

# Ballot Results

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## 2020-10 TJ Admissions Revised Merit Lottery Survey

**(1) Like / Dislike TJ Admissions Revised Merit Lottery Plan** - On a scale from 1 (Dislike) to 5 (Like)

FCPS TJ Admissions Revised Merit Lottery Proposal - average rating = **1.49**, total rating = **526**, rated by 354 voters.

### (2) Comments

The revised Merit Lottery has little to do merit, and it does not solve any real problems. It's just an easy and cheap cover up for FCPS's failures to reach out to disadvantaged students and provide necessary support for them to succeed. This plan will divide the community, destroy the mission of TJHSST, and bring long lasting damages to FCPS students. Lottery is against all commonly accepted education beliefs and theories. It's shame that FCPS proposed this plan. I am totally against it. - 2 or 1%

This revised plan is just changing the entrance exam from the previous standardized test to a new exam called the "problem-solving essay". There should be at least 3 "problems" to be solved to get a correct measure of a student's aptitude. The standards of being a semi-finalists are being raised. Both with the GPA and the new harder format of the entrance exam. It sounds like extracurriculars are being heavily weighted, which many of our underrepresented students are being denied the opportunity for access. Having a lottery among the new semi-finalists is immaterial. As originally described, this plan will do nothing to help increase underrepresented minorities. It would be better for underrepresented minorities to have all 500 seats selected holistically, so that all the seats can see increased weighting for those extra factors. As it is now, underrepresented minorities will see a further drop in numbers in the semi-finalist pool and a lottery will keep them underrepresented, when a 500 seat holistic review could have increased it. - 1 or 0%

Discriminate Asian students. Need better screening method. - 1 or 0%

The revised merit lottery plan does not help disadvantaged students with the academic readiness required for them to succeed at TJ. - 1 or 0%

If we use lottery to choose TJ principal, FCPS superintendent, and government officials of the United States, we can also use lottery to choose TJ students. Otherwise, STOP! Lottery will kill TJ and will not benefit anyone in the end. Fire the TJ principal!! Fire FCPS superintendent!!! - 1 or 0%

The revised proposal attempts to make some hasty, cosmetic changes and continues to ignore the fundamental problem, which is the failure to provide broad access to learning opportunities for advanced education at K-8 grade levels. Mr. Brabrand doesn't show any efforts in address his failure to improve the education gap for Black, Hispanic and socioeconomically-challenged students. I strongly urge the School Board reject this Plan B proposal, abandon its rush to overhaul the TJ admissions process this year, and put in place a coalition with community stakeholders to develop a serious and effective plan to increase the enrollment of underrepresented minorities at TJ while maintaining the school's merit standards for admission. There are so many holes in this sloppy proposal. As an example, teacher recommendation is removed as an assessment criteria for an absurd reason quoted by a school board member, "FCPS teachers are biased"! It is shocking to hear these words from a School Board member's mouth whose job is to oversee 13,000 dedicated FCPS teachers. The proposal would divide the TJ students and create a series of unintended consequences as noted in the proposal itself. It would destroy a nation #1 high school without attaining any of the goals Brabrand claimed. FCPS is an organization for education, not a stage for lame political stunts. We should not allow anyone to use FCPS' resources in such a ridiculous and harmful way to build a spring board for his/her political fantasy or ambition! - 1 or 0%

I understand that there needs to be diversity and TJ should be inclusive of all ethnicity. However, lottery is not the right solution to achieve this. TJHSST is a STEM school with advanced curriculum to serve the students with passion in STEM who are willing to work hard. Just the passion without hard work will not keep them happy at TJ. It is not right to call hard work a privilege. If TestPrep is the problem, do not announce the type of the tests for a school year. Keep them a surprise and rotate between multiple competition math based tests. A ton of material is available online and this will level the

playing fields. It is incorrect to teach the kids that one has to be lucky to get into a governor's school instead of working hard. Good habits must be cultivated at young age instead we are asking the kids to leave it to luck and not hard work, to get into a STEM focused school. - 1 or 0%

This has been a "ram-down-our-throats" process. I am still waiting for proof/verification that the proposed "merit-lottery" achieves the desired outcomes. It appears there is a pipeline issue with AAP centers concentrated in more affluent areas of Fairfax. FCPS needs to correct this pipeline issue first as well as diversity in teachers. I definitely want diversity for TJ but this proposal and process smacks of political shenanigans in an election year. This change needs to be thoughtfully considered with full beta testing and stakeholder buy-in. Otherwise, you are going to shatter the number one public high school in the country. With little thought or planning, you are inviting litigation and electoral upheaval. - 1 or 0%

The Revised Merit Lottery Plan has little to do with merit, and it won't solve any real problems. It also fails to serve the interests of underserved communities in Fairfax County (the chief beneficiary of the proposal will be white students, who could approach 50% of TJHSST enrollment). The plan will divide the community, destroy TJHSST's mission, and cause long lasting damages to FCPS students. The goal of a diversity plan should be to MAXIMIZE the potential of each eligible student who is interested in a STEM-focused education. A successful diversity plan should include: 1. A well-designed and tested admissions program; 2. Appropriate recruitment activities uniquely designed for the program; 3. An evaluation of the admission process; 4. Targeted recruitment activities; 5. Publicity about the program; 6. Community partnerships for long term commitment; 7. Communications and outreach to communities; and 8. Retention activities. The lottery plan will inevitably fail the underserved groups in Fairfax and surrounding counties as it only addresses one of the above areas and addresses even that one poorly. I am totally against it. - 1 or 0%

