

# ***Great Expectations***

Patterns of Minority  
Admissions  
To Gifted Programs

# Definitions

- **Minority = Students with parents born outside the United States**
- **Gifted Programs that require passing a test or other specified measure**
- **Admissions = a required application process that is subject to review**

# Thesis

- 1. That Gifted programs are seen by many immigrant parents as significantly preferable to General Education programs
- 2. That many parents will expend a significant amount of time and effort to improve their child's chances for admission to the Gifted Program
- 3. That there can be a significant social and emotional cost to such efforts.

Why are GT programs  
seen  
as preferable?

Number One Reason:  
Academic Rigor

*Gifted programs are perceived  
as having greater academic rigor  
than a General Education Program.*

# Rationale: Higher Test Scores

- Students in Gifted programs receive higher scores on standardized tests, therefore it is the gifted program that is responsible for the higher scores.

# Result: College Admissions

- Students who have participated in Gifted programs will have a better chance to get into better colleges
- Therefore – if my child participates in a gifted program, he/she will have a better chance to get into that better college.

# Therefore?

- Many parents will do anything they can to improve their child's chances for admission to the Gifted Program or access to rigorous academics.
- If the GT program has multiple pathways to admission, this process will focus on early, advanced preparation to improve a child's chances for admission.



# Major Questions for Discussion

- **Are there students who are being prepped for admission to a gifted program, who are not truly gifted?**
- **Is there a strategy that is used to gain admission to a program despite a student's not being truly gifted?**
- **Is there a physical and/or emotional cost for such students?**

# What Parents Want from a Gifted Program

- Significantly greater rigor
- Increased task complexity
- Higher reading level activities
- Higher level Mathematics, which provides entrance to advanced programs

# What Gifted Programs Want

- Students who are capable of success
- Students who are able to handle the expectations and workload of a gifted program
- Students who can work at a higher academic and/or cognitive level

# What may actually happen

- **A student who is rigorously prepared for entry into the gifted program, and uses such preparation to gain admission to the program despite true qualifications**
  - **Once in the program, parental expectations that may be too much for the student**

# What is happening

- Admissions criteria for GT programs are being moving away from relying on objective standardized testing.
- The admissions process opens to alternative methods of assessment.
- When standardization is taken away, subjective methods are used.

# Therefore -

- Multiple avenues for admissions consideration:
  - Wechsler, CogAT and Naglieri tests
  - Gifted Behaviors Rating Scale (GBRS)
  - Individual assessment
  - Letters of recommendation
  - Portfolios

# Entrepreneurial Opportunities

Weekend/evening/summer schools with:

- Advanced Mathematics and Writing
- Test Taking Strategies

# Results of an unofficial Survey

- N=60 students enrolled in a full time gifted program
- 28 East Asian, 12 Indian, 20 “Anglo”
- 60% of East Asian students had 4 or more years of weekend AND summer academic schooling
- 25% of Indian students had 4 or more years
- ,0% “Anglo” had ANY such preparation



# The Dark Side of the Force

- “Offline programs” where students are taught to prepare for a test that has been compromised
- “Test Mills” that operate solely to give tests to students who did not qualify highly enough the first time

# What many parents have encountered

- This summer, Delhi University issued cutoff scores at its top colleges that reached a near-impossible 100 percent in some cases. The Indian Institutes of Technology, which are spread across the country, have an acceptance rate of less than 2 percent — and that is only from a pool of roughly 500,000 who qualify to take the entrance exam, a feat that requires two years of specialized coaching after school.

# Chinese Competition

- China's prestigious Peking University and Tsinghua University, both based in Beijing, will together accept about 84 students out of every 10,000 Beijingers who took the *gaokao* this June; 14 students from every 10,000 who took the *gaokao* in nearby Tianjin, 10 out of every 10,000 test-takers from Shanghai, and only about three per 10,000 candidates from Anhui, Zhang's province of residence, and a mere two from every 10,000 taking the test in Guangdong.
- **Admission rate: .03 Percent.**

