that testing normally happens in October and November.

The opt in, this is a reflective conversation that we've had with staff about whether opt in versus opt out and many of our staff and you know, I'll let others share the thought that still asking kids to apply was part of wanting to be sure the original intent of TJ was there. That you had a passion and interest, not just that you had a high GPA, that some kids do great at Math and Science, but really loved the Arts, really love, you know, Literature. And that's just not something that they want to be involved in. But it's certainly something that we can continue to have a conversation about. The essay and problem solving, I'm going to defer that one to Jeremy and school by school, Jeremy or Marty as they are better subject matter experts on that than I.

Marty Smith 1:05:53

Well, I can say with the essay, we've had an essay as part of the process for many years in the form of an essay or a student information sheet. And we've seen no consequences to date with that essay. We know that the problem solving essay is really focused on the student's ability to solve problems. It's less focused on how well the student writes the particular essay but really focuses on their thought processes in getting to the end and how they got to the answer. We know that these portions of the process are provided within a timed frame or time format. We know that all students, all eighth grade students are sort of equally stressed by this portion of the process. And so our readers do look at that essay through a particular lens, and are really looking for how students come up with the answer and not necessarily how well they write their responses.

Jeremy Shughart 1:07:01

And just to kind of add on to what Mr. Smith is talking about there in terms of the problem solving essay. Ultimately, what we're looking at is with an understanding that students are coming at this from potentially 200 different schools with different experiences within their schools, from an academic standpoint. And so that's where we fall back to some of our academic minimums, which we had discussed earlier in this, which was students being enrolled in Algebra one or advanced Math. But on the Science side of it, from a public school perspective, all students are taking eighth grade Science, and there's some consistencies there in terms of the science. There's also some consistencies with multi step Math problems as well. And so the intent here is to actually drive at a student's problem solving ability. Were they employing things that they had already been, you know, known? Was there techniques or factors that allowed them to arrive at their answer? And ultimately, because it's an essay format, we allow them the opportunity to not only answer the question, but we allow them the opportunity to describe how they arrived at that answer. So that way, we're not just giving them credit for a correct answer or an incorrect answer, we're giving them credit for their thought processes. So we're not overly penalizing a student that may have gotten it wrong, if all of the work that they had put in was actually the right way. And as Mr. Smith mentioned, this was in a timed environment. So we know that there's a limited amount of time. There's time to work out the problem. There's also time for them to then answer those questions along with some other questions within that timed event. And so there is a balanced approach where students go through it. In terms of thinking about this. The problem solving essay was something that was, as may have been remembered from the previous presentation, this was something that was put in place a handful of years ago. Prior to that, it was looking at that writing style. It was looking at much more of a persuasive essay, whereas this is more looking at a technical essay in terms of answering that problem and finding the responses. And I think ultimately, that's a change, or that's an idea about what it is. And these students should be prepared to be able to answer those types of questions because they're being exposed to that type of information in the classroom, and ultimately, that's the types of things that we're looking to have for students that are aligned with some of those minimums to be successful at TJ.

Abrar Omeish 1:10:03

Yeah, no, I appreciate that. I mean, I think, you know, there's definitely going to be inevitable preparation where kids are certainly, you know, if they're doing practices over long periods of time through expensive programs, and our commitment's been that no preparation is needed, right, to have a competitive edge. I think that's going to be an area worth some reflection for us. And finally, in the outreach piece, the point after.. (ringing) there's no time, but thank you.

Ricardy Anderson 1:10:30

Thank you very much. Just a quick clarification for my colleagues. The purpose of this work session is for us to do exactly what has been taking place to ask questions of the plan to provide feedback to the superintendent and his team, and if there were to be some discussions that **we can provide concurrence around** that we should be able to do that here as well, because that will help us for the final presentation next Thursday. So those are the goals of this session, primarily to provide feedback and maybe consensus regarding certain issues, which I have been listing, as they have been shared by some of our colleagues, for us to perhaps do that towards the end of this conversation. Our next speaker is Miss Meren, please go ahead.

Melanie Meren 1:11:25

Thank you. Good evening. So I'd like to say first, that I'm not very convinced about the outreach plan. It's essentially a marketing plan to reach new audiences of students and families. As Miss Keys-Gamarra mentioned, the social media platforms mentioned aren't the ones that students tend to frequent. Um, you know, furthermore, the description of the video tour in the open house by Mr. Shughart didn't talk about the one thing that is the reason that the entry test is a barrier, and that's money. No mention was made of any additional costs it might take for parents to enroll their children in TJ or sustain them. There was a mention of extracurricular activities that Mr. Shughart said to help students succeed. There's no mention of costs, including transportation costs. Um, you know, the staff presenting here today, our COO and the program director of TJ, and while they've done a nice job, I'd like to know if staff from these following offices have actively helped develop this plan before us today. So the Office of Special Education Instruction, the Office of Professional Learning and Family Engagement, and specifically the Equity and Family Engagement Office, the Office of ESOL Services within the Instructional Services Department. And so I'd like to know about the involvement of these offices. But I pointed out to say that I don't see evidence of outreach practices that are specific to engaging the communities of color and those of economic hardship in this plan. And this really overshadows my analysis of the division's ability to get the desired outcomes. Second, you know, I must say that, to me, we are having this conversation in a vacuum. To talk about it the admissions process only as it happens in the year of application, and not the entire pipeline of you know, the change that's needed to have access to various academic, you know, advanced academic opportunities that would qualify students for TJ and help them be prepared is really frustrating. This plan is missing the larger picture. You know, even to have an estimated timeline of the kinds of things that we want to see, having the courses offered more consistently across middle schools and such, to systematically create the equity among our student body.

And finally, I'll say to my colleagues, that I really struggle with the decision to remove the test in the fall. I think it's the right thing to do. I also do feel badly for students who have invested the time in a time when everything is really tough for them.

But I do think that, you know, it's hard to make change like this and if we can even crawl a bit further, I think that it's worth doing. But I did just want to share that tension I'm having in my brain. So thank you. I'd like to know the question about the other staff offices involved, please. Thank you,

Ricardy Anderson 1:14:13

Mr. Smith?

Marty Smith 1:14:15

So I can share and people have said I have a unique job in Fairfax County as the COO and people have questioned why is the COO bringing a discussion about TJ admissions? And so you know, previously, before I was the COO, I was the Chief of Staff for the school system and under previous organization, the TJ admissions reported to me and in our absence of a Chief Equity Officer, the office came underneath for safekeeping, I guess you could say. So, Jeremy normally resides with the Chief Equity Officer and is part of the umbrella of supports that the Equity Office provides, and was clearly involved with the Equity Office as previous plans are brought forward. We've had questions about how equity will play a part in training for teachers, how equity will play a part in developing other aspects of the process. And the Equity Office will clearly be part of that process as we move forward. We know that we had connections and worked very closely with our Instructional Services Department. As part of this particular iteration, I did not work with our ESOL office. But I know that Mr. Shughart has had strong relationships with both our ESOL office and our Department of Special Services over time to ensure that while we're reaching the right students, I can let Mr. Shughart talk a little bit more about that part of the process.

Jeremy Shughart 1:16:02

Oh, I'm sorry, I don't think my mic was working there. So yeah, over the past, so we'll just talk about equity. There's been discussions as the equity office was established and created in terms of thinking about outreach. So we've worked with a variety of different folks within the office, both from a specialist level as well as from the leadership level in terms of discussing other options within communications and outreach. Some of this is also talking about parent engagement and a model in which they'd typically receive that information. You're absolutely right, in terms of where students receive their information, in terms of social media, I don't believe that too many of our students are Facebook fans. They're not really out on Facebook, like probably most of the people that are on the session tonight. You know, so it's about meeting them where they're at. It's about working with that would be about...

Melanie Meren 1:17:06

Well, excuse me, Mr. Chairman, I understand that, but that's what you just proposed. I mean, you said Facebook and Twitter. I mean, I'm looking at the staff attendees here tonight. I don't

think I see anyone here from a professional learning and family engagement office, unless I'm mistaken. It's just not instilling confidence. You know, talking about having good relationships is not the same as saying, here's the plan, here's who's been involved, and here's how we're working together. So I would like to see much more specificity that shows that the research and work has been done to find out the best ways to connect with historically disconnected communities. If that's in the next presentation, then that's fine. But I really don't want to, you know, hear things that are not answering that question, honestly. So if you want..

Marty Smith 1:17:54

We can certainly provide that and we will be working with those offices to make sure that we are reaching those particular students. And so there is a proposal, there is a plan. So right now we're bringing the proposal to the board to consider, and we can certainly bring some things that get a bit more at the plan of how we would implement that. I do want Dr. Bonitatibus to possibly weigh in on some of the things that the questions that you asked around students and different types of thugs that are offered at TJ and perhaps, if there are additional costs involved, and those particular considerations, and how she currently mitigates those with students who are at school who might be free and reduced meal or may not be able to take advantage of some of those opportunities.

Dr. Ann Bonitatibus 1:18:49

Thank you. I think that we have done some subtle things over the past couple of years. So that way, particularly for our students who qualify for the free and reduced meals, we're able to ensure that they have meals at school. I will share with you, when I first arrived at the school, breakfast was not served. And it was just a thought or a feeling that it was just something that didn't need to be done. And I knew that we had 30 students who qualify and it was important to me that even if one student got the breakfast that they needed, they got it. And when our students were going to the cafeteria in the morning to get it, I made sure that we put a grab and go cart right in our commons right in the front. And that way, any student can go up and get lunch and there's anonymity for the students perhaps who need the free meals and I'm ensured that those students are getting meals when they need them. So you know, some of the things are very subtle, some of them are more overt. We have engaged students, most recently on challenge success teams with our school on the Mental Wellness Coalition with our students. It's actually chaired by our students. And this year, we had a huge infusion of more students.

We just had our first meeting, I think it was last week, and the chairs of the committee are just so pleased. We also have students who are a part of our Equity team and we're really pleased about that. And through our clubs and activities, as recently as last week, I've now had a group of students, a group of sophomores who have come forward, and they are forming a club that is specific to how we can continue to create a welcoming environment at TJ as we go through perhaps a changed admissions process.

Melanie Meren 1:20:51

Well, they're all great but again, that's not about the application process. So that's great, but I'm still not hearing what are we doing to reach traditionally marginalized and disconnected students?

Dr. Ann Bonitatibus 1:21:06

So yeah, all right. Okay, well, I was speaking about what's going on in the school so I'll just bump it back to the others that are doing, talking about the admissions efforts.

Dr. Brabrand 1:21:17

I mean Miss Meren, bottom line is, it's a very fair question. We can bring more about it, and we will in our next step. I will tell you, return to school and all the work we've done around internet access and connecting with families to start virtually, we've learned a lot in just the last couple of months that can really help us with the TJ outreach. And, and we'll bring you additional material around that and our plan for it. As Mr. Smith said, we brought a proposal around TJ, but we need to build out the specifics of the outreach and we will do that for you.

Melanie Meren 1:21:54

Okay, I look forward to that. Thank you.

Stella Pekarsky 1:21:59

Okay, um, our next speaker will be Miss Cohen.

Laura Jane Cohen 1:22:06

Thank you, Miss Pekarsky. You know, I'm grateful to go after Miss Meren because I feel like that's what we continue to say is we have to have a plan in order to support a proposal. You know, my frustration is, we've continued to articulate that this is a symptom of a much larger problem. That we have to be super careful that this is not a bandaid that this is part and parcel of a systemic change about offering advanced opportunities starting in third grade Math in our elementary schools. And so, you know, for me, what my continued advocacy has been, I cannot support one without the other. So we need to figure out a way when we're getting to these conversations for Thursday night, again, that this is a holistic and that, you know, whole system approach of how we're changing this because to speak to Miss Meren's point, I think we all have admitted that we have a major problem with our application process. It's not just an admittance problem, that is certainly a problem. But the application problem is huge. And so I think we cannot look at this as all these separate things. I think this is how we wind up siloed in a place where we just keep looking at TJ and make six changes in nine years that don't net results. I will say that some additional issues I have, it is frustrating to me to sit in a district with a school at 132% capacity and one that's it, you know, 119% and TJ sits at 84%. So when we talk about equity generally, I feel like there are some ways where, again, we have a rising tide that if we have conversations where admitting more kids into TJ is something that expands opportunities for more kids, it also becomes an opportunity to lessen the burden on some of our other overcrowded schools. 84%, it's just, I can't rationalize that to Springfield district constituents who cannot get back in some of their schools at full capacity right now because of situations that we have created.

Laura Jane Cohen 1:24:38

I would love an answer about how we reduced the number of slots for other jurisdictions. You know, I know that there are places who have already reached out to board members to ask why we are sort of summarily in a regional school, just deciding that we're going to reduce their admissions. And then another piece for me is the serving on barriers to apply. We don't collect any data on why people turn down and we haven't done good data on why they don't apply in the first place. So we have to be able to ask the question to answer it.

Stella Pekarsky 1:25:22

Dr. Brabrand?

Dr. Brabrand 1:25:24

Yeah, let me take a couple and then see if Marty and Jeremy want to jump in. I completely agree with the systems approach. Later this month, we are bringing you a multi year plan around advanced academics based on the recommendations from the AAP consultant, Dr. Presidio just shared a draft with me, frankly, this week, and I think it's on the school board agenda this month. I mean, we can double check, but I believe it's coming the same month. As you know, the state deadline has got TJ in a sense before the AAP study and in a perfect world, which we're not in right now, we could have done the AAP study recommendations early October and done this later in the month. But we do have that and we do have a multi year approach on the pipeline. The TJ slot, the TJ capacity is fair feedback. And as I said, I will review that with the team and respond to it. I totally get it and I will respond to it at a follow-up and about serving the kids that don't apply or don't turn down. I'm going to ask Jeremy or Marty about that over the years. I certainly agree. That's data that could be very helpful to us. And let me get their feedback for context on that question.

Dr. Brabrand 1:26:54

Jeremy or Marty?

Jeremy Shughart 1:26:56

Sure. So we certainly don't survey students that are not applying. We don't. So some of this has been more recent times over students who have not accepted their offers. So that has changed over the past handful of years to say, you know, perhaps maybe as many as 10 years. So it's more of a recent trend. Some of this, we've seen, there's some anecdotal information. But I think that that is a possibility where if a student declined their offer, we have a way for them to provide feedback of why they're providing that or why they're declining an offer. That's something that could be built into their response of accepting or declining in terms of an offer. So that is something that we could look to implement. So that way we have the feedback of, they're not going to TJ because they're going to another school, or distance, or whatever the case may be. There's a lot of other options and opportunities that may be out there that they're saying that this is the reason why. So we have not done that other than from an anecdotal standpoint, in terms of why students have or have not decided to accept the numbers. And one point that in terms of your question about capacity, one of the things that I want to point out and I want to note, in

terms of capacity is the change to the 500 and the rolling admissions. So the change to the 500 and the rolling admissions does address the capacity issues, at least to some degree. So what we currently have within the policy, well, not the policy, within the regulation, sets a target of 480 students. And so through our current process, we offer admissions to approximately 480 students. That number happens to be between 480 and 500 students. And then we come back with a second round and also a wait pool where we offer additional students again. The distinction here is that that wait pool is offered in July, after everything else has been completed, and it's a one time offer where we offer the number of students to again bring them back up over that 480 mark, or at least to that 480 mark. But what we do know is that some students, even within that process, will still decline the offer. And so that's where we're left with students that are fewer than the initial or the anticipated number of students that have accepted. Additionally, we also have some students that accept the offer and ultimately don't complete the registration. So part of this admissions approach that we are suggesting with the kind of what we're calling the rolling admissions is having a pool of students that are available to them, continuing to offer until the beginning of the school. So that would move the enrollment numbers for an individual class up to 500. So instead of having an enrollment class that may be at 470, or even potentially lower, that would actually be maintaining that number at a much higher rate, which would address some of the issues that you talked about in terms of the maximum number of students.

Marty Smith 1:30:35

And then Jeremy, if you could talk about the sending jurisdictions.