1. I will not vote for any policy makers who use lottery to decide who can get into the #1 high school in the US. 2. To help more underrepresented students to get into TJ, policymakers should address the problem from its root: elementary school. You should spend time and money in helping the underrepresented students to get involved in STEM when they're young. You should not randomly throw them into TJ when they're already in 8th grade and don't like STEM so that you can achieve your political agenda. 3. I'm the parents of three children at TJ. I love the school from the bottom of my heart. Please don't dismantle it. 4. Lottery has no place in education. We're educating our children to become the scientists, innovators, leaders, engineers, problem solvers in the 21st century. How can you use lottery to decide who can get into the #1 high school in the US? If you use lottery, what are you promoting in our children? Gambling? Hard work, perseverance, grit, excellence, and merit are no longer valued in the lottery system. Only random luck is. 5. Please stop using the phrase merit lottery. It breaks my heart. They don't ever go together. Merit stems from hard work. Lottery pops up from a blind draw of luck. They are never even remotely related. 6. Education should award merit and excellence. Race, skin color, socioeconomic status should not be a factor in the TJ admission. Only the most motivated, passionate, and highly talented students should go to TJ. If you use the lottery to balance the race proportion of the student population in TJ, you're dismantling TJ, the #1 STEM high school in the US. 7. Standardized tests are objective and fair for all students. As a policymaker, how can you, on one hand, tout how great FCPS is since so many FCPS students (mostly from TJ) win the National Merit Scholarship based on standardized tests each year, yet, on the other hand, criticize the standardized TJ admissions test and want to abolish it? There is always an objective test for any certification, admission, employment and so on. The test is much more reliable than the subjective student self-portrait sheet. 8. Competition through tests helps every student to improve. Racial proportion through lottery at TJ only promotes laziness and mediocrity. 9. Prep classes are not illegal drugs. Students work really hard in prep classes on weekends. No teachers can inject any knowledge into students' brains. Students have no magic pills to swallow. Students need to do tons of work to learn the knowledge and skills. 10. Race proportion is racial discrimination. Only the best students should go to the best high school, no matter what their race is. The NBA and NFL never admit players based on race, only on their hard-core skills. 11. The basic requirement of 3.5 GPA and Algebra 1 enrollment can't differentiate students who are truly passionate for STEM from those who aren't. There are many students who meet this requirement. Yet, only a portion of them who study STEM on their own, who participate in math competitions and science fairs are truly passionate for STEM and should go to TJ. If you place all students who have met this basic requirement in the same lottery pool, you're destroying the future for the students who are truly passionate for STEM and you're destroying the self-confidence and self-esteem of students who are not passionate for STEM. 12. How can you get rid of the teacher recommendations in the application process? Who else know the students better than their teachers? How could Ms. Karen Keys-Gamarra, a FCPS board member, state in the town hall meeting that the reason to get rid of the teacher recommendations is because "FCPS teachers are biased"? - 1 or 0%

It is a poorly designed proposal without any solid or trustworthy analysis. It cannot do any good to all students at all. Instead, this plan will be detrimental to the future of TJ as one of the best STEM

oriented high school in the world. I strongly vote against any lottery based plan. - 1 or 0%

The revised merit lottery plan is not a solution to solve the diversity of underrepresented minorities.

1. Lottery plan is against all common beliefs of the education. It punishes hardworking students, and rewards the students for pure luck. It is against the FCPS AAP philosophy: "FCPS believes in developing the strengths and talents of all students. Every student needs to be challenged and engaged in exciting learning experiences. FCPS policies and procedures are grounded in equity and inclusion".
2. FCPS revised merit lottery plan is very vague, and lacks details and supporting data. It is hard to implement without further explanation.
3. Revised merit lottery plan is two-tiered admission process. Holistic review requires a lot of staff to review the applications from all the applicants, and it is very subjective. It will waste a lot of money from the tax payer.
4. The purpose of the revised merit lottery plan is to increase the Black and Hispanic minorities. However, the result is totally against FCPS' goal based on the FCPS's own projection and parent-projected data. The greatest beneficiary is White students, Black and Hispanic students only increase a little. The proposed plan greatly reduces the number of other minorities Asian-American students, it discriminates against Asian-American students in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution.
5. FCPS rushed proposing the merit lottery plan and quickly revised it in such a short time. It appeared to me that FCPS did not perform the comprehensive research for this important TJ admission change. FCPS failed to provide the public with detailed report with other options.
6. The revised merit lottery plan does not mention applicant's passion on STEM, it will admit many students without passion on STEM, who might not survive the rigorous curriculum of TJ and will eventually drop out.
7. During the virtual town hall on 9/23/2020, Mr. Bradrand repeatedly reiterated that people spend 10k to 15k each year on TJ test prep in order to get into TJ. This claim is outrageous based on my research and there is no service to provide TJ prep for such a large expense of 10k to 15k each year. Mr. Bradrand is misleading the public.
8. The revised merit lottery plan will divide the community, destroy TJHSST's mission, and cause long lasting damages to FCPS students.
9. FCPS failed to provide the constructive plan to resolve real diversity issue.
10. Lottery plan must stop, Bradrand must go! - 1 or 0%

I do not favor concessions when it comes to merit, rather provide financial and other needed assistance to uplift people who could not meet the requirements and encourage them to compete fairly. - 1 or 0%

The "TJ Admissions Merit Lottery Proposal : School Board Work Session : 9/15/2020" document shows the improvement in the diversity due to the Merit Lottery Proposal would not be significant and the resulting TJ student population would not represent the FCPS racial composition in anyway. This indicates that the admissions process change is not going to achieve intended results. In addition, the projected composition of TJ student population for the class of 2024 may not be representative of future composition as certain racial groups have been more attracted to TJHSST, while at the same time some racial groups are moving away from TJ due to the increased rigor, competitiveness, and high stress environment of TJHSST in recent years. It would be beneficial to the economically disadvantaged students if the application fee is removed, but removing the well regarded testing processes (Quant-Q and ACT) is likely to make way to unprepared or under-prepared students to get into TJHSST. It is more beneficial to offer help to the middle school students who are interested to get into TJHSST than dropping a good qualifier test that appears to help make TJHSST the top school in the nation. Reasons for lack of diversity at TJ must be studied properly by employing many sociology research methods rather than blaming admissions process alone. Because such comprehensive research was not done and lazy-easy-find-a-scapegoat process was employed (which always points finger at admissions process), the problem persisted for decades and admissions process was revised blindly and arbitrarily almost every year. This merit lottery proposal appears no different and could be overthrown in a year or two. I wish there was a way to get back the salaries paid to the earlier officials who made ineffective admissions process changes. Lack of this accountability of FCPS officials is more problematic than lack of diversity and is leading to all sorts of nonsensical changes year after year. COMMISSION A COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH AND FIX IT FOR LONG TERM. - 1 or 0%

I am strongly against Superintendent Braband's "Revised Merit Lottery" proposal for TJ Admissions. While I wholeheartedly support improving student diversity at TJ, "Merit Lottery" is not the way to achieve it. The "Revised Merit Lottery" plan is even worse because it proposes to separate a 100 "highest-evaluated students" from the rest who would be admitted by lottery. This would no doubt give the first 100 a "superstar" status while the rest would feel like they got to TJ by pure luck. It would be unfair and demoralizing. It would also be sending a wrong message to our kids that they shouldn't work hard to achieve a dream such as attending TJ because luck would play a bigger role than hard work or merit would. Who would want to work hard then? Is that really the message we want to tell our kids? If superintendent Braband really cares about the under-represented minority groups and wants to admit more of those students into TJ, he really needs to give it some serious thoughts and find ways to increase STEM interests among those students and help them achieve academic excellence from early

grades from elementary through middle school. He and FCPS would need to be willing to do some hard work to get there. Otherwise, manufacturing a "diversed" student body like the "Merit Lottery"/"Revised Merit Lottery" plans projected is just a short-sighted, "bandit solution" and will be short-lived as well. It won't take long before TJ is destroyed under such a plan and no one will benefit eventually. The two "Merit Lottery" proposals Dr. Braband introduced so far show that he is not a true educator. He is certainly not qualified to lead FCPS. He should find a job elsewhere. Thanks. - 1 or 0%