# Comparative Admissions Rates

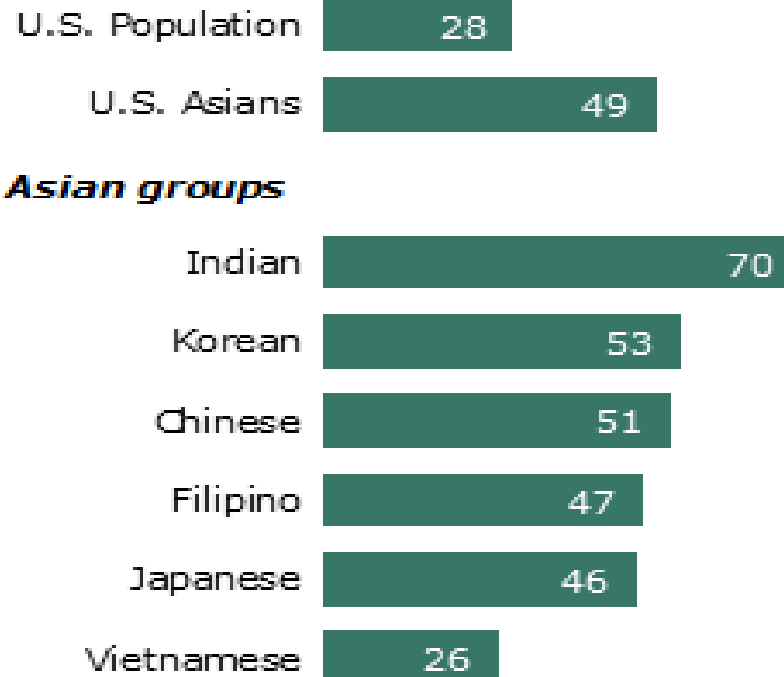
- This adds up to an acceptance rate for Beijing Universities of .035 percent of applicants
  - In contrast:
    - MIT 7.9%
    - Stanford 5.1%
    - Indian Tech Academies 2%

# Some observations on Populations

- Many immigrant populations entering the US bring with them memories of the educational advancement process in their home country. Advancement =
  - Extremely competitive
    - Often corrupt
  - No guarantee of employment

## College Education, Ages 25 and Older, 2010

*% with a bachelor's degree or more*



Note: All Asians (and each subgroup) include mixed-race and mixed-group populations, regardless of Hispanic origin.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2010 American Community Survey, Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample (IPUMS) files

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# Costs

- Emotional issues
- Lack of sleep due to difficult work
- Little or no free time or time to investigate fields of personal interest
- Behavioral issues arising from frustration
- Feeling like the “odd person out”

# Sharing Anecdotal Examples

- What have you seen and experienced?



# Physical Manifestations

- Ulcer
- Sleep Issues
- Other

# What is the Emotional Cost?

- Feelings of failure at not meeting parental expectations
- Not living up to the standards of the group
- Early burnout
- Depression
- Disconnecting

- One gruesome statistic that bears this out: rising suicide rates among high-achieving students. This used to be an Asian phenomenon, now it's spreading.
- In Stanford, California, the city has hired guards to patrol the local railway tracks, a top spot for high-achiever suicides.

# What can be the result?

- When students encounter true rigor for the first time, they will fall apart.
- What happens within a culture where the children are seen as the future caretakers of the parents, that must put emphasis on the advancement of those children so that parents will have a comfortable old age?

# Parents Clashing with the Special Education System

- Parents want to avoid any kind of label
- Parents will refuse permission for testing or access to special services because the perception of a disability label or even the possibility of such
- Includes: Autism spectrum, AD/HD, depression, anxiety
- LD

# Some Solutions

- A student may be gifted in one area but not in another. Allowing students to “float” between classes can provide advancement in the area of strength
- Cross grade level interchange: allowing students from one grade to attend subjects in another higher or lower grade classroom.
- Increased rigor in General Ed. Classes

# Sample Elem. School 1

## Demographics

- Grade 6
  - 32.06 Asian
  - 12.34 Black
  - 9.38 Hispanic
  - 40.86 White
  - Grade 6 AAP Math - 153 students 14-15
  - 75% Pass Advanced Math 7 SOL

# Sample MS Demographics

- 26% Asian
- 3% Black
- 9% Hispanic
- 55% White
- Test Results
- 532 Pass Algebra I, 2 fail
- 16 pass Alg 2, 0 fail
- 209 Pass Geometry 0 fail



# Further Research Needed

- Comparison between admissions programs and other statistics within the programs
- Data collection
- Involvement of counselors, psychologists, social workers
- Policy Changes
- Examination of Identification Practices