Jeremy Shughart 1:30:39

Oh, yes. So when we look at the the actual numbers of students that are at TJ, historically, what we're seeing is that the historic numbers of students at TJ, in terms of where they're coming from between Fairfax and the other counties is, we're at about 75% of the students are coming from Fairfax county that are currently in attendance at TJ. And what the current process or what the process was that was in place under the standard procedures is a cap process that's based on student enrollment in eighth grade. So there's caps that are put in place for all of our jurisdictions. And very few of those jurisdictions meet their caps. That's not necessarily the case with all of them, Falls Church City has an example. But the remaining school systems don't reach their caps. And it's not because they don't have qualified students, it has to do with the number of students that are applying from certain jurisdictions over time. And so what ends up happening is those caps are established based upon a ratio of students enrollment, and then we go through the process and the caps don't come into play unless a particular division meets or exceeds that particular cap. For most of our participating jurisdictions, that doesn't take into place. In fact, we're offering a number of students below their cap. And then you also have the number of students that are accepting that. So that's a number that's even further reduced down from the offers of admissions. And so for example, if a cap, and I'm going to use really big round numbers. If a cap is 50, for a particular jurisdiction, and we offered through the current process 35, but only 25 of those students accepted, that particular school division isn't using their cap. So using all of this information, and what we're saying and trying to stay consistent with what students were at a maximum, what students were accepting as a process going to TJ, and

staying consistent with what we've seen over time, is where we fell on the 70%/30% split. So we provided a process for 70% percent of the students to come through Fairfax County, and 30% of the students to come from our participating jurisdictions. So when we look at the participating jurisdictions approach, the 70% is then calculated out on a ratio basis looking at just the student enrollment in those participating jurisdictions. So it functions very similar to the cap approach. The piece that we're adding in or that we've ensured within this process is that whatever that cap is, we're gonna get, we're allowing any eligible student to be a part of that process and then to be able to backfill for those students that are saying no. So for many of our school divisions, this cap may actually fall very much in line with the accepted student right from our spring admission cycle and spring admissions process that we've had. So that's the part of between the inside Fairfax County and the non-FCPS school divisions. When you look at that from the regional approach, and I know that there's been a number of questions between a regional approach, a division level approach, although that hasn't been talked about this evening, and from a school level approach, the proportionality that we've provided here at a regional level approach is, again, it's also kind of a capsulated issue, looking at the enrollment of grade eight students as well. And so that's where the jurisdictions and how that ultimately came, or the split between the 70% and in the 30%, and then ultimately, when we use the historic numbers for those. That number would be recalculated on an annual basis based upon student enrollment in each of these school divisions and so the cap is not a static number where it would be this number in perpetuity. It will be recalculated, just as it is recalculated for the admissions process in the current process.

Stella Pekarsky 1:35:23

Miss Cohen, do you have any more questions?

Laura Jane Cohen 1:35:27

Oh, I do. But my buzzer rang.

Stella Pekarsky 1:35:33

Thank you, Miss McLaughlin.

Megan McLaughlin 1:35:40

Thank you. I may be looking down at my notes. So I apologize when people wonder what I'm doing here. Um, first of all, I do want to make clear to the public that I absolutely agree and believe, as one of the veteran board members, that FCPS as a school system has failed to ensure the diversity at TJ, that the school board since I've belonged in January 2012, made very clear of our expectations. There's not enough time for me to go cite the school board policy that I participated in governance, where it was adopted and revised on September 13, 2013, where we talked about what the purpose of TJ was, the operation of the school, and I will be sending notes to my colleagues about it. But the key point that it says is that the purpose is to establish a STEM high school where students have exceptional quantitative skills and an interest in STEM, and a desire to pursue higher level academic achievement in Science and STEM. Under the FCPS regulation, it specifically says that the school system is supposed to identify through its admissions processes exceptional quantitative skills, interest and aptitude, but also that the

school board expects that FCPS will be working on ensuring diversity of its students. As a former admissions officer with 10 years of professional experience in this field, I know for certain that we absolutely should have been able to achieve this for more than 20 years. I would say first and foremost, that FCPS superintendents from Jack Dale to Karen Garza to Scott Brabrand, have told this board to stay in his lane, be board members about governance and let them handle operations. And sadly, what's happened is we have operations that have not fulfilled the policy of the school board. It has not fulfilled the promises of the regulation.

I do think that the test is highly problematic. I do think we need to make changes this year.

I look forward to Miss Pekarsky and Miss Karen Corbett Sanders presenting alternative approaches. I want to thank Laura Jane Cohen, and others who are talking about the fact that we know holistic admissions works successfully. It's for diversity and high achievement at our nation's very best public and private universities for decades and decades. And I've seen it done up front. And Dr. Brabrand, I will for one be one board member who is going to press you on the metrics, your answers to our colleagues earlier. I absolutely do not speak to how each year a lottery, which is by nature a random selection process, is going to yield the diversity we know and want to see. I encourage you again to go talk to the universities who successfully have demographically diverse and high diversity students every year. The public has every right from all sides to be concerned about what you've outlined here. And I support what my colleagues are putting forward instead.

Stella Pekarsky 1:39:00

Thank you, Miss McLaughlin. Dr. Brabrand, would you like to respond and also comment about the proposal that Miss McLaughlin has identified as the points that were brought up by Miss Corbett Sanders earlier.

Dr. Brabrand 1:39:18

Yeah. Well, first of all, I would say multiple boards have worked with multiple superintendents on this, and I fully acknowledge that we're not where we need to be. And should I have brought it up earlier? You know, I guess that's a question for me and the previous board. There are a lot of equity issues that we're bringing to the front. And partly, I've changed my leadership as a result of the world around us to recognize that equity needs to be at the center of our work in the school system and there've been things that I've not paid attention to that I am paying attention to now. And TJ is one of them.

We've let it go for decades and it's time to do it and do it well. As far as the metrics to the lottery depend on changing the composition of the applicant pool. So Miss McLaughlin, I agree with that. Again, short term, we know there's talent in the pool that's not getting in the actual admitting class. So we believe a thorough outreach can continue to grow the pie of people through diverse backgrounds who want to come to TJ who qualify for merit. And that's how we would grow it. Again, I appreciate what you've shared about Miss Corbett Sanders' ideas, and we'll certainly listen to what the board has to say. That's what tonight is all about, is hearing board feedback. But we, I think, are all in agreement that what we've been doing hasn't been

the goals that you noted are in policy and regulation. And it's time to do something about it. Thanks.

Stella Pekarsky 1:41:19

Thank you, Dr. Brabrand. We'll come back to, I guess, the plan a little bit later that Miss Corbett Sanders laid out. Miss Tholen?

Elaine Tholen 1:41:35

Yes, thank you. I'm happy to follow through my other colleagues. I would first like to express that I fully realized that what our discussion tonight is just one piece in the whole strategic view around Science and Math education. I'm in the district and I guess, as a science educator, I absolutely look forward to our upcoming discussions and a broad strategic view on how we can make some improvements. I come to this discussion, maybe with a bit of a different view. I have a son that graduated from TJ several years ago, and I look at his experience at TJ, and would he have had a better experience if there had been a more diverse student body? Yes, probably. And so I fully support increasing the diversity at the school. But he was also a kid that did physics problem sets to relax. So I understand the kind of students that we have at TJ and the intense passion for Science and Math. And so one question that I have is, if we're not going to do the usual entrance exam, is the problem solving essay enough to measure Math and Science proficiency and potential? One question that I have is, is it an understanding that it's an essay question that is either going to be on Science, or it's going to be on Math? Do we need to perhaps broaden that a little bit? If that's, you know, a big part of what we were looking for are Science and Math proficiency and potential. So that's one question.

Elaine Tholen 1:43:27

One other question that I have is I haven't really gotten numbers on how many eighth graders do we have in Fairfax County that have a 3.5 GPA? And are taking algebra one? Like, how many kids are we talking about that will be eligible in this pool? So you know, I'd like to know that and also I'd really like to know that information kind of by region, and how many kids by region have that qualification. I fully support taking a look at how many kids we are putting into this class. If 480 was in our previous regulation, perhaps that regulation was developed for pre-renovation for TJ and I don't know what the program capacity was pre-renovation, but post-renovation is about 21/85. One of my other big concerns is like Laura Jane, I'm coming from a region that has overcrowded schools. So I really need us to take a really close look at what are the ramifications to our base schools for changing the TJ admissions process. (buzzer) And programmatic standpoint as well, what courses should we be offering those kids if they're moving into our base schools.

Stella Pekarsky 1:44:57

Thank you Miss Tholen. Dr. Brabrand?

Dr. Brabrand 1:45:02

Sure. First of all, thanks for sharing your experience with your son. And I think we've got to come at this issue with multiple perspectives. Jeremy, do we know what the 3.5 Algebra one for the entire (inaudible) Is there some data that we can get and provide the board?

Jeremy Shughart 1:45:18

It's actually not because we don't calculate GPA at the middle school level. This was a question I was asked in the previous follow up, and we put that in some information. So let me give you, because there's a lot of questions around this. What we can provide or what we've provided with some information is around the number of students who are in Algebra One or the more advanced Math classes in Fairfax County. What we do on an admission standpoint is we actually worked with the school systems in, and if we're talking about non FCPS, I'm sorry, I didn't turn on my camera. If we're talking about non-FCPS, they actually submit letter grades to us and then we actually go through and do a calculation for those individual grades. We're also talking about a core. So we don't use every class that the students are enrolled in, which is what would frequently be something that would be created from an overall GPA. A lot of people think about the overall GPA. They think about that from a high school perspective. They think about an unweighted as well as the weighted, which we had discussed earlier, and includes all of the different classes that the students take. So there's also questions that we've fielded around, which classes or how many years and so on and so forth. But what we look at from a GPA standpoint, is the end of the year seventh grade in the core academic areas of Math and Science, English and History, and then the first quarter of eight grade. And any student is taking a world language credit, or a class or a high school credit. So the GPA calculation from a system standpoint would be much more difficult to create. It's not something that we have available for our applicant pool, but it's not something that we actually have from a system standpoint because we don't create GPAs for our middle school students.

Dr. Brabrand 1:47:35

The other question Miss Tholen had was about adding spots and we can certainly look at that and then about what to do for kids that are back in the base school if they don't get in TJ. And was that a next step question you would ask before Miss Tholen?

Elaine Tholen 1:47:53

You know, I had mentioned it in our previous work session. But I will definitely be following up on that. That's a big issue. So my other question was about the testing for math proficiency and potential, math and science.

Dr. Brabrand 1:48:17

Your question whether the problem solving essay is going to get at what we need to get at, right? Is that whether it's going to pull out what we can find the kids with the talent, merit to attend TJ, right. Was that your question?

Elaine Tholen 1:48:35

Right. (inaudible) not doing the regular admissions test? Why are we thinking that this problem solving essay will be enough?

Dr. Brabrand 1:48:47

Okay, Jeremy or Marty?

Jeremy Shughart 1:48:50

Sure. So while that's one component of that holistic review, we've also looked at the GPA, we've looked at Math classes, or looking at the student portrait sheet as well. So there's a number of different areas here that we're considering and point together in terms of an evaluation of the students' overall application. So we're looking at multiple elements. So the problem solving essay is driving at a student's ability to be able to solve a unique problem that they've not been prepared or presented with before. Each year, we create and use new questions that haven't been used before within the process. But that's one piece within that whole puzzle. What we're also talking about is finding a way to identify students that are going to be able to be successful at TJ. Previously, what we were using that for was that was a way of identifying the strongest applications that we were seeing. And so it's a slightly different review of applications is looking at how these students would match up with the rigor of TJ. But I think that Dr. Bonitatibus can also speak about the students that are coming into TJ, how well prepared and kind of that sequential approach of students coming in, where they're coming in from, because there's questions about Algebra and those students as well. But we do believe that this would give us information and it's one component of a wholer picture of all of the students with the other elements combined that supported. So it's not just is the student exceptionally well, just as an example, sometimes in the current process, students do exceedingly well on the current test, and still don't get into TJ.

Or students do really well on the essay and don't get in or the exact opposite. We have students that don't perform well on the essay, but the other components have allowed them to be accepted into the process. So it's about understanding that it's not just one piece. If it was only the essay, the problem solving essay that we administered, then maybe there would need to be more than one problem solving essay. But we certainly think that this is a way combined with more elements to get to it.

Elaine Tholen 1:51:24

Thank you.

Stella Pekarsky 1:51:26

Miss Tholen, I think that wraps up. Next, we have Miss Sizemore Heizer.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 1:51:37

Thank you, you may also put me on go-back already.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 1:51:41

So I want to pick up on something that Miss Tholen said and Miss McLaughlin said. I think, first of all, we all recognize that there have been many years of changes trying to be made to make sure that we are getting diverse students at TJ and in addressing the issue of diversity in TJ. In

my many community meetings, it doesn't matter what.. All I'm saying, everybody agrees that we have a diversity issue with TJ and we are missing diverse students of color who have an aptitude, passion, and skills for STEM. So I think we can all agree on that. But I think I'm glad Miss McLaughlin brought up the purpose of TJ. I think we can't forget what the purpose of TJ is, which is to provide a place for those students who have these skills, aptitude and passion for STEM, advanced education in STEM. So having said that, we need to make sure that the process we have in place ensures that those are the students who are in our pool who are applying to TJ and what I'm hearing from everything is the admissions and the years of fixing it hasn't addressed that issue. So to me, it is a symptom of a larger problem. And the problem starts, you know, I appreciate Dr. Brabrand saying with AAP but I think it's much bigger than that. It starts with outreach, it starts with opportunities for STEM, it starts with AAP and advanced. So I am having a difficult time seeing how some of these proposals are really going to address the actual problem, which I think we all want to fix. I am really concerned earlier hearing some talking about the lottery versus the (inaudible) lottery. In conversations early, but why are we doing this system and how's it going to reach our super underrepresented populations and statements was, well often people from certain underrepresented populations may not apply because the test is a barrier and they don't think they can pass it. So now we have a lottery that lets them know that hey, now you have a chance. And honestly, the talent has to say now we have a random element in here you have a chance to be a TJ.

Every statement is about the test being the barrier, not the lottery being the solution.

And I don't understand if the test is the barrier, why the lottery isn't a solution. So we can look at different ways of getting to skills aptitude and passion whether it's a problem solving essay, whether as Miss Tholen brought up this situation that is it enough to make sure that those students have aptitude, passion and talent? Are we doing enough to build a pipeline to make sure that our opt students from all schools develop an interest in STEM, those who have the aptitude. But problem solving, is that going to get to make sure our students have the skills, aptitude, and passion. And I am disturbed at this way we're framing the test as the barrier and the lottery as a solution. I don't understand that relationship so as long as I can speak to that first, I appreciate it. (buzzer)

Stella Pekarsky 1:54:43

Perfect timing. Dr. Brabrand or anyone else?

Dr. Brabrand 1:54:50

I mean, as far as we can show what it looks like after the test is administered what happens to the pool. I think we share that at the prior. The solution, we brought you a solution with the merit lottery and a holistic admissions to identify the hundred kids who are best. And, you know, I'm not saying there may be other solutions out there. These are solutions that we believe will enhance the diversity that's already in the pool. So I don't know that I can respond any differently than that.

We have data that shares that the testing does draw down the talent, diversity of the pool.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 1:55:54

I'm not questioning that data. I'm just questioning the solution that's offered.

Dr. Brabrand 1:55:58

Right. Yeah, I mean, the lottery, the merit lottery, is a solution that increases diversity and the hybrid we've proposed also, we believe both of those will help enhance diversity for the TJ admitted class. That's the answer.