Revised merit lottery proposal site is down. Regardless, bad solution. Very rushed, minimal community input. How much is the problem solving essay going to narrow down applicants? Even with the essay, a lottery will statistically pick students in the middle (by ability, on average the 50th percentile will be the average student admitted as opposed to the regular process in which the top 15% gets into TJ). So, you're going to be filling TJ up with average 3.5+ GPA students. Not only will that put pressure on TJ to drop its standards, you're not going to be giving the best education to the most worthy students. The lottery doesn't even attempt to solve the problem of why blacks and Hispanics tend to do worse on the TJ application, heck, in the SOL's and other standardized tests in general. And why minorities are involved less in the APP program. FCPS has not adequately addressed the needs of underrepresented minorities in elementary and middle school. The problem is not TJ, TJ is a place where the problem shows up because TJ is so competitive. With this proposal, you're going to be putting in a bunch of children unable to handle TJ and who would have a better learning experience in a base school. And, why is the test so bad? The test is there for a reason. The test is designed to skim off those who wouldn't be able to handle TJ's rigor before the essay application and teacher's recommendations tell more about the student. And, why exactly are you removing teacher's recommendations? Yes, there apparently may be data to suggest teachers from top feeder schools are trained to write better recommendations, but teachers recommendations are one of the best way to differentiate the student from their parent's manipulation. Only the student, not the parents, interact with the teachers. There's also nothing stopping parents from completing the portrait of a graduate sheet or whatever themselves. Plus, that sheet isn't even an adequate measure of ability. Yeah, congratulations, an 8th grader definitely knows how to be an ethical and global citizen. What about introverted geniuses? What about people with potential who just haven't blossomed yet because of lack of opportunity? If your justification for having the top 100 seats be open to the best students, at least make it best BY. MERIT. And another thing, the lottery claims to increase opportunity, but in reality it destroys it. If you were a disadvantaged low income student in the past, at least you could foster good relationships with your teachers, learn as much as you could, and complete online practice for the TJ test. Your fate could be somewhat controlled by you. Now, however, it's the throw your hat in the ring and pray game. Seriously, parents are gonna fill out these sheets for their kids, and the sheets don't even measure potential or ability, just some ethics bullcrap. In this new system, the only people getting a guaranteed (or semi-guaranteed) high-quality education are those with enough money for private school. What about people like me who need a high quality education to thrive and whose parents wouldn't have put them in a private school? You are destroying opportunity for the disadvantaged, not creating it, and you are destroying something great, not fixing it. - 1 or 0%

- First of all, I do oppose the lottery approach. By lottery, we are telling kids that luck is more important than efforts. This should not be a message that FCPS/parents/teachers/schools/governors convey to our kids, period. - Secondly, is FCPS and TJ ready with a plan to help kids who are actually not ready for the rigorous curriculum at TJ? Under the existing admission process, kids applying to TJ did demonstrate their interest in STEM and their qualification by going through the 2 rounds of tests as well as Teacher Recommendation. Even with such admission rates, drop out ratio at TJ is about 15%. By introducing the lottery approach, is FCPS confident that they will identify kids of better fit to TJ? Have FCPS developed plan to help kids if they struggle with the rigorous curriculum? Until a well thought-out plan is developed, FCPS should not move forward with changing the current admission process. - Thirdly, TJ is a governor's school that address special needs of those students capable of a more advanced STEM curriculum. Any change to the admission process should not be approved at the price of deteriorating the quality and rigor of TJ's curriculum. In the event that the merit lottery process is approved and later on FCPS find lots of students can't adapt to the rigor of TJ, will FCPS and TJ decide to lower the bar at TJ? If so, what is the purpose of having TJ? - Fourthly, the lottery approach does not address the root cause issue. FCPS should address the pipeline first. Start with elementary school and middle school, develop or identify more kids with interest in STEM. Or, if the purpose is to let more high school kids study STEM, consider open up resources at TJ to more FCPS students such as online learning, lab time for other schools etc. There are a lot of ways to address the diversity issue than merely changing the admission process. I do trust that the school board of FCPS and our governors deeply cares about the wellbeing of each and every child in FCPS and will carefully evaluate all aspects of the issue before making any decisions. Let's put in more time and have a "holistic review" of the admission process by involving all stakeholders, researching more about the root cause. Please do not

rush. Thank you! - 1 or 0%

The 100/400 lottery system itself, the act of getting rid of both the test and the teacher recommendations, have not have thought put into them at all. What is the standard? The lottery system was brought up to increase diversity- understood- just as it is historically, let's say more Asians apply to TJ with the lottery system, much more. Statistically, who has a higher chance of being chosen? This may resolve this problem slightly, but not entirely. I would also like to say how the superintendent called out Asians for using thousands of dollars on prep- my daughter did not take prep. You do not generalize that to a whole population just because some kids took prep. More kids did not take prep- this school was made to challenge students. This school is the #1 high school in the country because of the rigor and the race-blind admissions process- changing it to a lottery system is not right. Race is the issue, and colleges have resolved that by taking a set percentage. - 1 or 0%

Lottery is a joke and a slap in face to what we educate the children. FCPS could allocate say 20% seats to students with reduced and free lunch (also meeting merit criteria) and maintain merit rigor for the remaining 80%. OBJECTION to any lottery. SUPPORT diversification and inclusion through special seats! - 1 or 0%

The Revised Merit Lottery Plan has little to do with merit, and won't solve any real problems. It's just an easy and cheap cover up for FCPS's failures to reach out to disadvantaged students and provide support to help them succeed. The plan will divide the community, destroy TJHHST's mission, and cause long lasting damages to FCPS students. Lottery admission is against all commonly accepted education beliefs and theories. It's a shame for FCPS to propose lottery admission. I am totally against it. - 1 or 0%

Incorporating aspects of randomness into the TJ admissions process will ultimately undermine the purpose of TJ and cause divisiveness within the school's students. To pick 100 students based on "merit" and 400 based on the lottery means that there will be a difference in ability between the two groups. How will the school deal with the aftermath of the lack of consistency in the student's performances? The lottery will block some qualified students from being admitted to TJ and some unqualified students to enter. The dropout rate will rise, or the TJ curriculums will drop in quality because of this change. The whole concept of a lottery seems preposterous. Additionally, why must this happen so quickly during this period of uncertainty whilst the pandemic is raging? if you're going to revamp the system, why not take the time to think it through properly instead of just doing whatever feels easy to you at the moment? - 1 or 0%