# Thomas Jefferson High School

- 59% Asian
- 1.2% Black
- 2 % Hispanic
- 29% White

# NYC Stuyvesant High School

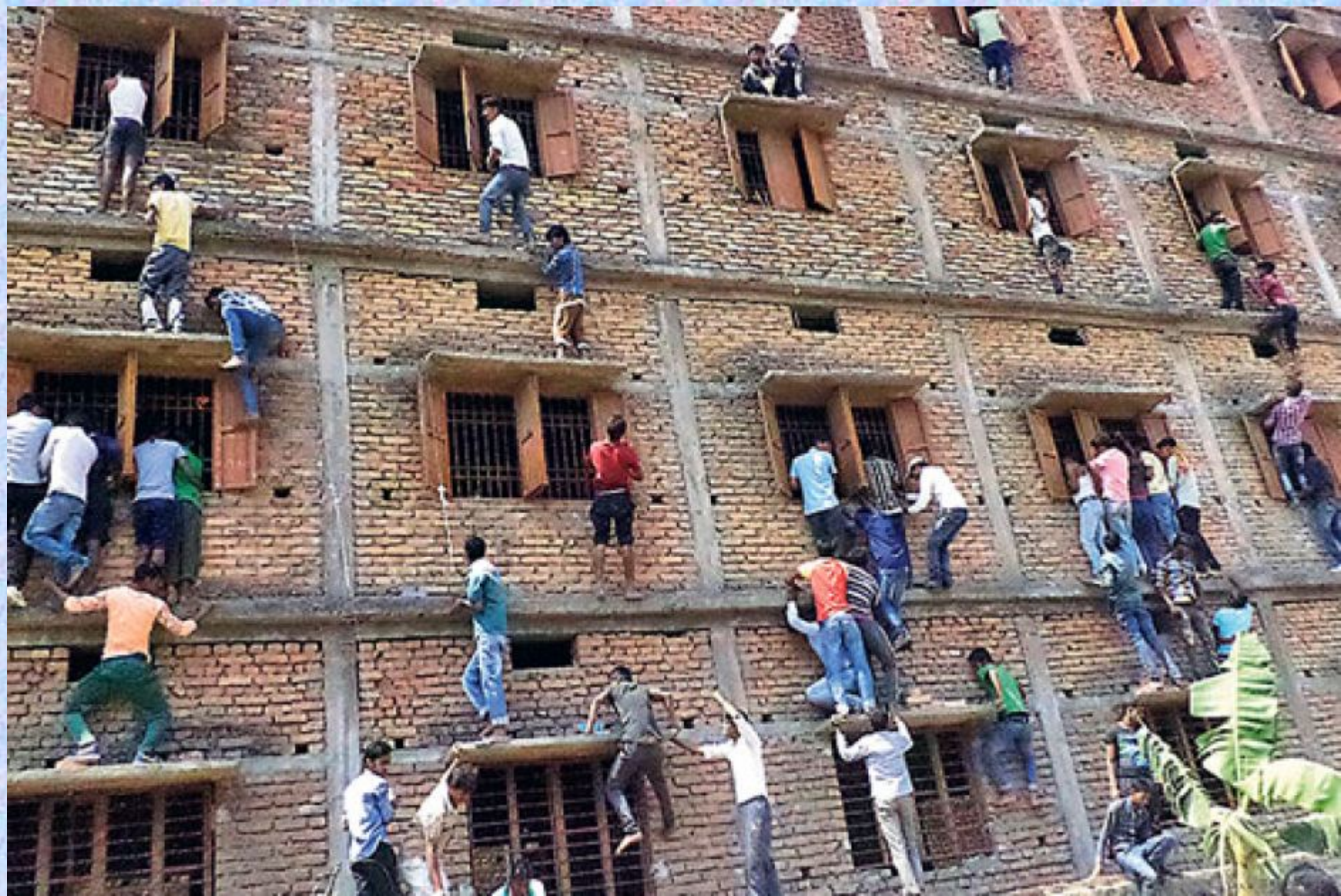
- Asian 73%
- Black 1%
- Hispanic 3%
- White 20%
- 91% of teachers have taught there 3 or more years.

# NYC Union HS Science Tech

- White 55%
- Asian 27%
- Hispanic 8%
- Black 8.4%

# Sample Parent Email during the AAP Notification Process

- “What has my life been reduced to? Running to the mailbox daily in hopes of scores, if not a pool letter. Anxious about whether my 7 yr old will get into AAP. WT? I am going to have an aneurysm by the time college rolls around. And I have 3 more behind this one!
- \_01/07/2016 16:19
- **Subject:** I'm ashamed to admit I'm going batty over AAP
- \_ \_ **Anonymous**



- Some 2,440 Chinese students taking a national exam have been caught using high-tech cheating gear that wouldn't be out of place in a spy film.
- According to [state media](#), invigilators detected abnormal radio signals that were being used to transmit the answers in code to candidates, who wore wireless ear pieces or placed "electronic erasers" on their desks.
- More than 25,000 students took the exam to become licensed pharmacists in the northwestern city of Xian on October 18 and 19. The test took place in seven separate locations.
- The organizers of the scam sent fake candidates to take the test, who quickly left after memorizing the questions. They then broadcast the correct answers to candidates, who had paid \$330 for the service.
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