Marty Smith 1:56:30

And to eat a phrase, Dr. Brabrand, I think that based on the input that we received from the community and questions from board members, to paraphrase it was we were putting our eggs in one basket with the merit lottery. And so by providing an approach that uses two different ways for admissions to TJ, it provides more opportunities for students. And so as we think about putting all of our eggs into another single way in TJ, may not provide the same level of diversity that we're looking for. And I do have to agree, Miss Sizemore Heizer, that we are talking about the admissions process and we've shared with the board and I've shared in my years and working with Jeremy on this process, that this is more than just an admissions issue. This is an issue where we certainly do have to look at the ability for our students to take advantage of rigorous courses very early on in their elementary careers, so that they have options ahead of them. And that TJ is merely one of those options, but that they have options ahead of them to take advantage of rigorous coursework, wherever they land, whether that be within a class-based program, whether that be in a CTE program, whether that be in a program for students with special needs, whatever path they choose, we need to ensure that they've had a rigorous foundation. So this is merely one aspect that we're focused on now, knowing that we have to work on those other pieces concurrently. So I couldn't agree with you more than that, or couldn't agree with you more. Again, with regard to the lottery, there's nothing definite about this process. If I hadn't answered about how to solve TJ, I would have solved it many years ago. So I don't have the answer. I can't say that, yes, this will definitely provide a certain level of diversity. But I do know that it's doing something different than what we're doing now. And I do know that based on our previous modeling, the lottery does provide that diversity. I certainly would want to see what happens and know that we have the ability as you have the ability as a board. We have the ability as staff to continue to bring back recommendations until we get it right. But I will be the first to say that I don't have all the answers for TJ but we'll certainly stay long enough within this process to make sure that we were doing something that's better than what we're doing today.

Stella Pekarsky 1:59:31

Okay, thank you. We're gonna move on. I'll put you on a go back. There's still a few people who need to speak, Mr. Frisch.

Karl Frisch 1:59:43

Thank you. I want to go back to something that we started with Miss Keys-Gamarra. Can we talk about accountability? I guess one way to think about accountability is to go backwards and think

about how currently monitoring equity when it comes to TJ and elsewhere, frankly. How are we systematically monitoring demographics that TJ, both those applying, being accepted, being rejected, those accepting, and then leaving, et cetera, and how is that information being made available to the public and to the school board?

Dr. Brabrand 2:00:34

So Mr. Smith, can you answer that question?

Marty Smith 2:00:43

So we regularly are collecting data on TJ. Mr. Shughart has reams and reams of data on the diversity of our application process, the diversity of those students, and just numbers on the students who are offered and who accepted TJ. We provide information to the board as part of a regular report to TJ, and I believe that Mr. Shughart can talk a little bit more about that. But in terms of data collection, we have lots of data that we've collected about the diversity of our incoming classes, and the diversity of those students apply. As part of our outreach efforts, we regularly talk about those numbers and talk about that level of diversity with our administrators in our buildings and our middle school buildings with our liaison counselors. We know that the board has been very focused on increasing diversity over time. And so that discussion is at the heart of all conversations that we have about TJ, when we're talking with our stakeholders. I don't know how to answer that any differently other than just the way that I have. Mr. Shughart, is there any more information to share about how we share that information with the public or stakeholders?

Jeremy Shughart 2:02:24

So in terms of public, we do the news release, where we share information about the applicant pool, so it does share information about those that applied, and those that were accepted. Certainly, there were questions and concerns earlier this year about that release, in terms of the information that was provided. So that's done on an annual basis. Additionally, beyond that, there are additional information and documents and resources that are made available and provided to the school board, in terms of numbers of students that are going through from a school level perspective. And that information is certainly something that we share with you all as well. One of the things that Mr. Smith shared about, in terms of outreach and some other metrics, are some other elements. Some of the things that we do within the outreach is actually tracking the number of students that are participating in a variety of different events and actually monitoring and measuring the students that come from those individual schools, and looking at that. So there is a long term type of process that we've been working on within the admissions office in terms of looking at, can we kind of track students from year to year and so there's been some pieces there that we've actually looked at as well as in terms of implementation. So those are certainly metrics that we're currently using in terms of providing that information. And certainly I have additional information that if that's something that is requested and we need to share and have that with the school board, I certainly can share additional information as well.

Karl Frisch 2:04:19

I don't doubt that we have the information. I just wonder how we are taking action for accountability. I mean, it's back to Miss Keys-Gamarra's point. I don't think the board didn't know that there was an equity problem of TJ and in other areas. But I think we were all caught a little flat footed when the numbers about admissions came out this year. Shortly, there are indications long before acceptances are out that there are other issues going on and other problems going on. So if we're going to have a conversation about accountability, and making sure that we are picking up on things before they become a big problem or before they become a worst problem. I think part of the conversation, as Miss Keys-Gamarra was saying, is around accountability, and what we're doing to elevate those signs as they happen. Not just part of something like an annual review or as a standard report that comes out every year. Right? If something is brewing, we need to know about it. On the issue of outreach, I will second Miss Meren's comments about the need for a full fledged, really thoughtful plan here. I'm grateful to see some of the suggestions that I know I've made, and Miss Cohen has made, and others have made here about reaching out in ways that we haven't necessarily before. But I do think that it is still a bit too passive for outreach, especially when we're trying to reach historically difficult people to reach and to engage. So I would like to see some folks put into more active communication, right. This is something that comes up frequently, when we're talking about, you know, engaging families, and perhaps be part of that broader discussion as well. On the regional versus pyramid question, I have a couple questions. How did we end up with only one model of the regional approach?

Stella Pekarsky 2:06:50

Thank you Mr. Frisch. And I also see that Dr. Bonitatibus' hand is up so we can let her kind of jump in and then answer your question, if that's okay. I believe she may have had something to share.

Dr. Ann Bonitatibus 2:07:08 / 3:02 in video

Hi, thank you. I'd like to take this opportunity to answer Mr. Frisch's question and go back and revisit Miss Meren's as well. Because I was talking, since outreach keeps coming up. And I just spoke to what we were doing just within the walls of TJ. And I better understand that while I cannot speak on behalf of FCPS, I just would like to offer some ideas that I have talked to various groups about and to FCPS leadership about.

So first of all, when we're talking about outreach, we have to move beyond the notion that TJ is telling them selling something. It's going to be about partnering and we have to again meet people where they are. I'm just going to list a variety of things that I would be interested in exploring that I've done with other communities and found a lot of success.

So reaching out and partnering with Boys and Girls Clubs, (inaudible) organization, club sports and youth leagues, and working with service fraternities and sororities like the Alphas and the Gammas, going to barbershops, going to churches, synagogues, temples, reaching out in

communities and local restaurants, going to the corner via the mercados Latinos ["Latin markets"] and talking to community members there, partnering with businesses and industries who have (inaudible), being visible at events like the Special Olympics, going to cultural street fairs, and making sure that every time we go out and we present in the community that the presentation is being done with translations.

So people are sitting there with audio devices and they're hearing the translation at the same time and any print materials are translated and the outreach that our clubs do, whether it's through our students doing Techstravaganza, our TWIST, which is Women in Science and Technology, our computer rehab club that goes out and donates computers to our local middle schools, taught our kids do tons of science fairs galore, they're out there and they're tutoring at Weyanoke Elementary, bringing the kids in.

And so it's important to me that not only we're talking about outreach with these connection/connectivity events, but also what I call inreach. So it's just not about us always going out. It is how much we are cooling the community into TJ. So for instance, when our planetarium was finished, right away, we started partnering with a partnership fund so that we could pay for buses to bring elementary and middle school students from the school that received Title 1 funding and they came into our planetariums and saw themselves as scientists. Our labs, when our labs aren't being used all day long, because sometimes they're not in use. Why are there no field trips to TJ, and students can come into our school? It worked with some of our own kids about pulling people in, just not doing push outs. So I just wanted to make sure I went back. Thank you for just giving me a couple moments to be more explicit about some of the things that I think could be possible.

Stella Pekarsky 2:10:40

Thank you, Dr. Bonitatibus. Mr. Frisch, would you like to restate your last questions?

Karl Frisch 2:10:45

Yes. The question was did we only conduct one model? That's what we've been presented with, for the regional. And if so, why didn't we conduct other models for other variations or even for the same solution that's been proposed?

Marty Smith 2:11:16

So the original model that we proposed was the straight 70 per region. And the revised model we propose is to look at that proportionally. And so those are the two models that we've looked at as far as a regional approach. And, again, using that merit lottery..

Karl Frisch 2:11:41

I don't mean model as in like, here's one model of doing things and here's another model of doing things. I'm talking about the model that you've come up with to determine what the outcome of the proposal would be.

Marty Smith 2:11:55

Oh, and so we did look at a variety of schools. And we'd share that in the next steps of those five schools that currently have a lottery as part of their process, and looked at some studies on lottery processes. Overall, looking at about 34 schools that are like TJ, that have different processes, and those schools that we looked at had a test. So we did focus on those that had lottery processes. But really, with regard to the regional approach, we use feedback that we were getting from community members and from school board members around under representation by certain schools in the system.

Jeremy Shughart 2:12:46

Tim, I'm sorry, this is Jeremy, there was a question that Mr. Frisch asked about kind of running this together and waiting until the last moment. I'd like to take us back and remind both the board as well as the public because I don't think anyone was on the board, certainly, when this occurred. But back in the early 2000s, there was actually a Blue Ribbon Commission that was pulled together for TJ. And at that point in time, they made a large number of recommendations, and suggestions about the process and what we could do to improve our process. Coming out of that Blue Ribbon Commission, I think, with exception of maybe one recommendation, all of those recommendations were implemented over the series of years, kind of following the Blue Ribbon Commission in 2004. Those took time to implement because some of those costs significant money to be able to be a part of what that application process was. One of which was the establishment of an outreach specialist for the admissions office and actually to do a lot of the things that are being asked about here most recently. And so about a decade ago, that outreach specialist was created with the intent and with the idea of starting to reach out to all these groups and so with different levels of success, and not success. And so things have changed in terms of the outreach approach based upon what we have seen work and, quite frankly, what we have seen that hasn't worked over that time in terms of increases in numbers of students that have applied. However, as was also mentioned in the last presentation, just a handful of years ago, our office, unfortunately, had to take a staff reduction. And that staff reduction was to our outreach specialist. So we're functioning within our office in terms of the outreach that's being asked with a staff member that's only a part-time staff member. And we've shifted gears based upon that change in that position to try to better effectively meet the needs of as many students as we possibly can. But to suggest that there is a level of pieces and a level of information, there are a lot of different ideas and a lot of different activities that have been done. And what we've also identified is that some of this has to happen at another level. So we talked about the pipeline and providing information, and working with schools and with the individual teachers. The other piece here is it's about excitement for students. It's about a belief system that they have or they don't have. We're focused on TJ, but the other reality is that getting kids excited about STEM is a benefit for all of our schools and everything that's going on. So what we're talking about from the pipeline, and from the preparation for TJ only supports everything out. So I'm not suggesting that anything that is not being talked about here from an outreach perspective, that these aren't great plans and these aren't things that can be implemented and adjusted. But we also have to realize and recognize that having a staff member, that's a part time staff member, there's only so many hours in the day that we can actually accomplish the goals and the mission that's being put forward before us. To have prior people target the admissions office for staff reductions is kind of problematic when we're the

ones that are actually then carried out with the mission of making sure that this all happens. So let's be mindful of the history of what has changed and what has been presented. And we've made these changes with all the best intentions. We're bringing forward another proposal. At the end of the day, this is what we felt would best suit the ideas that have been presented from a school system. We've talked a lot about equity. And we've talked and mentioned a lot about why now? Why does this have to be done? It seems rushed. Well, some of this has to be that at some point in time, we have to make a decision to move forward. We've made a lot of different changes. We've implemented almost all the changes from that prior Blue Ribbon Commission, and you saw the last 15 years worth of data. Not a change in the data that was what we were hoping for. And so we've implemented changes that were made from recommendations. So we're bringing the board and to the public, a new approach. We're thinking that this approach is going to provide us with a very unique and new opportunity. One of the things that we haven't talked about is the social issues of the rejection within this process, and how that impacts the students that go through the current process and don't get in and feel as though that they're a failure. That's not the case at all. Being in a lottery, to some degree, there is a random chance here. And so, I'm sorry to be on a soapbox for a little bit but I do think that we have to be aware of that. In terms of modeling and thinking about this, we were approaching this from different ideas. And so there was looking at the current process, and what we were seeing with semifinalists and what was happening from the semi finalists round to the final round. So it was almost as though taking that approach and looking at the model. And what we were seeing from a semi finalists to the final round, is percentages of students that go from the semi finalists round to the final offer round is there's not a whole lot of a difference from a ratio perspective. So the students that make it to the semi finalists round and get into the final rounds are very consistent. The problem was that we were having inconsistencies going from the application round to get to the semi finalists round. If you consider the semi finalists round, that is what's made up of most of what we're proposing here with this process. The difference is we're saying let's open it up and find out all of the kids that can possibly do that and then give them a possibility of an opportunity. And I'm sorry.

Stella Pekarsky 2:19:42

Thank you Mr. Shughart. I think we're gonna move on because we've got quite a few people on go-back, a couple that haven't spoken. I'm sorry, Mr. Frisch. I think your time was up.

Karl Frisch 2:19:54

I'm just saying you can add me in the list of callbacks. Thanks. Yeah.

Stella Pekarsky 2:19:57

I will add you. I will take my opportunity. My apologies, Miss Derenak Kaufax. You go first.

Tamara Derenak Kaufax 2:20:06

Thank you, Miss Pekarsky. And I want to thank everybody here tonight. I first want to say, you know, TJ, currently, as it sits, is an amazing school with great parental support with an amazing principal. We know that there can be even a more diverse body of parents and students under

that roof. And that's why we're here. But I don't want to "TJ bash". I think it's extremely and I think that's happened a lot in the community so I just want to say that upfront.

As I make my comments, I've always stated that TJ is simply a data point that highlights that there's an imbalance of academic achievement and equity across FCPS. It's been evident in the application process and admittance data for years. It's one of the first things I've spoken to all four superintendents I work with, that I've worked with my time here. Why are certain demographics not applying? We have gotten the numbers for the past 10 years. And on average, when you average over the last 10 years, nearly 1000 Asian students apply each year, nearly 575 white students, Black about 123 and Hispanic 147. If we are not sure currently, what the pool is, what that 3.5 GPA average looks like, how can we predict the outcome?

And how will we even know more will apply if there's just an invite, when these numbers have historically been what they have been for 10 years? Yes, outreach is critical. I consistently have talked about the pipeline. It's for the reasons I stated time and time again. Front loading (inaudible) of academic teachers in all elementary schools, fidelity of implementation in Math and Science curriculum, work to ensure young scholars. These are things that we've talked about that I've said a million times. All of these things have been suggested by APAC since 2016, maybe longer than that. But add to this, where their school programs where PTAs don't exist, or they're barely funded, and it becomes evident that these are large systemic issues about why TJ's membership looks the way it is. And we must fix those systemic issues to remain where we are.

We have to realize that TJ is a Governor's School. And from VDOE, it says the purpose of a Governor's School is to give gifted students opportunities beyond those normally available to students in their home school. This is on VDEOE's website.

And a Governor's School has been designed to assist divisions as they meet the needs of a small percentage of students whose learning levels are remarkably different from their age level peers. We have this obligation. We all have the obligation for diversity and by stating that, I didn't even get to ask/answer my questions. I respectfully say when we are talking about topics like this, we are not being held to a three minute rule. Staff is not being held and we can't even get questions out because we are not allowed to speak fully what we need to talk to the public about.

Tamara Derenak Kaufax 2:20:11

Thank you, Miss Derenak Kaufax. We will make sure you get another opportunity. I know this is an important topic. So thank you. I don't know if anybody wants to comment on any of that.

Karen Corbett Sanders 2:23:36

There was a question in there in the beginning. There was. If you want me to restate it again, I can.

Stella Pekarsky 2:24:00

Mr. Brabrand?

Dr. Brabrand 2:24:01

I mean, in full confession, if you could restate the first part of the question would be helpful. Again, I was listening to everything you said. But I listened more at the end.

Tamara Derenak Kaufax 2:24:15

It's where I talked about the 10 year averages of who applies. And I said how can we predict the outcome if we don't even know what the pool number will be? And because these numbers are so embedded, what type of outreach is going to happen? But first of all, because we don't know who has that 3.5 GPA, how will we know? How can we predict the outcome?