Why not do 50% merit and 50% lottery - 1 or 0%

New plan is not fair to applicants who have been preparing to get admission from early age, - 1 or 0%

Concerns on the updated proposal: - lack of statistic to validate the model, eg # of students meeting the GPA cutoff for the last 5 years, per school, region distribution. Plus a comparison of TJ classes in the last 5 years. - criterions to select the top pool need to focus on STEM performance (vs not on humanity and leadership) and the pool should go up to 50% (vs 25%) to ensure TJ standards. stat for the selected needs to be available for public, eg GPA distribution, race and region distribution. - the lottery process needs to be audited by third party to avoid data cherry - 1 or 0%

I thought the original merit lottery proposal was a bit extreme, but the system for the 400 lottery and 100 highest-evaluated students is a great compromise. I've read about other magnet school which have used similar systems, and they seem to be reflecting real population demographics very well. I don't think students should be notified of which method (lottery or merit) they were admitted by, because that puts unnecessary pressure on the applicants. I will often hear, "Oh, it's just a band aid solution! This will not fix systemic racism in the United States!" It's not wrong, but a band aid solution is better than no solution at all. At least it shows that people are willing to aim for equity. No one is arguing that this proposal is perfect, and since the opposing groups don't seem to be offering any alternatives, it's the best thing we have. - 1 or 0%

My son is a new freshman at TJ. I think a lottery system is entirely inappropriate. The most qualified kids should get in, period. To have it based on sheer luck lessens the accomplishments of those who do qualify for TJ. I do not mind the idea of geographic quotas based on student enrollment. This will help ensure an equal number of kids from across the county. The new portrait of a graduate criteria is not unreasonable, but the focus on STEM is now largely missing from the enrollment process. These criteria could be used for any governor's/magnet school, regardless of its area of specialty. If the standardized tests have been deemed inadequate/inappropriate, maybe there are different tests to use, or TJ can come up with their own testing system. There needs to be some type of test that measures a student's knowledge, skills, and abilities in STEM. In order to boost interest and enrollment by underrepresented populations, TJ should be focusing on advertising and FCPS should be on the lookout for kids who are STEM oriented and STEM talented from elementary school. Only one of my son's middle school teachers ever talked to him about TJ. If we, as his parents, had not taken the initiative, he would not be a

student at TJ now. - 1 or 0%

I don't think tests are a good way to select students so I support not having tests be a critical factor. However, I think you are trying to change the admissions process to get the 'desired' results you are looking for without changing the underlying issues that are causing the 'undesired' results in the first place. Changing the criteria so that the outcome is determined largely by a lottery may increase the number of kids willing to apply to TJ. I think the pool of candidates that would be eligible to meet the revised criteria will increase dramatically and if you then use a lottery system on that larger pool of candidates you will not necessarily see the results you want. You can't forecast the expected demographics of classes using the new revised criteria but the past applicant pool. You need to forecast using all the potential students that would now be eligible and more willing to apply because there are fewer hurdles (Tests). If you do this, you might see very different results than what your models have predicted. Why don't you offer more challenging courses to anyone who has shown interest in TJ? Why should those that fail to get into TJ have no alternatives? Why not build a better education infrastructure that will create a better pipeline of students applying to TJ. Parents and children have been doing this on their own by taking supplemental courses and preparation and we now seem to be saying that this is somehow an unfair advantage. Rather than punish those that can and do the extra preparation why not focus on more holistic preparation in schools that need it. Shouldn't we want all children to have access to better and more challenging work? It's not that the admission policy is wrong but rather it is a failure to educate, provide the tools, raise awareness and give the access to the students we claim to want to help most. - 1 or 0%

By making it so that the 100 top students get admitted and the other 400 come from the lottery, you are keeping this lottery system, and even worse you are drawing a very thick line between these 2 sets of students. One of the reasons that I love TJ is how we all connect with each other- yes we have different backgrounds and have different academic strengths, but we can see ourselves succeeding with others, struggling with others sometimes. I think that if you bring this lottery into play, the current abilities of the students may have such a wide range that they cannot connect with each other very well. Also regarding the lottery, a point that keeps being brought up is that there are so many students who are qualified to go to TJ but don't get in because the system doesn't favor them. I agree that there are many students who don't get in even though they're disqualified, but the students who do get in are also qualified, so I don't think an approach of luck or randomness is the solution. - 1 or 0%

This proposal is not perfect but there is no perfect way to assess "merit" and separate out ability/potential from opportunities for enrichment which many students have not had. I would like to see a minimum level of math skills assessment (possibly could use math SOL pass advanced in 7th grade for most students). A lottery will not "ruin TJ." Any incoming students who would like to could attend a pre-TJ summer session to help with the transition socially by connecting to peers and staff, and to reinforce math and science skills, since students come from many different educational and family settings. Further any "top" students who were not selected for the 100 slots or the lottery could apply for sophomore year. Students should not be told how they are admitted to avoid a 2-tiered study body perception. Lotteries are used for many charter schools and address the problem that any method we use to identify the "best" students or "most deserving" students is subject to bias and does not accurately and fairly measure what it purports to measure (STEM aptitude? STEM passion? potential to succeed at TJ?), once you have started with a pool of higher-tier students. Further, including a lottery will expand the diversity of thought at TJ for creativity and innovation--not just selecting the most high-achieving students with a narrow definition of "who TJ is for," but including students may have a variety of strengths that will be beneficial for design and thought about real-world problems, and who approach projects or topics differently. It will eliminate the sense of superiority that comes from acceptance over non-acceptance, as we know that right now there are top students who applied (or who didn't) that are not being accepted--it is a flawed system and one that has repeatedly over the past 30 years failed to find some of the most talented students in the county with STEM passion. Right now, there are students at TJ who need tutoring before and during a class, or who lack STEM passion (not everyone needs to know what they will do as a career when they enter TJ, they are 13 y.o. when applying, but they should at least have a strong STEM passion as well as other interests). - 1 or 0%

Not only would the merit based lottery decrease the quality of TJ, it would also decrease the qualities of other high schools in the area. The merit based lottery would likely cause many rich parents who are worried about their kids education to move to areas with better high schools, while the people who can't afford it would be left behind. The lottery would lead to the collapse of many high schools around Fairfax, and create more of an academic gap between the "isles of excellence" and the other schools. - 1 or 0%

