

CACF Stands Committed to Ensuring a Challenging and Inspiring Education for All



CACF's Commitment to Education Equity

CACF has a responsibility to the Asian American & Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AA&NH/PI) community in New York City to advocate for educational policies, structures, and systems that are fair and beneficial to all AA&NH/PI students. CACF envisions an equitable, inclusive, and engaging school system that truly serves the public and meets the needs of each individual student – helping them learn, grow, freely express themselves, develop critical thinking skills, and reach their fullest potential.

AA&NH/PIs in Elementary Education

The diversity of the AA&NH/PI community continues to be misrepresented in broader political discourse, particularly in education-related spaces. The perpetuation of the model minority myth that stereotypes AA&NH/PIs as studious high achievers obscures real needs within our community. It is also often weaponized against both our community and other communities of color to justify underinvestment and the continuation of a status quo that upholds systemic inequities. **Mayor-elect Adams and the incoming Chancellor of the NYC Department of Education must look beyond the model minority myth and ensure that all adopted educational policies and investments center and prioritize those most marginalized, including the many AA&NH/PI students who are underserved in public schools today.**

The model minority myth has influenced discussions surrounding a recent announcement to phase out New York City's Gifted & Talented (G&T) programs and its proposed replacement, Brilliant NYC, perpetuating a non-nuanced understanding of how such a decision may affect our community. Despite the misconception that G&T is a benefit to Asian students, the majority of AA&NH/PI students, like the majority of all students, are shut out from existing G&T programs in multiple ways:

- 1. AA&NH/PI students as a whole do not comprehensively benefit from G&T.** In the 2019-20 school year, the G&T program enrolled approximately 1,075 AA&NH/PI students, which constitutes only 0.58% of AA&NH/PI students across all grades and 0.83% of K-8 AA&NH/PI students. Moreover, **subgroups under the wide AA&NH/PI umbrella may be accessing G&T programs at lower rates than the average**, but the lack of disaggregated G&T enrollment data by ethnicity hides these trends.
- 2. Both the opt-in nature of G&T and the test itself are significant barriers to enrollment**, as nearly 25% of the AA&NH/PI population is low-income, 70% is immigrant, and nearly half of NYC AA&NH/PI adults have limited English proficiency.
- 3. G&T serves almost no students with disabilities or English Language Learners**, who respectively make up 8.58% and 19.6% of the AA&NH/PI student population and are in practice shut out of accessing the program.

Implementing a Program Anchored in Equity and Inclusion

We urge Mayor-elect Eric Adams to move forward with a plan that properly addresses underlying educational issues of inequity and access in New York City, provides opportunities to all students, and acknowledges that public education ought to be for the public good.

Mayor-elect Adams has [signaled](#) that he will not eliminate G&T but “expand the opportunities for accelerated learning.” We believe that adding G&T classrooms will not equitably distribute resources but rather maintain an exclusive program and continue to produce “winners” and “losers” within a system of competition and deprivation. Moving away from a limited program with a cap on the number of seats - by nature incapable of serving every student who could benefit - will bring that potential to the entire K-3 population. Overall, a shift towards equity-minded programs will increase AA&NH/PI students' access and provide greater benefits to all students while largely mitigating the pressures and competitiveness of the current zero-sum system. Key recommendations can be found in the School Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG) [report](#).

For More Information

As part of CACF's advocacy for an equitable and inclusive education system, we are sharing resources that dive deeper into rethinking gifted education. We note, however, that data analysis glossing over the AA&NH/PI demographic in service of an oversimplified "white and Asian" versus "Black and Latinx" binary is misleading. Nonetheless, CACF's values, goals, and policy recommendations align with many equity-minded groups' in our shared pursuit of opportunity, justice, and racial solidarity in New York City.

Many, including Mayor de Blasio's SDAG, have recommended the discontinuation of NYC's G&T.

- [Making the Grade II: New Programs for Better Schools](#)
- [NYC school segregation: a report card from the UCLA Civil Rights Project](#)
- [Why Are NYC Parents So Upset At The Idea Of Scrapping 'Gifted And Talented' Programs?](#)
- [Integrated Classrooms Inclusive Enrichment \(from CACF's partners at NY Appleseed\)](#)

NYC's G&T test is not developmentally or pedagogically appropriate and has engendered a test prep economy that shuts out those lacking significant parental time and investment. Most other cities have far less severe school tracking that begins at age 8.

- [What NYC must learn about gifted and talented education: Testing and sorting 4-year-olds is far inferior to other ways to challenge precocious students of all backgrounds](#)
- [As a New York City teacher, I screened 4-year-olds for gifted programs. Here is what I learned.](#)

The city's G&T programs are extremely racially segregated. The programs currently separate out very young students, preventing them from reaping the well researched benefits of learning in diverse environments and perpetuating existing inequities.

- [Will Ending Gifted and Talented Programs Help Desegregate Schools?](#)
- [Why it's good for kids to have friends from different socioeconomic backgrounds](#)
- [A Shadow System Feeds Segregation in New York City Schools](#)
- [Great divide: How extreme academic segregation isolates students in New York City's high schools](#)

Classrooms of varied skill level are beneficial to all students, including academic high achievers, pointing to "de-tracking" as a viable model for improving academic outcomes as well as school diversity.

- [Why Gifted Students Belong in Inclusive Schools](#)
- [How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students](#)
- [Serve gifted kids in integrated classrooms: Equity and excellence can go together](#)

Expanding G&T in NYC is not a solution to the scarcity model under which students compete for an arbitrarily limited number of spots. An earlier attempt in 2008 failed to sustain an expanded G&T program, and further concentrated them in affluent neighborhoods.

- [The real problem is the very idea of "giftedness"](#)
- [Gifted and Talented Programs Are Not the Path to Equity](#)