Dr. Brabrand 2:24:46

Okay. I heard that. It's just a time check. It's 10 o'clock. I've been working 15 hours and I'm sure many of you all have to so it's trying to think, listen, talk. This has been a 20-year issue. This is why it's hard. Lots of boards, lots of superintendents, no change. I'm trying to bring change. I'm trying to bring something that's different. Jeremy, let's go back for a quick question on the GPA because I think you answered it earlier that we don't have GPA. I think what Miss Derenak Kaufax is asking can we find out like how many African American kids in seventh grade have a 3.5 GPA? Can we say that or say why we don't have that and language in a sentence or two.

Jeremy Shughart 2:25:33

So there's a difference between a GPA, which most people think about from a high school perspective, and what we use for the admissions approach, which is just a core academics. The other issue is as a school division, we don't calculate GPA in the middle school level.

Dr. Brabrand 2:26:00

Jeremy, when you say that we don't calculate GPA, but don't kids get A's B's C's, right?

Jeremy Shughart 2:26:06

Correct. They do. So that's what I'm saying is that that would be something that we would have to look into to see if that's something that we can create from a DIT's perspective.

Dr. Brabrand 2:26:19

Right. But Jeremy, when we say that we're doing a pool of 3.5, how do we determine those kids have 3.5? I think that's what Miss Derenak Kaufax is getting at. So based on how we determine that, can't we see if there's a greater pool that's lurking in the back of kids that just aren't applying?

Jeremy Shughart 2:26:37

Well, yeah. I suppose there is. I think to answer your question about how the students know, previously, when the GPA was at a 3.0, we worked with the students to calculate their GPAs. So

part of this is that the information is, look, you're applying to a Science and Technology school, right? I think that this is a simple Math problem where students were able to be able to calculate that out. And we would actually do that in a presentation when we're standing in front of parents and students, and whatever. We would talk about, this is how you do that, that you don't go to your counselor and say, give me my GPA, because that doesn't exist. And so what I'm suggesting and what I'm providing to you is, that isn't something that has a system that we've done, where we've identified a core GPA from the end of seventh grade, and have that as readily available. That's something that we'd have to look into to see if we can bring it back to answer your question. What I'm just telling you is what we don't have currently is we don't have that information. That would be something that we'd have to investigate, to see if we could bring it in. What we did provide to the board and what we did have is the number of students that were enrolled in the Math classes to be able to go through. And so that is information that we do have access to and then we've been able to look at that from a three year perspective to be able to provide you a little bit of a trend line to see where that information is. I'm not sure if I answered your question, though.

Dr. Brabrand 2:28:19

Yeah, I think I'm getting closer. And Marty, maybe, you know, do we not have in SIS, our Student Information System, a GPA for middle school? I guess that's what Jeremy is saying that we don't track a GPA like we do in high school and SIS. Is that true?

Marty Smith 2:28:37

Yeah, I believe that is true and I can follow up with that. What I do know is that Jeremy's office does this manually by taking grades and converting them so that we have a base grade for everyone both within FCPS and outside.

Dr. Brabrand 2:28:54

So the bottom line is, and I think this is what board members are saying tonight, we need to continue to modernize our IT infrastructure to capture data that is strategic toward goals that we want. Jeremy has the office of a person and a half trying to hand calculate the middle school GPAs for kids.

Marty Smith 2:29:16

And it's also philosophy. There's also philosophy. I would imagine around collecting GPA for middle school students and scribing GPA for middle school students.

Dr. Brabrand 2:29:27

I see. All right, thank you.

Stella Pekarsky 2:29:30

Okay, thank you. I want to move us along a little bit. I'm going to take my turn. So just to kind of piggyback off of what Miss Derenak Kaufax has said, and I think some others have touched upon the GPA. Do we have this GPA for the applicant pools that have applied for the pools?

Jeremy Shughart 2:29:52

Yes. So for the applicant pools, we create a GPA internally within our process, in both internal and external students. We calculate the GPA for them. We also calculate a sub-GPA or Math/Science GPA for those students as well. So as a part of our process, we collect grades throughout that where our participating jurisdictions, the counselors at those schools actually enter grades into the application process for us, so that we can calculate the grades out.

Stella Pekarsky 2:30:33

So, okay. Is that something that could be provided to us? So we have an idea of what the number of students are that have 3.5 or higher GPAs, and what that looks like?

Jeremy Shughart 2:30:55

Sure, I mean, we can use the prior applicant pools and be able to go back to the 3.5 GPA. So that the modeling, just so that we're clear, the modeling that we used in the previous presentation was on a 3.5 GPA. So we removed the students that were in the applicant pool that did not achieve a 3.5. So when we went through the modeling, that modeling was for students that were at a 3.5 or above. And that modeling went back for three different years. So we showed that over the sequence of three different years, and I believe, if I recall that was this current application year, I think it was the class of maybe 2020/2019, as well as I believe it was 2015, I don't recall completely, but I think it was that. And that is the information that we used for that modeling, and I certainly can provide that information to you.

Stella Pekarsky 2:31:54

And I do remember those pie charts. I mean, those, you know, those projections had some minimal gains in diversity but the largest gain was actually not, I think the students that we're trying to capture, is that correct?

Jeremy Shughart 2:32:20

So in terms of largest gains, there's a distinction to be made between percentage gains, and raw student gain. So if you're looking at percentage gain, and some of this has to do with small numbers to begin with. So if you're starting with numbers that are under 10 and raising those numbers said significantly, we were talking about some of our underrepresented or historically underrepresented students, increasing by anywhere from six to seven times. Whereas the large gain that I think that you may be referring to was the White student population. There was a gain there, but it was not proportionally as large as what we were talking about with some of the other groups. The other groups were more than doubling in that case. And I want to go back to some of the modeling and the projections that people were asking about because I think that might be what some of the last people were asking questions. The projections that we were doing were off of the admissions pool, and it was off of those admissions pools with these qualifications of 3.5 and the Math. So we did use that in terms of the modeling from the previous presentation as well.

Stella Pekarsky 2:33:46

Thank you. I think a lot of great points have been shared by my colleagues, something that I would be remiss not to bring up in this meeting. I applaud your desire and I agree with what your

goal is. I think we all have the same goal. That's why I want to look at things like I think Miss Meren brought up. How are we engaging the families of the students that we feel are being left out? And how do we assign accountability to that? I think those are very important topics. And I'd like to see very specific goals for that. But I would be remiss not to bring up the fact that we and Dr. Brabrand have had thousands of emails surrounding TJ and there are very strong feelings from both sides, people who like a lottery approach and people who don't, and I found a lot of common ground among many of the people that I've spent hours on speaking to and I just have to say that they do not feel heard in this process. And I think that's unfortunate. I just have a very hard time understanding why we haven't engaged some of these communities beyond a town hall. From our very first work session, it's the same comment I made. I just think the ideas and the feedback that I have gotten from people are just amazing. And I really wish that was part of this conversation. I hear commonality. I'll take my go-back. Dr. Anderson, go ahead.

Ricardy Anderson 2:35:57

Okay, thank you. I will make my comments and then we will take the pulse of the board on some of the common issues that have been raised throughout our comments.

And then we will continue with the go-backs. As Miss Pekarsky shared, and I also think we began this conversation with comments by Miss Keys-Gamarra that have shared that we have large groups in our community who are aching for this change, and so much that they are willing to accept an imperfect system and an imperfect process.

And that is significant data feedback to me at least, and perhaps the many of us in terms of how desperate people must be when they're willing to kind of settle a little bit for something that is imperfect because of years and years of inaction as Miss McLaughlin shared as a longtime member, as Miss Derenak Kaufax shared also as a longtime member of the school board. Why don't I get to apply to TJ, this is a question that I've had myself.

And I actually decided to call all of my principals here because at Mason District, we have the fewest number of students who are represented in TJ admissions more than any other area, I'm fairly certain of that. When we have schools across five years that have had one admission, we want to get admitted.

And my principals who have all very unique views, the principles in this area have shared that our kids don't see themselves at TJ. They don't see a path for them, because they don't see other students that look like them being accepted into the process.

And when they're denied, it's a very public process. They know for sure, everybody knows in their community that they were not accepted.

So they shy away because of that social emotional trauma that I think Mr. Shughart shared, and the fact that as students who do have that high aptitude for math and science, they can work the numbers and see that that's not in their favor. And so that's a sad commentary regarding the state.

We'd love to have that information and at a greater level, except for just my middle schools that I was able to find that information for.

Changing gears a little bit, I want to share my support for the following. I want to be clear, everybody knows this, removal for the test, removal for the application fee, the yearly reporting for the metrics that I believe one of my colleagues share, we have to develop that because how else we will we know that we have hit our target, and most importantly, a very comprehensive address of the systemic issues that led us to this.

This is just the final hurdle and all of the hurdles as some of our students have been experiencing since the time that they've entered Fairfax County Public Schools, we have to be sure that we are addressing all of that.

Oh, my goodness, I didn't even get to my question. I will put myself on a go-back.

Ricardy Anderson 2:39:10

We have a number of go-backs. And, at this point, I would like to take the pulse of the board on about three issues that have been part of the conversation so far.

So please give me a second. So I believe everybody pretty much was on a go-back. Is that fairly accurate? Probably.

So I'm just going to ask everyone to please lower their hands, so we can get to the consensus taking of some issues.

It looks like everybody's on for a call-back, so we'll just regroup.

One of the first things that I believe most of us commented on was regarding the assessment. I would love for us to give some feedback to the superintendent in terms of some consensus or concurrence regarding the removal of that.

So I will propose that we take a quick poll, if we are in favor of removing the assessment that has been articulated to be a barrier, both in this presentation and the previous.

I would like for hands to be raised to that.

Karen Keys-Gamarra 2:40:29

Madam Chair, may I just ask for clarification?

Ricardy Anderson 2:40:32

Yes, ma'am.

Karen Keys-Gamarra 2:40:34

You're calling it an assessment and I believe you're talking about the test. And I think that that's how the community hears it. So I just want to clarify that that's what we're talking about.

Ricardy Anderson 2:40:44

This is what we're talking about, the test. The test that we've been talking about, that has been the barrier for many of our students. So in terms of trying to give some feedback to the superintendent.. Yes, ma'am.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 2:40:56

I apologize. Just to clarify, Miss Keys-Gamarra. You're talking about the currently used test, the Quant Q test, correct? I just want to make sure we're clear on exactly what test we are talking about.

Ricardy Anderson 2:41:06

That is exactly right. I believe this will be helpful for the superintendent as he prepares his statement to the state that is due October the 12th. So this is the removal of the Quant Q test. I'm sorry, whoever it is, go ahead.

Elaine Tholen 2:41:25

Mr. Shughart raised his hand up.

Ricardy Anderson 2:41:28

Oh, Mr. Shughart, please go ahead.

Jeremy Shughart 2:41:30

So I just want to point out that there's actually a battery of tests. So it's not just the Quad Q that's administered. It's also the ACT Aspire reading and science.

Ricardy Anderson 2:41:41

Correct. So the assessments that have been discussed as the barriers from the applicant pool to the semi-finalists pool, as clarified by Mr. Shughart. If we are in support of removing that, as suggested by the superintendent, please show your hands at this time.

Megan McLaughlin 2:42:05

Madam Chair, it's Megan McLaughlin. I tried to raise my hand, but it said it was number seven. And in question to what you want us to vote on?

Ricardy Anderson 2:42:14

I'm asking us to vote on..

Megan McLaughlin 2:42:16

Like you allowed the other board members, including Rachna Sizemore Heizer, I want to bring clarity to what we're voting on.

Ricardy Anderson 2:42:26

No, go ahead. I'm sorry. I thought you were asking me a question rather than wanting to make a statement. Go ahead.

Megan McLaughlin 2:42:32

No, it's a question. So what I know I have heard the board talk about is that for this year, all the reasons we've talked about to remove the test for this year, so that the public understands we're not making a long-term decision when there is a whole lot that we have still not discussed, including Mr. Shughart saying that this isn't just Quant Q, which is what we mostly talked about. There's all these other things.

So I'm just uncomfortable giving direction right now, at this very moment, when it's unclear. Are we talking about forever and ever or are we talking about for this admissions cycle?

Ricardy Anderson 2:43:13

Miss Corbett Sanders, would you like to speak to that? I know you've had conversations with folks regarding this.

Karen Corbett Sanders 2:43:19

Yes, thank you very much, Dr. Anderson. It is my understanding and speaking to everybody on the board, that this is the elimination of the admissions test and the associated application fees that have traditionally been, originally they were the administered test, and now they're the Quant Q and ACT, those barrier tests.

Those tests that have indicated that they create barriers or cultural biases in how they're administered. So the idea is that similar to what the superintendent has recommended, is that we would replace that battery of tests with a holistic admissions process, which includes the three parts that were identified by the superintendent.

Ricardy Anderson 2:44:21

Miss McLaughlin, does that help?

Megan McLaughlin 2:44:30

Well, it was my understanding that the Quant Q suggestion is to remove the standardized test and they put a problem set in its place.

I feels like instead we're just like speaking to one piece, and that's making me uncomfortable.

Karen Corbett Sanders 2:44:44

That's the next piece on it. So if possible, I circulated some language earlier today and that might help bring us to some focus here but it's a two-part question.

One is the test and associated fees.

And then the second is greater clarification from the superintendent, which he would bring back in December about how the merit-based approach to the admissions process, which will focus on the whole student, aptitude, and take into account a student's access to opportunity to include FRM and inclusion and underrepresented populations or other criteria that the superintendent would recommend.

Ricardy Anderson 2:45:38

So, Ms McLaughlin, we're going to go, I see you Miss Sizemore Heizer.

Megan McLaughlin 2:45:43

Let's move on. Thank you.

Ricardy Anderson 2:45:46

Thank you. Miss Sizemore Heizer?

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 2:45:48

Just a point of clarification here. Are you just looking to try to get consensus on pieces we can agree to? Or are we in this moment directing the superintendent because I'm a little confused.

Ricardy Anderson 2:45:57

We're looking to get consensus, because we want to be able to give him substance of how to move on for Thursday, when he brings the next part of this presentation.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 2:46:09

Okay, thank you.

Ricardy Anderson 2:46:10

Because right now, we're giving a lot of feedback. So we're not necessarily looking to give a direction, but he needs to know where we are sitting as a board.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 2:46:18

Thank you.

Ricardy Anderson 2:46:19

Does that make sense? Okay. So we're going to go back to that first piece, the elimination of the assessment and its associated fees. If you are able to, to give concurrence to that, please raise your hand at this time.

Megan McLaughlin 2:46:40

Dr. Anderson, I thought the associated fee is the application fee, not the test fee.

Ricardy Anderson 2:46:47

Thank you, Miss McLaughlin. I did get my two points confounded here. So folks, please lower your hands.

We're gonna start this again.

Remove all of the assessment. Just as Miss Corbett Sanders described and just as Mr. Shughart just talked about a little while ago, the assessment that prevents our students from moving from applicant to semi-finalist stage, primarily the Quant Q and the other associated assessments.

If we are giving concurrence consensus of the superintendent regarding the removal of that assessment, as he has shared on page 11, I believe of his holistic review or 10, please raise your hand at this time.

Ricardy Anderson 2:47:40

We have Miss Keys-Gamarra, Miss Meren, Miss Corbett Sanders, Miss Cohen, Miss Omeish, Mr. Frisch, Miss Derenak Kaufax, Miss Sizemore Heizer, Miss Pekarsky, Miss Tholen, Miss McLaughlin, and myself. So that is unanimous. Please lower your hands.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 2:48:09

The next piece is the removal of the application and its associated fees. Again, as described by the superintendent..

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 2:48:18

It's not the application itself, right?

Karen Corbett Sanders 2:48:21

Correct. It is just the fee.

Ricardy Anderson 2:48:23

I'm sorry, the application fee as described, I don't remember the page of the document here. But if you find that, please go ahead and put that lottery proposal up so people know exactly to which I am referring. Dr. Brabrand and Mr. Smith, can you identify the page on which that is shared?

Dr. Brabrand 2:48:53

Checked in right now. Hold on there. Mr. Smith, I think it was in the original presentation that we specifically mentioned the removal of the fee. I don't know if it's on a slide today.