TJ is for talented kids for STEM, should not be based on geography and race. This proposal doesn't truly help black and Hispanic students, rather, it is targeting and discriminating Asian students who are working hard and have the gifts and talents to be in TJ! This proposal is discouraging and punishing kids

who has the talents and work hard. It isn't a solution to the TJ issue that was claimed by the school board. - 1 or 0%

It's not a good plan. No one I know as a student at TJ even remotely thinks this is going to be effective. First of all, TJ is a very difficult school even for those who got in through the test, and if a lottery system is used, students who got in that way will struggle severely, and since most of the class will be getting in through lottery, the teachers will have to change their standards for the students which ruins the whole point of the school. Also, with 100 students getting in based on merit and the others through luck, it creates a divide between students, and even if they don't know which way they got in, students will doubt the intellect of themselves and others. As a student at TJ who struggles with the workload and difficulty sometimes, thinking about the fact that I got in through the test reminds me I am capable of performing well, and I think coming classes should have that reassurance as well. A better thing to do is to just reach out to schools in struggling areas and encourage them to try out and provide them with programs that make them more able to. Switching the admissions process so quickly is not a good idea, and if I was in the class of 2025, I would be very anxious and scared about trying out for TJ because being confident in my skills apparently isn't enough to get in. - 1 or 0%

It's unfair for kids who work hard. It promotes the idea that being lucky is more important than work hard. It harms the society in the way that future scientist and engineers are not necessarily the most capable ones. It doesn't address the root of the problem of equity. It covers the problem by making the outcome seeming equal. - 1 or 0%

Mediocrity and discrimination are present in all aspects of American society - yet TJ stands out as a place to aspire towards, it is simply the best public high school in the country for a reason- the Students. If you start to reduce or dilute the intellectual capacity of the student base here is what will happen: the 2025 graduates will have an asterix against their names- oh they were the year TJ changed its exam policy, the places at top universities will fall, funding from the likes of Google & others will dry up & the students themselves will feel less emboldened to take on the world. TJ is about the students who are remarkable - in our first year we cannot emphasis how good the clubs are, mostly student run and how good the influence of the seniors is on the freshmen class. But it is hard work; you have to motivated and the drop out rate is somewhere between 10-15% per year, My son is white and he worked his socks off to get into TJ, and gave up time with friends, x box etc, he attended the Sunshine academy last summer to study a course designed to help students get into TJ. He was the only white kid there. This is about getting the number of Asian Americans down and the number of White kids up plus some increases in Black and Hispanic (which are proportionally lower than typical schools- of course that is a problem - but dont' change the exam, change the structural opportunities afforded everyone, Give Sunshine Academy free to disadvantaged children and see who shows up- this is about motivation. TJ is about motivated kids doing incredible things who worked hard to get there and that's the American dream. PS if you dont' change the exam I will personally organize and set up Sunshine Academies in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and get TJ students to teach it -- PLEASE PLEASE dont' change something that is working. - 1 or 0%

The new plan continues to be plagued by two major problems: 1) Too low a ceiling (and an absence of information) to identify gifted kids. Most MS kids take similar classes, with the exception of math. There are always many more than 100 students who take Algebra 2 in MS and also have straight As. The student information sheet and the problem solving essay are opportunities for kids to share their experiences with math/science and to demonstrate their ability to reason about something scientific, but I do not know if you would be able to tell who is "top" based on these alone. I would think they need teacher recommendations, and/or some really challenging questions to try to solve, possibly an interview to see how the student is thinking. 2) Too low a floor for students to be ready for TJ. TJ is not designed to be a school for all kids. It's a school designed for gifted kids and advanced learners. I don't believe this proposal represents a serious attempt at identifying those students for whom TJ (and all governor's schools) were designed in the first place. TJ is a demanding school which is not appropriate for kids who don't have well-developed algebraic intuition as well as strength in proportional reasoning and multi-step reasoning. This change is likely to be half-baked and destructive; moreover, it will not have community support, which is essential to public education. - 1 or 0%

I think that admission should be based on merit rather than by chance in a lottery - 1 or 0%

The goal of the new lottery policy is a racist based policy, with the goal to discriminate Asian kids. It is the responsibility of our elected officials and government to provide better STEM education in all schools. However, instead of make progress to improve the public schools, Atif Mustafa Qarni focused his energy in attacking the most successful STEM school in the whole country for his own personal political interests. As a governor's school, TJ allows gifted students to study in a way that best suits the gifted learner's needs. If the merit based entrance criteria was undermined, TJ would not be able to provide such a challenging curriculum. It would be a waste of the tax payer's money and kids time to travel a very long way everyday to get an education that is available locally. - 1 or 0%

Using a merit lottery system would suppress many people from gaining their full potential and be giving these seats to people who might not even want to be at the school. The purpose of TJHSST is to educate the future leaders of the US, but this lottery just contradicts this idea. - 1 or 0%

This is just a slightly watered-down version of the original deeply flawed proposal. There is no merit in the lottery proposal, just chance. - 1 or 0%

I think relying simply on a baseline minimum GPA and having taken Algebra 1 as the sole "objective" criteria is pretty pathetic for admissions to a Science & Tech focused school. The Quan Q and aspire test offered a clearly objective parameter with which to compare all applicants and more reliably pick out those who could succeed, given the number meeting the baseline requirements. The Quan Q and aspire test eliminated the possibility of GPAs being skewed by teachers who are concerned with the optics of their class performance as I have seen firsthand. It seems that Fairfax county simply thinks because TJ has fantastic teachers that they will be able to take any student and have them succeed on the same level as the current students. I disagree with this. Just because you are a bright child does not mean one would fit well in the current academics at TJ. My oldest daughter is an example. She applied with all the same qualifications as her brother who now goes to TJ, but she did not make it past the Quant Q and aspire test. It was disappointing but I can clearly see that she did not have the mindset of her brother and would not have thrived at TJ. She is an excellent communicator and excellent with the written word, so no doubt she would have done well with the proposed new application process. However I clearly, and she would definitely agree, realize that she would have struggled at TJ. Just because you are smart does not mean that it is the right type of smart to absorb, juggle, and really thrive in this demanding system. I would not risk changing the system/TJ to accommodate a broader range of students; rather I would work on preparing more students across a broader range for that demanding system. - 1 or 0%

Lottery is gambling. Education is NOT a gamble. - 1 or 0%

Any shape or form of lottery system just sends the wrong message to the students. They do not need to work as hard as they can. Nor would it matter any ways. The pursuit of happiness in life all just comes down to luck. That is most terrible thing we can teach to our children. Unfortunately, the rest of the society doesn't rely on lottery system to distribute opportunities. Imagine school board is elected through lottery system. No experience or qualification matters. - 1 or 0%