Ricardy Anderson 2:49:28

That is okay. We're going to proceed, the removal of the application fee. If you are able to support that, please show support for that to our superintendent at this time by raising your hand. We have Miss Corbett Sanders, Miss McLaughlin, Miss Cohen, Miss Tholen, Miss Keys-Gamarra, Miss Pekarsky, Miss Omeish, Miss Meren, Miss Sizemore Heizer, Mr. Frisch, Miss Derenak Kaufax, and myself. That is also unanimous.

Ricardy Anderson 2:50:00

The third part of the conversation that's been talked about quite a bit, please now lower your hand, folks, is the capacity increase at TJ. Increasing it. I know this is also a next step. So I'm a little bit more hesitant on this one, whether or not we would want to show support for it pending what the superintendent tells us, because I think there was a next step that somebody asked. I am sorry, was that you Miss Corbett Sanders? Somebody wrote a next step regarding what that may look like.

Karen Corbett Sanders 2:50:37

The next step is to bring the capacity usage at TJ into alignment with what is used at other schools. So it would be as much as 50. But he can come back to it. The superintendent could come back with a recommendation on this specific number.

Ricardy Anderson 2:51:02

So this is a next step that's also going to kind of give you a **sense of where the board is on this matter**, which is to increase the capacity at TJ, to be more in alignment with the other schools. And the details will be for you to share with us hopefully by Thursday. If you are able to support this measure, please raise your hand at this time. We have Miss Corbett Sanders, Miss Pekarsky, Miss McLaughlin, Miss Keys-Gamarra, Miss Cohen, Mr. Frisch, Miss Meren, Miss Derenak Kaufax, Miss Sizemore Heizer, Miss Tholen, Miss Omeish, and myself. That is also unanimous.

Ricardy Anderson 2:51:52

The other piece that I know we heard some conversation about it, not as much as the others, but I do know this is a piece from what Miss Corbett Sanders shared earlier. This is.. I'm sorry, Mr. Derenak Kaufax, did you have a question? Thank you. This is the review of the Pyramid versus Regional versus Middle School approach. Miss Corbett Sanders, did you want to speak to that really quickly, just to be sure everybody's clear on what we're asking them to provide support on, rather, consensus about.

Karen Corbett Sanders 2:52:29

It's to utilize a middle school approach based on the proportion of students at each middle school as the basis for the numbers of students for each area, rather than just the regional approach, which does not allow for full representation from each of our pyramids in middle schools. So it is an approach that looks at the admissions pool by Middle School, which is consistent with how many universities look at admissions and identify qualified applicants by school.

Ricardy Anderson 2:53:18

Thank you. Miss Omeish, did you have a question about this measure?

Abrar Omeish 2:53:23

Yes, thank you. I just wanted to clarify, if this would be proportional to population within the schools? That's a critical piece. So I just want to make sure that's included before we vote.

Karen Corbett Sanders 2:53:36

Yes. Thank you.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 2:53:41

Again, are we just asking him, I apologize for clarification. You're asking him to explore using that approach and bring us back more information? Or are we directing him to use that approach? I'm just very unclear here what we're trying to get because I'm honestly a little uncomfortable doing this piece by piece here without having our go-backs.

Ricardy Anderson 2:54:01

Okay, then, if we are uncomfortable with the rest of these, I think the first three issues that we talked about, were really discussed by almost everybody during their comments. So I'm happy to stop here for us to complete with the go-backs and come back to these matters. So right now.. I'm so sorry.

Karen Corbett Sanders 2:54:22

Dr. Anderson, perhaps we could also all agree on the holistic approach that was presented, which asking the superintendent to come back with a fuller we can agree that there will be a merit based approach to the admissions process, which will focus on the whole student aptitude and take into account a student's access to opportunity to include FRM inclusion in underrepresented populations. That is similar to the language that the superintendent provided on a discussion about the merit, it is the holistic review discussion placed on page nine. So if we could get support for the holistic review.

Ricardy Anderson 2:55:30

I'm not sure that we are 100% clear on that, could you please repeat that?

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 2:55:34

I apologize but we all have a list of go-backs. We all had things we want to say that we've only, all each of us, have three minutes to speak to this point, we've had staff who've spoken for a significant length of time, I don't really disagree with some of these proposals, but I feel like we're being a little premature in trying to figure out what we're even directing or suggesting or recommending here.

Ricardy Anderson 2:55:57

That's fine. That's fair enough. We already covered three points. Let's go ahead and just continue with that go-backs and we will come back to these measures a little bit later on in this evening. We'll suspend it at this point. I do believe just about everybody was on the list for a go-back. So we will start probably in the order in which we started, which is Miss Keys-Gamarra, go ahead.

Karen Keys-Gamarra 2:56:24

Thank you, I'm just trying to get my camera on. Okay. So I appreciate that we were able to go over the things that we agreed to but a number of things have been said tonight and I want to make sure that I'm looking at it overall. I'm hearing a number of my colleagues saying that there are pipeline problems that there is a larger problem, obviously, we just dealt with the test, that there are lots of contributing factors. I would like to also say that in the process of studying this issue, in the various capacities that I've been able to do so, we also have had a number of years where we tried to do a number of things, including which some of which are listed in the Blue Ribbon study from 2000, which was never fully implemented. We also studied, I was also able to look at the lottery being a part of the solution, even though I don't think we have a consensus on this board for that, but I would like to authorize the superintendent to show us how it can be an effective measure, because that is how the state has been looking at that. I also want to address this issue of what diversity means. I've heard a number of comments from letters, even some deceptions. And it all seems to equate diversity, some of it with, oh, my God, are we going to lower our standards.

And I want to say, just as we are concerned about certain communities feeling that we are maligning them by talking about tests, we must be very careful and we must be cognizant of how demeaning these types of comments are and that many people consider these comments to be rooted in racism. I'm not saying it's intentional, but we need to be mindful. We've also talked to them.. Is that my time? Oh, that's my phone. I'm sorry. Okay.

Karen Keys-Gamarra 2:58:27

We've also talked about the purpose of TJ. The purpose of TJ is not, as far as I understand, is not for gifted students but is for students with an aptitude for STEM, and science. And we seem to be looking for, we'd like to have been able to predict the outcome, and we may not be able to. So with that, I want to make sure that we do pin down those things that we can do. I understand that Miss Corbett Sanders and Miss Pekarsky have worked together to help bring an idea that we can discuss more fully. But I also would like to release the superintendent to be able to bring ideas to us that, he believes, will work that we may not have consensus on right now, such as the lottery. And I think that was the bell for me, correct? Okay

Ricardy Anderson 2:59:20

Once I put on my camera, that means time's up. I try to take off my camera.

Karen Keys-Gamarra 2:59:26

And everybody's you know, in any way, I will be respectful. But those are the comments. I wanted to say.

Ricardy Anderson 2:59:32

Thank you. Since you only had comments, Miss Keys-Gamarra, and not questions, I will move on to the next speaker. Is that fine?

Karen Keys-Gamarra 2:59:44

Unless Dr. Brabrand wants to comment about the opportunity to be able to bring to the board his justification for the lottery, which I don't believe we necessarily have consensus for on this board. But I don't want to limit the superintendent If he can bring something that is justified with metrics and data.

Ricardy Anderson 3:00:05

Thank you. That was your time. Dr. Brabrand. Go ahead.

Dr. Brabrand 3:00:12

Thank you Miss Keys-Gamarra. Well, I'd like to share that I think what we may want to consider is where the board has already made some decisions tonight. And then talking about those decisions can form my response to the state by October 12. And then allowing for some additional time to take some of the feedback we've heard tonight, around looking at the lottery with greater detail, looking at the holistic process that Miss Corbett Sanders mentioned, looking at the lottery in greater details, like Miss Keys- Gamarra have mentioned, also exploring the outreach plan in far more details like Miss Meren and Mr. Frisch mentioned. All that cannot be successfully done by Thursday, I'm just being candid. So perhaps by working with the board tonight, we can identify those things that can constitute my initial response to the state, and find additional time for us to work on the other components of the admission process later this fall to bring back to the board. And I'd certainly be willing to work with the board, if that's the will of the board.

Ricardy Anderson 3:01:30

Thank you, Dr. Brabrand. And in a little while, I will get the board's pulse on what you've just proposed, which is to use some of the decisions and guidance that we've provided you with tonight to move forward with your statement to the state with what needs to happen and then for us to determine what timeline would be regarding the other issues that Miss Keys-Gamarra and others have mentioned this evening. So we will take the pulse of the board on that in just a little bit. But I do want to move on to our next speaker, Miss Corbett Sanders, go ahead.

Karen Corbett Sanders 3:02:11

Thank you. And I'm glad to follow Dr. Brabrand's comment because that is precisely what we offered earlier today, which was to kind of frame tonight's discussion with what can we get to yes on for the submission to the state and setting a timeframe of December for him to come back to us with more details on the areas that we would like to have more detail. I would also like you to know, I very much appreciate Mr. Smith's frank expression of it's time to do something different just to see what happens. And I absolutely agree it's time to do something different. And it's time to do something different that has a more inclusive result in a more inclusive environment at TJ. However, I do have concerns about it's time to do something different. And we do lots of different things. And we are not able to actually measure what is moving the dial or moving the needle. So I would hope that whatever we do is we make a commitment by this board to make sure that we make changes this year in this year's admissions process. We also then measure the effectiveness of those initial changes. And before next year's admissions process, be willing to say okay, what worked, what didn't work? Do we need to dial in with some additional

changes? Or do we say it's working and we need to give it more time. So I would just suggest that and along those lines, I am a little concerned that we aren't using the resources that we have available to us. And that includes data that's available to us through the SIS system. It also includes taking a look at what has worked and not worked in our lotteries. And my experience with the immersion lottery in our community in the Mount Vernon region is that it has not resulted in significant diversity, but it has actually resulted in a mechanism for people to choose not to go to certain schools. And so I would be very careful about equating a lottery at a kindergarten level which is when it's administered to one that is a lottery after we've done merit so I would like, part of the best practices, to come back with real examples and also some of the studies that have been done by some of the major universities and think tanks on the value of lotteries. I will continue to advocate for a Pyramid approach or a Middle school approach. I will continue to advocate for a holistic approach and setting a timeframe of December, as well as a regional board for TJ.

Ricardy Anderson 3:05:16

Thank you Miss Corbett Sanders, thank you for completing that sentence and not the entire thought. Miss McLaughlin, go ahead.

Megan McLaughlin 3:05:32

Sorry, just trying to get the video on. So first of all, I'm just speaking in order, Miss Corbett Sanders and Miss Pekarsky, thank you for what you send around to the board members. I do find that overall you've captured where I believe we can make some important steps for this coming admission cycle and do exactly what you said Miss Corbett Sanders. I am deeply troubled that Dr. Brabrand, Mr. Smith, Mr. Shughart keeps saying that this is a 20 year problem and it's too difficult to fix. Please go talk to MIT, Stanford, the elite public and private universities in this country. If you think that you can't figure out how to have a high performing freshman class selected, that also reflects the diversity of its applicant pool, that is entirely troubling. The pushback that you were getting from this community is reasonable. Our school board policy, our school board, or FCPS' regulation that Dr. Brabrand owns, and that the Virginia Department of Education says this is supposed to be a school for students who are gifted and exceptional, and that have exceptional quantitative skills. I absolutely believe every child from every background, and every diversity of demographics has that ability. What I do think is that we've had a flawed admissions process, and I placed it on the shoulders of the superintendent and his team. And I also placed it on this board that we will now be watching this intensively for this year and in the years to come, that you're gonna have to bring back why you can't accomplish it. But you have not demonstrated in the metrics cheeky calling a merit based lottery, you don't even have the data to share with us. What has been the GPAs, the core calculated GPAs of the last 10 years of the TJ applicant pool. So there's nothing now that we've taken out a standardized test, and you won't produce the GPAs and you haven't till we've asked and asked. How is the public and this board supposed to know that you're actually creating a merit based lottery. So it is my belief that Miss Corbett Sanders' proposal that we only do what we said tonight, and give direction about changes for the October 12 filing. And the rest of this stuff has got to include TJ faculty, and other AAP consultants and the community to talk about how you build a actual merit based holistic process and that you have to bring back the actual use of data, like the core calculate

GPA's, that Jeremy and his team have to show your modeling that you're actually identifying exceptional students. I'm sorry, this is so rushed. There's so many more things that the public has shared with us. But I for one, find it insulting to the community that you are saying we can't solve a problem that's been solved for 30 to 40 years by the universities already. It's unconscionable.

Ricardy Anderson 3:08:48

Thank you, Miss McLaughlin. Miss Omeish, go ahead.

Abrar Omeish 3:08:54

Thank you. To clarify, just to address the data question, I do want to say I shared some analysis with my colleagues. I would encourage you to look to that for some of the trends that exist. And I think it's important for us to keep in mind, there is no perfect solution. I mean, this is why we're here. The first solution, the solution, the next solution we're going to come up with, even the Ivy League schools, whoever it might be, they have many imperfections to their plans and lead to disparities of all sorts. And we know this. It's a well documented issue. I want to also distinguish us from that, because the difference here is it's our obligation to prepare these kids and empower them leading up to that point. Colleges take kids where they're at, but if a kid from K through 12 or I guess at this point K through seven/K through eight isn't prepared, that's a failure on our system and we have to really reflect on that. Anyway, I want to go back. I really appreciate Miss Karen Keys-Gamarra's points. I think there are some key components here and making sure this is not a conversation about dumbing down a standard. This is not a conversation about giving certain kids advantage over others. We're talking about students who are qualified that we know have fit within the 3.5 to 4 range, which is the current pool. Although we've allowed threes, but generally kids who end up in. So we already know. These are kids with talent and capability to be successful. So if we've understood that, we're otherwise limiting these kids. And the other thing to keep in mind, I wanted to mention, we're basing our judgments on rankings here. So we're looking at TJ as this gem School, which is exceptional in many ways, based on rankings and rankings that are based on tests, right. And our major problem right now is the test and how it's biased or made the outcomes lopsided for many reasons, whether it's the prep industry, whether for all the reasons we've talked about. So kids who are best equipped to take tests are entering the school that is ranked based on tests. And we're not really looking at the bottom line of what outcomes are best for kids, or what challenges are kids facing, or what are the circumstances they're being put in to end up in that circumstance. We're looking at the ranking and we're nervous about what's going to happen. At the end of the day, we're the ones that situate kids to succeed. If we're going to be intentional about it, that's in our hands to do.

Abrar Omeish 3:11:23

And finally, I mean, when we think about the student outcomes in the student conditions, you'll find it funny to actually know that there is statistical significance suggesting that even Asian students are disenfranchised by this process. So this is one of those situations where we really have to be intentional about looking at the data and seeing things for what they are. And even with the Blue Ribbon Commission that Jeremy mentioned, I mean, they've tried changing the

test, right. You guys have tried modifying for those of you who are senior board members, there's been modeling done. Bottom line and in summary, there hasn't been a perfect solution, there will never be a perfect solution. It's about what we choose to care about.

Ricardy Anderson 3:12:06

Thank you, Miss Omeish. Since you did not have any questions, I'm going to move on to the next speaker. Miss Cohen, followed by Miss Sizemore Heizer.

Laura Jane Cohen 3:12:21

I think Miss Meren was before me. Just, you know, I'm a big rule follower.

Ricardy Anderson 3:12:31

I appreciate it very much.