Please consider altering the proposed ratio by increasing the applicants who are reviewed, applying the holistic approach. Twenty percent seems low. - 1 or 0%

Another half baked idea. The revised plan won't help TJ find gifted students or students who need more advanced courses than their base school offers. - 1 or 0%

I feel that the lottery-based admissions system is unfair to those who worked and studied hard to try to get into TJ. Everybody should have the same opportunity, regardless of their race. - 1 or 0%

It's not about the "old" versus the "new" proposal, because both proposals are inadequate. The new plan continues to be plagued by two major problems: 1) Too low a ceiling (and an absence of information) to identify gifted kids. Most MS kids take similar classes, with the exception of math. There are always many more than 200 students who take Algebra 2 in MS and also have straight As. FCPS could decide to admit students based on taking math higher than Algebra 2, but that would put a carrot for parents to accelerate their kids far more than what is appropriate for most kids in math. The student information sheet and the problem-solving essay are opportunities for kids to share their experiences with math/science and to demonstrate their ability to reason about something scientific, but I do not know if you would be able to tell who is "top" based on these alone. I would think FCPS needs some really challenging questions to try to solve, possibly an interview to see how the student is thinking. 2) Too low a floor for students to be ready for TJ. TJ is not designed to be a school for all kids. It's a school designed for gifted kids and advanced learners. From the Virginia DOE website: "The Virginia Governor's School Program has been designed to assist divisions as they meet the needs of a small population of students whose learning levels are remarkably different from their age-level peers. The foundation of the Virginia Governor's School Program centers on best practices in the field of gifted education and the presentation of advanced content to able learners." TJ is a demanding school that is not appropriate for kids who don't have well-developed algebraic intuition as well as strength in proportional reasoning and multi-step reasoning. If the county does not administer a math test as part of its entrance exam, how do you find the TJ readiness? Algebra 1 with a GPA does not give much information. It's not a matter of whether the kids can "catch up" or not; it's a matter of whether they can enter a demanding program and at the same time make up for less developed math skills. I Presuming FCPS wants to maintain the excellence that the school has built, it has to think about the minimal criteria for thriving at TJ. It includes strong math skills (not necessarily advanced math skills). That needs to be screened for in order for admission to ensure that all students selected to attend getting an appropriate education. - 1 or 0%

Please consider the second look semifinalist proposal put together by the Coalition for TJ. This is a



fair solution to combat test bias in underrepresented schools while keeping the merit-based admissions process. This will allow underrepresented students to get a fair shot at earning their way into TJ. Please consider voting on this proposal so we can show the board that is it popular and fair. - 1 or 0%

I think instead of a lottery, TJ Admissions should take a similar approach to admissions like colleges do: A holistic review of grades, SIS and essays, but most importantly, In the context of the student's middle school. Some STEM passionate students may not have access to as many math and science enrichment programs in their middle school, but if that is taken into account, that passionate student would have an equal chance as students in other middle schools that do have access to STEM. - 1 or 0%

I agree that TJ should have more diversity, but a lottery is not the solution. I personally think that perhaps a quota on the number of people who have free/reduced lunch with the same test would be a much better solution. Additionally, if you really don't want people prepping for the test, just make it really hard or a test which doesn't use prior knowledge. An example could be like how power rounds are done in math competitions - the new definitions and ideas (typically obscure as to make it impossible to prepare for) are given in the test, and the test taker's goal is to prove and figure out new concepts from those new ideas. This tests the kid's logical reasoning much better than a standard math test does while still making it easy to pick out the kids who have good reasoning but might not be as privileged. - 1 or 0%

I opposed to lottery in general. Because it is against hard working, and life can not to accomplished with pure luck. No pain, no gain! That's what we were taught when we were young and the same thing we are teaching our kids. Lottery is too random and can not make sure the student body it picks will be strong enough to handle the vigorous courses that TJ offers. Either TJ will have to increase its drop out rate or TJ will have to lower its course standard. Either way, it is bad for school and unfair for the students. Also, merit-based test is the only race-blind way. A student gets into TJ because of her study ability, and nobody will judge her by her skin color. But if the lottery was pushed through, everyone will be judge that he gets in TJ either because of her skin color or pure luck. It's harming some real talented and hardworking kids. - 1 or 0%

1) current admission process is race blind, merit based selection. This is a fair process. By introducing race factor as preference in admission process is not only wrong, but also against law. 2) Every year the admission rate is around 15%. So we have a large pool of students, unlike what FCPS has said that we need to increase the pool. 3) lottery system will not encourage students to put in their effort. In the long run, this will have a detrimental effect 4) FCPS needs to do the hard work and put in their effort to address the pipeline issue. 5) we need to have teachers's recommendation as part of the selection process. FCPS should trust and respect our teachers at least 6) mental health issues will not be resolved by lottery, instead, it will make it worse. In the past when no race factors are considered, students can care less of their differences. 7) the current plan is too vague and lack of details. 8) the process in developing this new plan is too rush, and it lacks of date to backup its feasibility. - 1 or 0%

As parents of a TJ student, we disagree with the original and revised proposals. Either plan will have the likely outcome of eliminating TJ as the standard bearer of US public education without accomplishing the goal of giving a larger number of gifted underrepresented students the opportunity to attend a high school that can adequately prepare them for the future they deserve. If FCPS is interested in making TJ accessible to all, it needs to invest in the kinds of programs at all ES/MS that have made current "pipeline" schools successful (e.g. Science Olympiad, Math Counts, Chess club); commit personnel at those schools to actively seek out kids who have the academic potential and interest in STEM; create a roadmap for those students to attend TJ (e.g., tutoring, test-prep, development of critical thinking skills). To accomplish the stated goal, it makes no sense to lower the standards—the students who end up winning the lottery will not be attending the same TJ they applied to. A 3.5 GPA and an essay are not sufficient to show who has a chance to succeed at TJ and will not identify a large enough number of talented, underrepresented students to make a significant change in the demographics. Teacher recommendations are critical to the process (or better yet, a person whose primary job is to help identify the kids who NEED this kind of education). TJ serves an important role in FCPS, meeting the special needs of a certain group of kids. A student who needs a post-BC Calculus class to challenge them is just as important as someone who participates in one of the many special needs programs FCPS offers. But to lower the standards at TJ is as much of an injustice to high performing kids as kids at underrepresented schools not having preparation to compete for a spot at TJ. As parents who finally see their child in an environment where they are amongst their peers, we can tell you it is priceless. To be in a place where peers help each other grow intellectually, emotionally and socially is what makes TJ. No one wants to see more opportunities across the board for all FCPS students than we do but please do it by raising the floor for everyone rather than lowering the ceiling for TJ. - 1 or 0%

this amended proposal NOR the previous proposal has the ability to meet the CORE objective with which the county board started - and that was "to increase the participation of latino and african"

students in TJ. and it will also create a "massive" skills gap, if just the top 100 are pitted against the other 380 students who have NOT adequately prepared to enter TJ and get in via the Lottery. - 1 or 0%