Laura Jane Cohen 3:12:35

You know, I think to echo a little bit of what Mr. Omeish just said, I want us to be mindful that there's never a convenient season to try to do what we're trying to do. Which is to say that there's kids in this system, who are just beyond incredibly talented. And we're picking up some and we're not picking up others, and how do we figure out why and how best to go about that. And I think my frustration has been, I would really like to see a model where the conversations that we've had about how you get to that top 100. Here's points ranking, here's all the factors involved in finding a TJ kid and how we look at what that means. And what does that kid do ultimately, for TJ, and for the culture, and the environment, all of those things that we have a hand in creating. And so I'm hopeful that Dr. Brabrand will bring to us a statistical model that really shows us, what does it look like if that holistic model is used for all 500 kids? And maybe that means we're gonna have to put more resources into two days worth of probes who are willing to come in and be proctors or evaluators and look at reading some of this. But let's not let that be the barrier to the best solution. Look, the truth is whether we're talking about AAP in this country, or Ivy League admissions, nobody has figured out how to make it (inaudible) happen. We have not been successful in that endeavor in this country. So how do we help be part of the solution? How do we help make this look and represent all the talent that we know that we have who really have this passion for science, technology, engineering, and math, because that's what this is supposed to be about, aptitude and passion, and we have to figure out a better way to get there. So I agree with Miss Keys-Gamarra. If you fundamentally believe in the lottery process, I would really like to see better data and better modeling that shows me, we considered all these other options and this is the best and this is what, because we didn't hear it tonight. But I would like your holistic process brought to all 500 and see what that looks like. Can we make that happen? And can we make it more representative of the different regions that we have in this county? Because I will tell you as the Springfield district member, I probably got five emails on this from people who were actually Springfield members, because we send about 14 kids a year. So my families are concerned about how we get their kids back in school and how we keep them and their teachers safe. That's where we are in Springfield. So I want us to get this right because then I want us to be able to move on and start evaluating this every year.

We got work to do and I want us to get there. I need us to get there and I need you to give us more data and predictive modeling that shows the best way forward. Thanks.

Ricardy Anderson 3:15:59

Thank you, Miss Cohen. Dr. Brabrand, I believe you have captured her sentiments. There are no questions there. So we will move on to the next speaker. Miss Meren, I see that your microphone is on. Did you wanna go back at this? Okay, the microphone is off. Thank you. Miss Sizemore Heizer, please go ahead, followed by Miss Derenak Kaufax.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer 3:16:22

Thank you. I'm happy to follow up Miss Cohen. Again, I wanted to reiterate what she said that I think we need data and information and a holistic approach that's really designed to look at the whole child as Miss Corbett Sanders said, to ensure that we're getting out all of our students who have the passion, skills, and aptitude for TJ. And I do not understand and do not see any data on how a lottery, the randomness of the lottery, gets to it. I do not see enough data and information on how the current merit proposal gets to what we're looking at and so I have a lot of concerns on the lack of information here to make sure that we're getting to the students that we want to get to.

I also just want to make a point, when we talked about the top hundred qualified versus percent of gifted that we end up. Be careful that we're not looking at the entire population but the pool from which we're looking at that top hundred qualified is already a pool that's been down selected through this merit process. So it's a different pool, that would make sense in a pool that we go through this GPA and problem solving that it would be a higher number of highly gifted because the pool has been down selected.

And also want to put out there in terms of that hybrid model that the students aren't being told how they got selected. So in terms of that caring culture piece, I don't think that is as a concern as we're discussing. But those are just the small pieces and I fully support coming back with a much better holistic approach. And I want to just say one last thing, when we talk about caring culture, when we talk about equity at the center, as the only Asian American on this board and as the first Indian American in this position, I just want to say that caring culture applies to everything and everybody. And I think my colleague, Miss Derenak Kaufax, mentioned about TJ bashing, and I just want to put out there that we need to be mindful of being respectful to all cultures, and in our conversations, and looking at a holistic approach that really takes into account that we welcome all students. So I'm just gonna put that out there. But I think that we need to have much more information to make sure that the approach we're doing is going to seek the goals that we all share, which is a diverse pool of students who have the passion, aptitude, desire, and skill for TJ. That's what TJ is, so I'm gonna leave it at that. Thank you.

Ricardy Anderson 3:18:52

Thank you. Miss Derenak Kaufax followed by Mr. Frisch, and then Miss Tholen.

Tamara Derenak Kaufax 3:19:04

I appreciate following my colleague Rachna. I think she stated some excellent points. I have a question, Dr. Brabrand. I, as a board member, am unclear kind of where we are now and what we've committed to as far as (inaudible). When would you like this process done? I need clarity on this right now. Because right now, I feel like you need to submit your plan but we have time to think and when is the end, the latest possible end date, that we can come together as a board to change this process this year.

Dr. Brabrand 3:19:55

Thanks, Tammy. The letter to the state is October 12, about what our plan is for the year, but it can incorporate many elements. Let me turn to Jeremy and Marty to see when's the latest that we can have a holistic process or lottery process or any other process, what's the latest we could wait. I know December's been mentioned by Miss Corbett Sanders. Jeremy/Marty, what's the latest we could wait to present to the board.

Marty Smith 3:20:29

I'm thinking now we have certain timelines and I'd have to confer with Mr. Shughart, because I don't want to speak for him and his office in the work that they have to do to create a process and then run that process and do all the work necessary to provide feedback to students. And so I can't give you an answer right now without knowing all the components that might be changing within the process to be proposed.

Dr. Brabrand 3:21:01

Okay, I see. Jeremy, did you want to make a comment?

Jeremy Shughart 3:21:04

I mean, time is of the essence. You know, the further we delay this, the more time or I should say the last time that's going to be available to actually implement whatever changes that are deemed to be necessary. And at the same time, we also know that a class needs to be seated, and it has to be seated relatively soon in terms of the bigger picture. So you know, December, to be quite frank seems like it's a bit too late in terms of having that information. To then turn around and open up an application window and go through this entire process, knowing what that process is going to be, because everything's on hold for right now.

Dr. Brabrand 3:21:53

So, Jeremy. I mean, we might have to extend by end of the month or early November, the latest?

Jeremy Shughart 3:22:00

We're gonna have to. Yeah.

Ricardy Anderson 3:22:06

Miss Derenak Kaufax said, you can please get back to her after you've had the opportunity to kind of review your timeline.

Tamara Derenak Kaufax 3:22:15

It's to the board and the general public. I have an idea but I think that the public needs to understand this, because there's been lots of moving parts in this. So I think that's important. I also think Dr. Brabrand, what's very important is that TJ is a Governor's school. And a Governor's school, by definition, is a school that gives gifted students academic opportunities beyond those normally available in their students' home schools. That is what is out there from the Virginia Department of Education. I think it's very important, there may be a mission statement for TJ and we might have to look at that as well. I am supportive of all the changes, of course, that I voted on today. But I am also supportive of having our board explore,

I'm not saying develop but explore, the idea of having what is called for in the Virginia Department of Education, a board of directors of regional and governing boards, I think that's important. The holistic approach is extremely important to me. And again, this is our sixth change in nine years. It's a lot of changes. I've been here for most of them. They are always done with the best intent, and I do believe there is a lot of merit out there from the community, some of the information they've given us, and that's why I would, at least, like opportunities for your team to look at some of those solutions that are out there and see if they can be put into this holistic approach.

Because we have some really smart, thoughtful people out there that are making additional suggestions. So I would like to do that and I do want to say thank you. This is difficult, because people are passionate. And I do feel that what we have to do is we may come from different opinions and different approaches. We all do want to make a positive change. But I think we must do this in a respectful way and we have to make certain we maintain that caring culture.

Dr. Brabrand 3:24:35

Well, thank you, Tammy. And I do have to say I think all of us that is one of the most powerful comments that has been made tonight. We cannot personalize this at the board table with the superintendent or the leadership aim, or the community. This school system and this community want the very best process for our students to access TJ. It's been a long, long discussion that has left folks frustrated, and I remain committed tonight to working with this board and our community to finding the right path. And I'm confident we will. So thank you for those comments.

Ricardy Anderson 3:25:19

Was that all, Miss Derenak Kaufax?

Tamara Derenak Kaufax 3:25:21

That's it for now.

Ricardy Anderson 3:25:23

Thank you. Mr. Frisch, go ahead, followed by Miss Tholen and then Miss Pekarsky.

Karl Frisch 3:25:28

Thank you, I'm going to try and be a little clearer. In my previous go, when I used the word model, I wasn't saying that the regional model versus another model. I was talking about the statistical predictions that we're making as part of the model. So maybe we can get to those questions I asked initially, did we only want to run one statistical prediction for the regional model? If so, how long did it take to put that together? Assuming you have all the data, it shouldn't take too long. And is it possible to get updated statistical predictions models based on the consensus of the board to grow the population of TJ? And then also to factor in if we were to go with a pyramid or middle school approach as opposed to region. I'm happy to clarify.

Marty Smith 3:26:29

I understand your question, Mr. Frisch around modeling. So thank you for that clarification. So I can certainly work with Mr. Shughart. I know that as we ran the modeling, based on the overall diversity, we can certainly look at what that modeling would look like, by regions. If you have to excuse me. It's a late hour and so I can't call up right now specifically the different models that were run, but we can certainly get information back to the board.

Karl Frisch 3:27:01

Great. And the question as to whether we could expect fresh numbers being produced based on the one or at least the current intent of the board to grow the population that TJ, and then to take into consideration other approaches other than the regional approach?

Jeremy Shughart 3:27:24

Mr. Frisch, This is Jeremy. To kind of follow up on what Mr. Smith was saying, I can certainly take a look back at the previous models that were run and reevaluate those from I believe what you're really asking is a school or a pyramid, and would likely run that from a school perspective, because of the way the pyramids are set up is very similar to a school perspective as well. So we can take a look at trying to model that.

Karl Frisch 3:27:52

It's great. And having a degree of understanding about staff's confidence in the numbers, whether there's a margin of error. Should we be seeing a margin of error or confidence interval in these numbers as well? Maybe I should say there's a question mark at the end of that statement.

Marty Smith 3:28:20

Yes, we can look at that. And we've had our research office also look at the numbers and so we can have another look at that with some particular margin of error, to see if we have the ability to calculate that.

Karl Frisch 3:28:35

Yeah. I asked that because I want us to, as these conversations continue, I want us to be basing this off of the best current data. And if we're able to do that for these alternate scenarios, or with the increased population at TJ, we should probably do that for the superintendent's second version of his proposal, too. So that we have an idea of how the predictions, the statistical

predictions, are impacted by the changes that he's proposing. Yeah, it's 11 o'clock. All right. I'll leave it at that. Thank you,

Dr. Brabrand 3:29:22

Carl, let me make one point.

Karl Frisch 3:29:25

I'm trying to get that information out there. Because initially, I asked those questions. My time was up and we talked for 30 minutes about a different meaning of the word model.

Dr. Brabrand 3:29:36

Yeah. One is the lottery. The other with the hybrid is the holistic process. And I think we can run some models back on all their data when we have that holistic process in place and try to look at the issue of the experience factors and the modeling for that because you wanted to see modeling for the lottery. And you want to see modeling for what a holistic process would look like.

Karl Frisch

Yeah. And I'd like to see how the lottery would be impacted by these things that folks are talking about.

Dr. Brabrand

Right. Got it. Thank you.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Doesn't that include the middle school by middle school approach as well?

Karl Frisch

And that's what Marty was getting at.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Make sure that's built in there.

Karl Frisch

Yes.

Ricardy Anderson

Miss Corbett Sanders, you have not been recognized to speak.

Karen Corbett Sanders

I apologize.

Karl Frisch

All right. I will yield my time.

Ricardy Anderson

Thank you. Miss Tholen, go ahead, please.

Elaine Tholen

Yes, thanks. I have a series of comments, really. Of course, I fully support working toward diversifying our student body at TJ, as I mentioned earlier, but remain uncomfortable with the current proposals and the data that backs them up. So I'm supporting what Karl and other people are asking for. I think some of the things that we've seen the alternatives that we've seen presented could give us more intentional ways to get to these results. But I do want to follow up on Miss Derenak Kaufax and Miss Sizemore Heizer. I implore you to engage in the community. In these discussions, I also have gotten incredible ideas and comments from people. The only people I've talked to that have asked me to not change anything, of course, are our eighth graders who are just, you know, in the throes of this that weren't ready to begin the process. So we need to be very sensitive to them. I'm super proud of our TJ students for hosting a town hall last night where they pulled together people with disparate backgrounds, using opinions for a real back and forth discussion and it took our students to show us how to collaborate and communicate with each other. And the discussion showed that there are lots of common ground across all of these interested parties, and we really need to bring them to the table and talk to them. We have so many families across our district that are focused on education and hard work, and we must honor these families and their students. To do so, the standalone schools, as I mentioned earlier, is part of an overall education system here in the county and our region. And changes at TJ will impact our other schools. So we need to pay attention to school capacities and school programming in our base schools. And I do have a motion around that I can save until later or I can put it in the next steps, whichever is most appropriate for this evening and save that until Thursday. But it's around this idea of really looking at how we're impacting our other schools with this process as well.

Ricardy Anderson

I think that would be a good next step for you to add Miss Tholen onto the list.

Elaine Tholen

Okay, you want me to put it in next steps?

Ricardy Anderson

Please.

Elaine Tholen

All right. Thank you.

Ricardy Anderson

Anybody want to speak to Miss Tholen's comments?

Dr. Brabrand

Thank you, Miss Tholen. I'm just not gonna thank you very much. I appreciate that feedback. And we will take your next step and follow up.

Elaine Tholen

Thank you.

Ricardy Anderson

Miss Pekarsky.

Stella Pekarsky

Thank you. I think, as Miss Tholen said, I'd like to see the outreach around this and going forward. I'm thankful to the board for supporting a different approach and a different definition to merit and aptitude outside of the test. I think our Ivy League's are getting away from that. I think there is a good body of research and writing out there that really limits children. All children, our kids, are more than just a single number. And from the many, many people that I have talked to and heard from, many actually agreed on a more holistic approach. So I look forward to hearing more about that from Dr. Brabrand.

I hear just even us on the board going back and forth on purpose of TJ and that really gets to the heart of what we're trying to do here, as Miss Derenak Kaufax mentioned VDOE, that says, very clearly that, TJ is meant for a small number of gifted students whose needs cannot be met in their schools and that's why it exists.

So how we find those kids, we will continue talking about that. I think an important piece of this is ensuring that these kids have advanced math courses and enrichment opportunities in their middle schools, especially. Because I know they do in my district, and I want that for all kids. At the end of the day, I cannot.. I will just say I do not see how the lottery system gets to our goal to find these kids, who we have missed along the way, who would excel and who really need to be at a place like TJ to reach their fullest potential. I don't see that in the lottery, I don't see that in the data, as some of my other colleagues have said. There are many other approaches that universities and such are using, that are diversifying and are doing a good job of being more inclusive and representative of the communities. And that's what I would like to see, that's where I am right now, that's what I've heard from my constituents. And I do hope that we get this done sooner than later because there is so much appetite in our community. But also because it's taking away time from things like getting back all our kids into schools for return to school. And I'll stop there.

Ricardy Anderson

Thank you. I will make my comments and then offer some wrap up things for this meeting. I do want to be sure that I articulate what my non negotiables are particularly as the representative for Mason district. This must be a process that has some direct link to the middle school as in the regional pool, which has been proposed, the schools of Mason or eclipse. Whether it's lottery, whether it is something else, I do not see us being represented based on the past data, if we do not move down that level of granularity. We need to have minimally a pyramid, if not, a

middle school approach. Also not having a process that is going to be in place to impact the incoming class of fall 2021, we cannot continue to kick this can down the road. We've heard person after person speak about how important this is, how overdue this is. So we really have to make sure that we have that impact. I also want to kind of touch upon something that Dr. Bonitatibus shared earlier, which Miss Keys-Gamarra also talked about. There seems to be this equation of the greater diversity, but the diminishing of the talent that can be brought into TJ. And I just really want to be sure we're cognitive of that narrative. So I want to make sure that we are not sending a message forward that these efforts are automatically going to diminish what TJ is, and its ranking in the world and in this country. We have many talented students who are everywhere and finding a way to have those talented students who have the aptitude, who have the passion, has to be paramount. It has to be part of our work. I am not beholden in any way to preserve the status of TJ or to preserve what we believe it is. Rather, I am much more concerned that we are going to serve the students who are here in FCPS, who have been wanting for so many years to have a chance to have their talents be recognized in a manner that it has never been before, because they've been discounted due to a number of reasons and a number of failed efforts, which many people talked about earlier. I do have grave concerns with the top tier because I do believe that provides, not top tier, those are my terms, the hundred students that we are going to just accept off the top as per the presentation, because I believe that provides a two tier system that makes me very uncomfortable.