The biggest problem of the "merit lottery" proposal, where all middle schoolers who meet a minimum GPA and math requirement are included, is that it would miss many kids who really, really need TJ. I'm not sure what percentage of students this is -- maybe 30%-50% - who won't realize their potential at a base school because it doesn't offer the same rigor or classes. I'm sure it is a tempting model for FCPS to choose - because it eliminates most of the analysis and allows FCPS to avoid complaints and allegations that the admissions process, while race-blind, is somehow racist. It's an "easy out" but it dilutes the TJ application process and hurts many deserving kids by being such a rough cut. The "top 100" compromise is a slight improvement, but the rigor of a student's coursework must be taken into account - not just that they have Algebra 1 and meet the "portrait of a graduate." One side note I'd like to add is that TJ is a difficult school for a low-income and/or single-parent student to attend logistically, especially if the student lives far from TJ. In order to participate in sports, marching band, some clubs, etc. at TJ, parents need to have the time and resources available to pick up their child after practice multiple days per week. If FCPS wants to encourage low-income students to attend, it may need to offer better post-activity transportation options for these students. Parents who want their children to be well-rounded but don't have the flexibility to drive for 30 - 60 minutes each way to pick up their child from activities will not choose to send their child to TJ in any circumstance. - 1 or 0%

What I found amusing is that outsiders think TJ is a place where you put anyone through it, he/she will magically become excellent. Have they ever thought why TJ ranked No.1 nationally? It's the student base! They are the most hard working, intelligent, competitive students. Because of them, they scored high in SAT, in SOL, in AP Exam, all of which contributed the No.1 ranking. Now let's take a look what would happen when this very base are sourced by a Lottery System. They no longer work hard to learn because success is brought by luck; with a 3.5 GPA (easily achieved with a GPA inflammation), students are not ready for the challenge curriculum at TJ. Ultimately the students will fail at the SOL, SAT, AP Exam, Senior year Research Lab will be cancelled because not enough kids met the pre-requisition. Do you think TJ will still rank No. 1? It's just another local High School with VA ranking #100 and such. Two years down the road, will TJ still be the talk in the town? We, as parents, teacher, school board, are the educators to our children's future. How can our country stay competitive among other countries in the world, are largely depending on our children. We need strong leaders, top notch scientist, education are crucial. Will a college admission based on lottery, will a job offer given by lottery, will the government contract awarded to company using a lottery? Until they do, we must prepare our students for it. We must prepare them to be ready for the real life challenge. Lottery system won't solve the teen's mental health issue if not worsen it. Imagine if you teach a 2nd grade kid with 6th grade curriculum, will they stress out, be anxious? The standardized entrance test ensures all kids admitted are at the academic level needed be to survive. and they will thrive at school not feeling beaten by it otherwise. By the way, the reason the so called "infamous" TJ prep classes existed was because FCPS hasn't done enough to prep our students high school ready. There is no magic to the prep classes, they simply teach the students what should have been taught at school. Look at the Singapore Math curriculum, the 3rd grade material there is our 4th or 5th grade level. And they emphasize heavily on word problem solving that is largely lacking in our school system. Let's admit it, we are behind. What we need is not to destroy a fine school, but to create more schools like TJ, from the elementary level. - 1 or 0%

Hi, I really love the idea of adding more diversity at TJ, but the lottery method is not the right way to do it. I really feel you need to fully fund resources to the pipeline and even add more STEM resources in the elementary and middle school curriculum. Even after-school clubs can be STEM-focused so the students get exposure to the STEM topics. Only then will they know if they want to pursue a STEM future by applying the TJ. I also feel that the FCPS high schools need more STEM exposure. If a student wants to pursue STEM, TJ should not be their only option. As for diversifying TJ, I think you need to spend more time with outreach at the middle schools without any representation at TJ, and help them build the confidence and knowledge with STEM. TJ is a rigorous school and the students that are admitted should be the ones that really love STEM and want to be challenged. Also, you can choose 5 students from the underrepresented middle schools that show a love, interest and ready to work in STEM (chosen by teachers) to be admitted to TJ to bring in more representation, but the rest of the students should be admitted based SOLELY on merit. So, instead of 100 merit and 400 lottery that is currently being proposed, it should be all merit with middle schools allowed to choose some students from select middle schools. These are just some ideas! Please do not do a lottery for 400 students! I also agree to not have a standardized test so there is no inequity with test prep. - 1 or 0%

The proposal and the revised proposal are not fair for the students, teachers and the advanced program at TJ. You will do no good to the incoming students and the school if you choose them by lottery. The merit in the proposal is not enough to make an objective selection. Schools are meant to be a place where students thrive and excel. Keep TJ for academically advanced students and search for

another school in Fairfax for race diversity. - 1 or 0%

I support increasing the diversity of TJ's student body because I'm extremely grateful to have these resources and I think they should be made available to those who haven't had, and otherwise may never have, the opportunity to get them. I also strongly believe that talented kids may be overlooked by the current admissions system. I have 2 main issues with this proposal: the content and the procedure by which it was created. I'm concerned about this new system because I feel like it does little to address underlying issues of race and socioeconomic status as they relate to education and only aims to make TJ's demographics superficially more representative of FCPS. I hope there are some other plans in progress to combat FCPS's educational inequity, but I haven't heard anything so I'm assuming this is the only plan. I would be much more supportive of this proposal if there was another plan to address the inequities from the lower grades up implemented in tandem. Another concern I have is the removal of the first-round test and the teacher recommendations. I think raising the GPA requirement is a poor substitute for the test and in removing the recommendations, you lose the human aspect of the student. I believe a teacher's perspective is really valuable in knowing what kind of learner the student is, and if they would be able to thrive at TJ. I've heard that there are studies that show recommendations tend to reflect better on affluent students than poorer students, and if this is true I would prefer if there was still some component of the admissions process that was analogous, rather than removing it entirely. My second issue with this proposal was that it seemed that it was created without much input from the community. I don't entirely understand the reasons for this, but I think if more community members were involved, or if the town halls were held while it was still in progress rather than after it was done, we would come out with a plan that would be less divisive (at least people would understand it better). - 1 or 0%