It gives me a lot of reason for pause.

In addition, if we're really saying that TJ is for the gifted, we really will not be accepting students who have been Test Prep since second grade. We will really hone in for what that means and it will be a much smaller pool of students. So along those lines, I'd like for us to take a look at that. Set aside those reserved seats to be a lot more in alignment with the gifted population as determined nationally. Okay, so I will stop there. I will send my questions to staff at another point.

Ricardy Anderson

We do have a number of next steps. So if Miss Milburn, please provide those next steps.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Dr. Anderson?

Ricardy Anderson

Yes, ma'am. Oh, I'm so sorry. I did not see your hand. Go ahead.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Earlier this afternoon and throughout the day, many of us actually went through a list of questions or a list of areas that there was consensus, and did not finish up our discussion on consensus. Can I ask that we do that?

Ricardy Anderson

Thank you. I did pause on that as per the request of one of our school board members. Absolutely. I did send the three that we did receive consensus on. So let's go ahead and introduce one more. Go ahead, Miss Corbett Sanders.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Hold on one moment. I apologize, I am going to have to bring it up on my phone because I want to be able to see everybody as I speak. So the area that I don't believe we've gotten a full vote on or full consensus on is item number four which is.. Actually, if you can put up the three you've already agreed to so that I don't repeat them. But I believe item number four has not been agreed to yet which is agree that there will be a merit based approach to the admissions process, which will focus on the whole student aptitude and take into account a student's access to opportunity to include FRM and inclusion in underrepresented populations.

Ricardy Anderson

Let me ask a clarifying question about this. Will this preclude the superintendent from doing what Miss Keys-Gamarra shared earlier, which is to also provide some additional and better thinking regarding a lottery process?

Karen Corbett Sanders

It does not preclude that. But it does recognize that as a Governor's school that we are looking at the holistic approach to merit as is defined on I believe is page 12 of the presentation, the holistic review piece on page 12.

Ricardy Anderson

Okay, so page 12 has this student portrait sheet, a problem solving essay, and the experience factor?

Karen Corbett Sanders

Yes. And what this asked for is a bit more granularity to be shared with the board and with the public so that people know what to expect. It adds the transparency of that.

Ricardy Anderson

Can you please repeat that once more? The number four.

Elaine Tholen

Okay,

Karen Corbett Sanders

Agree that there will be a merit based approach to the admission's process which will focus on the whole student, aptitude and take into account a student's access to opportunity to include

FRM, and inclusion in underrepresented populations. So essentially fleshing out what's already on page 12 now.

Ricardy Anderson

You have a handout so I will go ahead. If we have some questions regarding this, we will take them at this time. Miss McLaughlin, go ahead.

Megan McLaughlin

Thank you. Just really quickly, I do think that my concerns may macro level, is whatever we do tonight, or whatever we do on Thursday, we may need to have legal guidance about how this will honor and not be in conflict with the school board's existing TJ policy, the FDPS existing regulation, and the Virginia Governor's School declarations. Maybe we don't have to solve that, by whatever. Dr. Brabrand files on October 12, but I'm concerned whatever we bring to the board table on Thursday night. If we're going beyond the things we gave him direction today on removing the test, removing the application fee, and then everything else will be determined at a later date, most likely by the end of December, I don't see a conflict with our stated policy and regulations, but beyond that, I would like guidance from Dr. Brabrand or Dr. John Foster, if we go beyond those three things for Thursday night, how do we reconcile the policy?

Ricardy Anderson

Mr. Foster, are you here?

John Foster

Yes, I'm here, Madam Chair. It's not clear to me if Miss McLaughlin is wanting guidance prior to Thursday evening or right now at the work session. I think that it's more realistic that I can certainly provide some guidance to the board prior to Thursday evening. I'm not going to be able to do it right now. But I can certainly work to do it before Thursday.

Ricardy Anderson

Thank you.

Megan McLaughlin

Okay. So then Dr. Anderson for the proposal on the table here from Miss Corbett Sanders. Again, this is giving guidance to Dr. Brabrand for further approval and discussion on Thursday.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Yes, this is part of what he would have to submit as part of the plan on the 12th of October. And so we would like him to recognize in the plan a holistic approach to merit.

Megan McLaughlin

Correct, but in support of what you have here, we as a board are not determining that this will be done through holistic versus lottery, or we would be putting a marker down that we are not approving a lottery approach, that we want a merit-based approach.

Ricardy Anderson

There is no marker.

Karen Corbett Sanders

It's not a marker. But as you know, the superintendent is suggesting that you have to do holistic merit, and then he wants to do a lottery over top of that. Okay, so what this does is affirm and go into detail the level of that holistic merit.

Ricardy Anderson

Miss McLaughlin? I'm so sorry, go ahead.

Karen Corbett Sanders

It's both merit and aptitude because it's an aptitude piece that gets to, frankly, many of the students that have the aptitude who have not historically applied to TJ.

Megan McLaughlin

Okay, thank you.

Ricardy Anderson

If I may, I do have a question about this or rather comment. I think this is a little bit redundant. And unless I'm missing something. Because we did have that conversation regarding the problem solving essay getting to aptitude. And if this does not preclude the lottery, but yet includes FRM and inclusion of underrepresented populations, those things are already being part of the proposal. So are we just agreeing to what's already here? I'm not seeing the need for us to agree on this tonight.

Karen Corbett Sanders

The reason you need to is because what you're affirming is an approach that the superintendent is now taking and as you know, much of this was done before we saw what was published earlier this afternoon. And what the superintendent needs to have from us is a go ahead on key components of the approach.

Ricardy Anderson

I understand but I think I still stand by my position of this being a little bit redundant at this point because we're still at the same place. We're not precluding any of this, including the lottery. So that's just my opinion.

Ricardy Anderson

Okay, so having said that, for those who can be in support of this measure, please raise your hands at this time. We have Miss Corbett Sanders, Miss McLaughlin, Miss Sizemore Heizer, Miss Pekarsky, Miss. Derenak Kaufax. Please lower your hands.

Ricardy Anderson

Those who are not able to be in support of this at this time, please raise your hands. I will raise my hand just not of the spirit but because I don't think it's necessary. So I have one. Those abstaining. Miss Cohen, Miss Meren, Mr. Frisch, Miss Tholen, Miss Omeish, Miss Keys-Gamarra. So at this time, this will not move forward. Thank you. Please lower your hands. The next piece, Miss Corbett Sanders, go ahead.

Karen Corbett Sanders

It's setting a time frame so that we can ensure that we adhere to or we have these changes in place for the 2025 admission year, which would mean for the admissions process this spring, so the students starting next September.

Ricardy Anderson

Absolutely in full agreement with that. One thing that I want to bring to the forefront of this is a conversation we just had with Mr. Shughart, where he needed to go back and review in terms of what more information we will need to help establish that timeframe. I'm wondering, should we wait until he provides that information to us, which I am sure we can have by Thursday?

Karen Corbett Sanders

We could just give guidance that we are going to enact changes for the new pot for the new admission year. And then he can give us a date specific, that's what I would prefer, is that we get the affirmation that we will have changes.

Ricardy Anderson

Right. Miss Cohen, did you have a question?

Laura Jane Cohen

I was just gonna say I think I mean, this is saying at latest, certainly it's something we can revise to move up if necessary. I don't see it as a limiting factor. So I will support it.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Thank you.

Ricardy Anderson

So we're going to go ahead, and I just pulled up your comments here. Require information to the board brought back to us. No, this is not it. It's not number five.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Okay, what I'm going to do is say establish the initiation of the admission's process timeline for the class of 2025 to begin no later than the end of January 2021. With the superintendent bringing back to the board, no later than December, the proposals necessary to accomplish those goals.

Ricardy Anderson

If I may piggyback on what you shared just a little while ago. The focus would be sure that whatever we have is going to be able to impact September.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Correct.

Ricardy Anderson

So okay, I'm in favor of that fully. Miss Keys-Gamarra, did you have a question?

Ricardy Anderson

Miss Keys-Gamarra. Were you voting? Or did you have a question?

Karen Keys-Gamarra

No, I was just seconding the motion so we could vote.

Ricardy Anderson

Oh, okay. We're just giving consensus at this time so we don't need to necessarily first and second those motions. So those who can be in support of this timetable as offered by Miss Corbett Sanders to impact the next school year, please go ahead and raise your hands at this time. We have Miss Keys-Gamarra, Miss Corbett Sanders, Miss Pekarsky. Miss Cohen, Mr. Frisch, Miss McLaughlin, Miss Sizemore Heizer, Miss Tholen, Miss Omeish, Miss Derenak Kaufax, and myself. That is 11. Please go ahead and lower your hands.

Ricardy Anderson

Those who are not able to support this motion? Not motion. Just suggestion, provide consensus around this suggestion, yes.

Ricardy Anderson

Okay. I see none. Those abstaining?

Ricardy Anderson

Miss Meren is abstaining. Thank you so much.

Karen Corbett Sanders

There's actually two more. I just want to make sure we have captured everything. Require the superintendent to bring to the board an annual diversity plan prior to submitting it to the state. The plan shall state the goal is to have TJ's demographics represent the Northern Virginia

region and the plan shall include actions detailing how outreach and supports will be extended to increase applications from underserved populations. So it's essentially an annual plan.

Ricardy Anderson

I'm sorry, I missed what you said because it was breaking up.

Karen Corbett Sanders

I'll send it around. I can read it again.

Ricardy Anderson

Please, if you like.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Require the superintendent to bring to the board the annual diversity plan prior to submitting it to the state. The plan shall state that the goal is to have TJ's demographics represent the NOVA region. The plan shall include actions detailing how outreach and supports will be extended to increase applications from underserved populations.

Ricardy Anderson

The four hands that are up, are you voting or do you have a question? Because if you do not have a question, please lower your hands so I don't get confused between the two. Okay, seeing that there are no questions, let's go ahead and show support for this measure. Miss Keys-Gamarra, Miss McLaughlin, Miss Cohen, Miss Corbett Sanders, Miss Pekarsky, Mr. Frisch, Miss Omeish, Miss Sizemore Heizer, myself, Miss Tholen, Miss Derenak Kaufax. Okay, that is 11. Please lower your hands.

Ricardy Anderson

Those who are not in support, please raise your hands at this time.

Ricardy Anderson

Miss Omeish? I'm sorry, the two of you already voted. I just need you to lower your hands.

Tamara Derenak Kaufax

I have a question.

Ricardy Anderson

Go ahead.

Tamara Derenak Kaufax

Miss Corbett Sanders, I didn't get my hand up in time. But I would like to add something, and I work with you. I wanted to say this, now, we don't need to vote on this because it's not fully formulated. But all of the things that many of us have talked about, the reasons, I hate using the word pipeline, but the academic imbalance and the lack of equity across, that has to be included in that. And that's why I was hesitating on voting for that. I know Dr. Brabrand is kind of

separating them. He's saying we're going to talk about AAP. And we're going to deal with it then but I don't think it should be dealt with separately, it should be part of this.

Karen Corbett Sanders

It needs to be a comprehensive plan, Miss Derenak Kaufax, and it should also include the diversity of the staffing at TJ as well as per the guidance from the state.

Ricardy Anderson

If I may say, let's go ahead and give consensus on this evening, when we come to our next work session around this. This is where we could flesh that out a little bit. But just for the sake of this late hour, and for what we need to accomplish, we'll consider that supported. I was still in the middle of the vote. Do we have any abstentions on this one? Miss Meren, thank you. All right, that counts all of us. Miss Corbett Sanders, was there another one?

Karen Corbett Sanders

I just wanted to make sure because I don't remember when we cut off conversation earlier. But agreeing to take a look at a middle school slash pyramid approach to the admissions process. So let's agree on an approach that looks at the admissions pool by pyramid, consistent with how many universities look at admissions and identified qualified applicants by those schools.

Ricardy Anderson

Okay, Miss Omeish. Do you have a question?

Abrar Omeish

Yeah. If I recall, the next step for me previously, and I think Dr. Anderson might be yours for this time, is to look at the merits of that against the school based one, I still feel strongly it should be school based. I'd love for that to be something that's deferred for more study by staff.

Ricardy Anderson

Miss Tholen, did you have a question?

Ricardy Anderson

Miss Tholen, go ahead.

Elaine Tholen

I'm sorry. I have two questions. I was confused by what Miss Omeish just said. I think I'm looking at it as a school based, it's the same as looking at that middle school reflection. And I just wanted to make sure that if we're voting on this, we're voting on that this is an additional thing that we should get some data on. Which I think is interesting, as well as the next step. Is that correct?

Ricardy Anderson

That is correct. I did add that as a next step. And this was also a topic that most of us brought up during our comments this afternoon, well this evening. We do need to have that

conversation. And I think this will accomplish either the next steps or this consensus to the superintendent that we would like to have this information, it accomplishes the same goal. This McLaughlin, go ahead.

Megan McLaughlin

As I apologize, because I know it's the late hour. I'm reading the top portion, and then the next portion. So on the approach that looks at the admissions like pyramid, I thought that at this point the board wants to see more data and modeling. And tonight, we're not giving direction if it's going to be by region by pyramid or by individual middle school. So Miss Corbett Sanders, am I missing something here?

Karen Corbett Sanders

I think we're fine with getting the data at this point. It was initially put on the table, as you know, because of concerns that the regional approach actually does not provide equitable access for certain schools.

Megan McLaughlin

Agree. And that's why I'd like to see the data for the pyramid and for individual middle school by middle school review.

Karen Corbett Sanders

And have it proportionate to the number of students in the school. Because one of the concerns is the underrepresented schools that have been indicated to us, they make smaller schools. And so if you look at proportional representation, that's a big piece of it, as well.

Megan McLaughlin

But again, is this to give Dr. Brabrand direction for Thursday, or about the admissions process, or direction to him about his annual report?

Ricardy Anderson

I think on Thursday, we're not going to be able to turn all of these around in the next two days for Thursday. So this will come over November.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Right. It's prior to the admissions process for next year, for those kids being admitted for next year, next September.

Ricardy Anderson

Miss McLaughlin, if it's helpful to know, I think the general sense is that Dr. Brabrand is going to submit a much less robust filing this Thursday, because it's due the 12th. So after this Thursday, he's going to offer something that has the points that we have already agreed upon, but much of this will be fleshed out after that date, and keeping in mind what we've just provided consensus on, that we do want for these items to be in place to impact the the incoming class next September. Did I help you though?

Megan McLaughlin

Well, just clarity for the public, for the board, and for Thursday night. Then what has changed is Thursday night, he will bring to us what his proposed filing will be for October 12 and that's the only thing we'll vote on for Thursday night's business meeting, will be his October 12 filing to this date. Everything beyond that will be for further deliberation in future work sessions, correct?

Karen Corbett Sanders

No, because there are a couple of follow-on motions that people are already talking about.

Megan McLaughlin

I just meant in terms of the action item that he will present to us, because we vote on his action item. And then the follow ons. I just want to know that the scope of his action item will have changed very much from tonight and we're now down to the test, removing the test. removal of the application fee, and that there is going to be further changes by the end of December to improve our efforts to increase diversity at TJ. Correct?

Ricardy Anderson

All right. And I also want to clarify that this is not an action item. This is a presentation item. That will be on Thursday, but it will be significantly more limited given the conversation tonight.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Correct. And it will also include the intention of the pool for TJ to be at the capacity on par with the other schools. So the admissions would be higher, more students. And then the other piece is the follow on motions, which would be for example, I put forth something on that at the end of last week on establishing a regional board for TJ similar to the ratio boards for every other Governor's school.

Megan McLaughlin

I just think everybody needs to understand that what the public has told me was that they understood Dr. Brabrand wanted to make changes to the TJ regulation with respect to admissions. And that was what the presentation would be and what we'd be voting on. So I do think it would be very important to have great clarity from Dr. Brabrand on what Thursday's presentation and purpose will be.

Ricardy Anderson

Dr. Brabrand, did you want to add to that at this time?

Dr. Brabrand

I think the bottom line is I'm going to present to you what the letter is on the 12th. It's going to be just the two or three things you talked about and then the rest will be for later. That's my assumption. We can talk about it and share tomorrow and verify. But as I sit here right now, at this time in the evening that my clarity is, it'll just be about what I'm sharing on the 12th to The Secretary of Education.

Megan McLaughlin

Thank you, Dr. Brabrand. I think that's appropriate and helpful.

Dr. Brabrand

Thank you.

Ricardy Anderson

Okay, so we were giving consensus on this last item, which is admissions, a look at admissions by pyramid/middle school. If you're able to show support for this..

Laura Jane Cohen

I'm so sorry, Dr. Anderson. This is Laura Jane. I thought a couple of people have their hands up just to ask questions on this. I apologize. I don't think we were there to vote yet.

Ricardy Anderson

Thank you. Miss Keys-Gamarra and Miss Sizemore Heizer, go ahead.

Karen Keys-Gamarra

Actually, I was going to state my support, and hopefully, we'll be able to move forward. But if other people have questions, you can go to them.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer

I actually think Miss Cohen had her hand up before me. So let her speak first if she wants.

Ricardy Anderson

Please go ahead. I think it'll be okay. Go ahead.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer

Similar to the other question about does this preclude bringing an approach that will continue to look at regional division to again, give us more data on the best approach to get to our goals of increasing applications and representation for underserved populations? I just said we don't have data on any approach. At this point. I'd like to have data on all the different options. That's what I'm trying to ask about.

Karen Corbett Sanders

It is my understanding that he will bring his data.

Ricardy Anderson

Miss Cohen?

Laura Jane Cohen

Sorry, I just wanted to ask. I'm just confused about why this is in this format, instead of just a next step. Since I think now, to miss McLaughlin's point, we've come to a consensus, Dr.

Brabrand is giving us the state plan Thursday. So I just want to be clear, because this is kind of out of our normal range of processes. And I'm not opposed to it. But is this still part of next steps or are these our own separate consensuses? It's late.

Ricardy Anderson

It can serve both purposes. But I think the goal was to be sure that we gave at least some sense to the superintendent in terms of whether or not there was strong board support regarding this.

So it could serve in the next step but I would address personally because I do have a major (inaudible) in terms of how we apportion these seats to Mason district. I would love for us to just go ahead and show that consensus now. But that's just my personal preference, but it could live in next steps as well in terms of processes.

Laura Jane Cohen

That's fine. I don't have a problem with that. I just was trying to get clarification.

Ricardy Anderson

I'm going to ask you to please lower their hands at this time. If you're able to show support for this measure, please raise your hands now. Miss Keys-Gamarra, Miss Corbett Sanders, Miss Cohen, Miss Pekarsky, Mr. Frisch, Miss McLaughlin, Miss Derenak Kaufax and Miss Sizemore Heizer, myself, Miss Tholen. Okay, please go ahead and lower your hands. Those who are not in favor of this.

Ricardy Anderson

Okay, those who are abstaining?

Ricardy Anderson

Miss Meren, Miss Omeish. Thank you. Miss Corbett Sanders, is that the last of the suggestions?

Karen Corbett Sanders

Yes, and thank you for your patience allowing me to go through that. This was something that we all worked on.

Ricardy Anderson

And so our next steps, if you could please put that up.

Ricardy Anderson

And again, we're looking at.. Miss Tholen, go ahead.

Elaine Tholen

So I just wanted to follow up on the list that we just went through also. And my understanding with that list is that we are asking the superintendent to look at an option that doesn't include the lottery? I don't know if that was clear.

Ricardy Anderson

No, he's not precluded from looking at a lottery as an option.

Elaine Tholen

No, I'm not saying that. I'm saying he's looking at a lottery. We've got two options on the table, but then we're also asking to look at a non-lottery solution.

Ricardy Anderson

If you're referring to number four, which is to look at the merit and aptitude piece. That was not something that moved forward. That did not have sufficient support. Miss Tholen, is that the one that you were referring to?

Elaine Tholen

I am actually referring to that and I will admit, I abstained on that one, because I was unclear if that was what we were talking about. But I think that whole conversation this evening and what we just went through, that we are looking at asking for a non-lottery solution to not our proposal to be looked at.

Ricardy Anderson

I'm sorry, could you please say that, again, I missed the last piece of what you said.

Elaine Tholen

Okay, I'm just saying that based on everything I heard this evening, and the discussions that we had, that a number of people brought up talking about the holistic application process. And that, to me, means something that does not include a lottery. So the thing is do we need to talk further about that? Do we need to make a motion? And how do we want to say to the superintendent to put that as a next step to please look at this as an additional proposal?

Ricardy Anderson

One of the things that was under discussion when we're talking about that measure is that it seems to already be embedded and what the superintendent provided, I can't remember the slide number at this time. And so for me, at least, my comment was that this was a little bit redundant, because it seems to have already been embedded. And I do believe that I've heard several board members say that they did not want for the superintendent to not have the opportunity to bring forward the lottery, albeit, repackaged, and with more data to support its merits. So it is still in play, but it still needs a lot more information. So that's a conversation for I think, a little bit down the line for us to make a decision about.

Elaine Tholen

Yeah, just I'm not including the lottery proposal. I'm just saying I want to make sure a non-lottery proposal is also looked at.

Ricardy Anderson

Right, I don't think the two are mutually exclusive. I think the conversation is always going to be two pronged. But I think what we accomplish tonight is not taking it on the table.

Elaine Tholen

No, I agree. I agree. And I just want to make clear that as we're moving forward, over the next few weeks and putting together more information, that we're looking at multiple options, multiple proposals.

Ricardy Anderson

I think that's the understanding. Yes, ma'am.

Elaine Tholen

Thank you.

Ricardy Anderson

Of course. Um, let's go ahead and go through the next steps. Miss Pekarsky?

Rachna Sizemore Heizer

I'm sorry. I had my hand up to make a comment here.

Ricardy Anderson

I'm so sorry. I looked down at my other screen and I missed several hands. Miss Sizemore Heizer, go ahead.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer

I would just like to follow up with what Miss Tholen said is that when we had the conversation earlier, it sort of twisted into, or turned, I should say. Sorry, it's late. It turned into conversation about this as redundant and not precluding the lottery. But I just want to make it clear that one of the things we're asking Dr. Brabrand to bring back is a holistic admissions approach. There's pieces of it certainly contained in what he has here in terms of the problem solving essay and all those pieces that he brought. But the pieces that he brought also includes the lottery and I want to make sure that we are clear that what we're looking for him to do is to bring back a holistic admission approach, which may or may preclude a lottery but it is a holistics admission approach that we are looking for, and data around that piece of it as well, or at least to bring a proposal back that has just a holistic admissions approach, as opposed to holistic admissions approach with a lottery. I think that got lost a little bit in that conversation earlier. I just want to make sure we're clear that there is board support for Dr. Brabrand to bring back an alternate holistic admissions approach. It does not preclude if he wants to continue to bring data around the lottery but that we are looking for an alternate holistic admissions approach with data.

Ricardy Anderson

I think as it was proposed, this was the suggestion that did not move forward, specifically, because of the number of abstentions.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer

So I think we need to have a motion or a separate thing, because I believe what happened, the reason for the abstentions was not because we did not have consensus for a holistic admissions approach. But because people felt that the way it was stated was redundant. But I want to be clear and if we need to do a separate motion to vote, I'd be happy to do that to say that we are also looking for Dr. Brabrand to bring us a holistic admissions approach with data so we can see what is the best approach to get into the goal of making our pool of qualified applicants representative of our populations.

Ricardy Anderson

Do you want to add that as a next step? Because we're about to vote on all of these right now.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer

Yeah, before we did that, I have it as a next step. But I would like to see if there's room to have a consensus taken on that as we did the other ones and just very clearly, we want Dr. Brabrand to bring us a holistic admissions approach with the requisite data as an approach to TJ admissions for the class of 2021-2022 freshmen.

Ricardy Anderson

So with that, let's take the other questions. Miss McLaughlin, and then Miss Cohen.

Megan McLaughlin

A few things, one, my iPad is not letting me type into the google doc and I'm using my laptop to be able to follow all of this, though, I'm worried about getting my next step in. I also know it's 11:42. So two things. One, I would suggest that because we're not making decisions by Thursday night, that the board not be closed out of putting up our next step requests, and then voting and deciding which ones will stick up there tonight. I don't think that's prudent. And then secondly, if the superintendent is trying to get direction and consensus on going forward, there seems to be right now, he put out there in his proposal doing a lottery. If six or more board members do not think a lottery is appropriate at this time for this admission cycle year, does he want to see that seven or more people want it? (inaudible) best they know, he's now on a deadlock board that wants to see a lottery or no lottery option? So I kind of wanted to understand process-wise what we're doing here.

Ricardy Anderson

Well, I believe that Miss Sizemore Heizer wanted to have that be added. Again, we do have a little bit of time on our side, it doesn't have to be this evening. But if it's something that she wants for us to respond to, we certainly should be able to do that.

Megan McLaughlin

So Madam Chair, I would humbly suggest to all of us to what Miss Sizemore was talking about and these next steps, all of it, since we now know it doesn't have to be decided by Thursday evening, that board members be given till 5pm tomorrow, whatever deadline you want to set to add in our next steps to this and that we bring it up at the next work session the next steps. If

you want to do that or view them in chairs with the vice chair and determine if there's any next steps that can't be managed but I'm just trying to be mindful of time and us doing good work at this point. I don't think we are doing ourselves or anyone a favor by continuing to liberate what are possible next steps would be right now. I just think we need time. Go ahead and file them and then review them. That would be my motion or request on the table right now.

Ricardy Anderson

I'm trying to think process-wise what your request is.

Megan McLaughlin

My request is that..

Ricardy Anderson

No, I understand your question. You're trying to figure out, the process-wise, what does it supersede.

Megan McLaughlin

It supersedes everything that's being done right now. Just see if there's board support to file additional next steps by tomorrow and that we conclude this work session.

Ricardy Anderson

It's McLaughlin, I understand that you're trying to save us some time, but it does not supersede everything else at this time because we still have other hands raised. I do appreciate what you're sharing and trust me, I want for that to happen. But we do have to give it its place in the queue. So we will hold on to that and let the other two speakers go ahead and then we will circle back to those two items.

Megan McLaughlin

I didn't mean to imply people would be cut off. I'm just offering that suggestion for consideration to the chair and vice chair.

Ricardy Anderson

Certainly. Miss Cohen and Miss Omeish.

Laura Jane Cohen

I just wanted to echo what Miss Sizemore Heizer said that I think many of us abstain in what Ms. Tholen said as not to be duplicative. I thought that the takeaway from our meeting, and it's good that we do this, but I thought that the takeaway was that we were asking for Dr. Brabrand to come up with an approach that doesn't preclude the lottery, but also give us an alternate, hybrid, or whatever we want to call it. Holistic model, not hybrid. Holistic model, similar to what he had for the top 100 for the whole system. So I guess I'm feeling a little bit confused as well, because I thought that that was the takeaway, and that we were saying that Miss Corbett Sanders' motion was redundant, because that had already been very clearly expressed. So if it needs to

be more clearly expressed, I wholeheartedly support going over this again. But we probably could clear this up with Dr. Brabrand, just telling us if he feels that has been expressed perhaps.

Ricardy Anderson

Before we get to that, let's go ahead and have Miss Omeish and Miss Pekarsky speak.

Abrar Omeish

Yeah, thank you actually building off of that, so echoing it and also adding that some of these are specific to particular plans. And we essentially right now have decided on certain concretes and deferred the rest. For when Dr. Brabrand is gonna come back. So I don't feel comfortable with us approving next steps that are relevant to specifying particular plans if we're not even decided on the plan. So I don't know. I appreciate clarity on that but some of the next steps are informing the work more broadly, but some of them are a little more specific to us moving in a direction and I don't believe we've decided on that.

Ricardy Anderson

That is why we vote on the next steps. Thank you. Miss Pekarsky,

Stella Pekarsky

Wooh, I just wanted to offer support for what Miss Sizemore Heizer said. I would like to see that, I don't know if we're making a motion now, offering consensus, but I would like to see us have that as an option to vote on for the superintendent to bring back.

Ricardy Anderson

So then we have for people who are asking for this to be treated in the same way that we addressed some of the other suggestions that were provided tonight. So we'll go ahead and have that be.

Rachna Sizemore Heizer

Miss Meren has to leave the meeting. So I'm wondering if we should have this as part of next steps. But if I may, I just like to mention to Miss Omeish. It's not saying that we're going in a direction. It's asking us I think we had consensus earlier, to bring an approach for us to review later on, along with other approaches. Because I think the consensus, we don't have enough data at this moment to make changes beyond what we've already gotten consensus on.

Ricardy Anderson

So let's kind of take a pause for right now. I'd like to go back to what Miss McLaughlin shared a little while ago, in terms of just taking a pause on this evening, because it is very late and none of us are doing our best work. Everybody's getting a little bit confused. Do we have latitude to add that as a next step? So we have all of the information. A lottery, not a lottery, she's having issues coming into the Google Sheets to add her next steps, I would say let us please revisit this tomorrow as shared by Miss McLaughlin and add that. Thank you. You've already added that, Miss Sizemore Heizer, as a next step, which we will discuss in chairs and come back to the board with. Would you all be in support of that approach at this time?

Karen Corbett Sanders

Dr. Anderson, I've had my hand up for a long time. I was actually the first one.

Ricardy Anderson

My screen just moved down a little bit so you were cut off. Totally, I have to move this to be in that perfect spot. So I apologize. I did not have the first spot showing up. Go ahead.

Karen Corbett Sanders

So I would support having the superintendent bring back options, almost like a menu approach to this which would include an approach that doesn't include the lottery and an approach that does, so there are options, so that we can make informed decisions based on the modeling similar to what Mr. Frisch put forth earlier in the evening about the importance of those statistical models. So I would suggest that we should get a general consensus from the board that they want to see a model that includes a lottery and a model that does not include the lottery.

Ricardy Anderson

Okay, so let's go ahead and have consensus on that, where we're just asking for a model that includes both a lottery and without a lottery. So it's very inclusive of both. And then we are going to go ahead and provide concurrence on Miss Megan McLaughlin's suggestion that we go ahead and table our next steps for this evening and we visit it tomorrow when I'm a lot clearer. I see the hands are going up. All in favor of the modeling that includes a lottery and a non-lottery option. We have Miss Sanders, Cohen, Keys-Gamarra. Let me go back. Let me let me try that again. Miss Corbett Sanders, Miss Cohen, Miss Keys-Gamarra, Miss McLaughlin, Miss Sizemore Heizer, Miss Derenak Kaufax, Mr. Frisch, Miss Pekarsy, Miss Tholen, Miss Omeish. I will put myself in there as well. Thank you. And that's 10. We're missing one person. Miss Meren is away from the table. Do we have any of those not able to support this?

Ricardy Anderson

Miss McLaughlin, I think you already voted. Okay, any abstentions?

Ricardy Anderson

There was one person who did not vote. I'm not sure who I missed but we're moving forward because we have at least 10. I'm going to Miss McLaughlin's idea of tabling the next steps. I will provide a deadline tomorrow morning in terms of when everybody's next steps must be in for consideration with the superintendent and chairs. Well, actually, if we're going to do chairs. Your next steps will have to be in by 9am. Who is able to support that? Miss Derenak Kaufax, you have a question? Okay, no question. Okay, we have Miss Cohen, Miss McLaughlin, Mr. Frisch, Miss Keys-Gamarra, Miss Pekarsky, Miss Corbett Sanders, Miss Sizemore Heizer. That's seven, plus myself. Miss Tholen. Thank you, let's lower the hands.

Ricardy Anderson

Who is not able to support this measure?

Ricardy Anderson

Miss Derenak Kaufax. Thank you. Who is abstaining?

Ricardy Anderson

We have Miss Omeish and then Miss Meren is away from the table. I believe we've concluded all of this business. We did have a subsequent meeting that we were going to go into but I believe that there is no bandwidth to do that at this time. So we will find another opportunity to conclude the previous discussion. So it is now 11:53 and we will be adjourning our meeting. Good night all.

Dr. Brabrand

Good night. Thank you.

Karen Corbett Sanders

Good night.