The racial disparity at TJ is rooted in the disparity of the quality of education in feeding schools, disparity that goes back to elementary schools. The proposed lottery system, while politically expedient, is nothing more than window dressing. It's going to cause significant harms with little real benefit: - Instead of selecting the most fitting students for TJ based on 100% race-blind and merit-focused criteria, the lottery process defers the decision to a random process. The result is an admission pool of students who're less qualified collectively; - By resorting to the nonsensical lottery process, FCPS may pat itself on the back for having done something. But it does nothing to improve the poor quality in those under-represented schools/regions; - It'll sow more discourse within the student body, when someone can be perceived as being admitted only because of luck, instead of his/her own merit. Aside from the proposal, the process it was introduced is also very haphazard, and very disturbing. For something that will have significant impact for many years to come, it's shocking how little due diligence has been exercised. There's little analysis of history data, no modeling/validation of what changes the proposed process would effect, little input from the community (not until widespread protest occurred). All these make me question the priorities, commitment, and competency of FCPS administrators. Equality is about judging a person by his/her own merit, regardless the color of the skin or socioeconomic status. This country was founded on the belief that everyone is created equal, and can achieve success through his/her own effort. Many of the current/past TJ students are from families who are first generation immigrants, mostly from under-developed countries. Their success in bringing up kids who're highly motivated and successful is living proof the ideas this country was founded upon are still well and alive. Instead of suppressing them, we should promote them. Through our collective effort, there's no reason the same can't be accomplished with other disadvantaged and currently under-represented minorities. The current process, which is 100% merit-based, and 100% race, and socioeconomic status blind, is the best embodiment of equality. It's helped to propel TJ to the topic ranking nationwide. Let's work together to improve it, to make it more comprehensive. But please, don't destroy it. Don't destroy TJ. - 1 or 0%

This proposal is not at all beneficial to the meritorious and hard working students of Fairfax county. This new proposal doesn't fit with the school motto. - 1 or 0%

The TJ Admissions Revised Merit Lottery Plan IS NOT the RIGHT solution to achieve the diversity. It has potential to harm TJ and its academic standards of excellence; it sends absolutely the wrong message that we can rely on luck (lottery system) instead of striving to be the best. Lottery admission is against all commonly accepted education beliefs and theories. I am opposed to it. - 1 or 0%

I am writing to ask you to: Carefully and Fully Analyze the Consequences. This needs further study. There is no reversing this process if it turns out badly as predicted by an analysis published by the Coalition for TJ. This proposal is being rushed through. Introducing the revised "merit" lottery plan is no way to deal with a change of this magnitude. In addition, there has been little or no outreach to any of the affected student communities. The School Board and the public need time to see more details on the proposal, as well as the data behind it, in order to analyze it properly, have a comment period, and consider the best options. Evaluate the most recent admissions changes. The admissions test was changed just 2 years ago. Has a study been conducted analyzing the effects of this most recent change? That should be the starting point. Consult the faculty and staff of TJ. Has anyone talked directly

with TJ faculty – not just the principal – the actual teachers? It does not seem a good idea to implement large scale reforms like this without consulting those who work directly with the students on a daily basis. Perhaps this should be done anonymously. These teachers are the most knowledgeable about how modifications have affected the students attending TJ. - 1 or 0%

The Revised Merit Lottery Plan still blatantly discriminates against Asian students and benefits white students. Getting accepted into TJ should be a result of hard work, but this plan undermines the effort that students put into their academic learning. It won't effectively increase the number of Black or Hispanic students admitted into TJ. This plan uses Black Lives Matter almost as a prop to discriminate against Asian Americans. FCPS is the top school district in the nation, but in the long term, this merit lottery will damage FCPS's reputation. FCPS should be proud of current TJ students for their academic success and hard work rather than bash them or tell them that they don't deserve to be at TJ. It's illegal to use racially "balance" any K-12 school in the US, including TJ. This lottery also hurts hardworking Black and Hispanic students. To leave a student's admittance up to chance is very sketchy and does not award students who put in the most effort. There are plenty of ways to help this racial imbalance, but this is not a viable solution. It is necessary to enforce a long-term plan, starting at the elementary school level to help those with economic disadvantages. The Revised Merit Lottery Plan consequently divides the future student body in half: those who are part of the 100 who get in purely through merit, and everyone else who gets in through the lottery. It is a recipe for disaster and a toxic environment at TJ. In conclusion, this is another failure of the FCPS School Board. - 1 or 0%

Any kind of Lottery system does not support the merit or diversity, rather introduces quota system in education and promotes inequality. Fundamental problem is improving the STEM pipeline and providing opportunities for economically disadvantaged (regardless of race). These opportunities can range from more funding to under represented feeder schools to promote STEM, individualized support plans for economically dis-advantaged students. That sort of plan not only encourages STEM pipeline, but also sense of ownership, achievement, and accomplishment to students. - 1 or 0%

I dislike both the original and the revised proposals, but the revised proposal is a little better than the original. TJ admissions standards should not be relaxed. The students admitted should be those best able to handle a rigorous curriculum. Requiring only a 3.5 GPA would be relaxing the admissions standards. Very few currently admitted students have such a low GPA. - 1 or 0%

The criteria for admission specified in Dr. Brabrand's proposal do not adhere to FCPS Policy 3355.4. The enumerated criteria omit important criteria that FCPS Policy 3355.4 uses to describe the purpose of TJ and the students it is intended to serve. A lottery defeats the very purpose of a holistic review. Even if a review process imperfectly assesses each qualified applicant's "ability to meet the rigors of a demanding curriculum and the potential to be effective contributors to the school's unique learning experience", statistical theory says that we should expect that a lottery would usually result in a student body that generally is less able to meet the rigors of the curriculum and effectively contribute to the learning experience (FCPS Policy 3355.4). The likely efficacy of Dr. Brabrand's revised proposal has not been evaluated. It would not be responsible to make such significant changes to FCPS Regulations without any empirical assessment of the likely progress toward the goal of a more demographically representative student body. - 1 or 0%

(1) The requirement is very vague for the top 100 students. As a former science teacher myself, there is no better evaluation than testing. Yes. it not perfect, but better than other approaches. (2) The other 80% lottery will be too much random and low bar, resulting very high drop rate, eventually creating big mental problems among the students in the TJ community. - 1 or 0%

My concerns are: How will you evaluate each applicant based on the holistic review process? How will you verify each claim? How will assign weight to each claim? How will you select the 100 "highest evaluated" applicants without a quantitative metrics system? How will you make sure the admission officers are not biased? What is your budget for the vastly increased burden in the admission process, in terms of time, people and money? How will you plan to acquire the additional resources? How will you measure outcome and plan according next step? - 1 or 0%

I am a junior at TJ. I believe that this school is made for people who excel at school and enjoy learning, not just people who have a high GPA. TJ is a community of like-minded people who can work together; it's not just about advanced classes. In my 2 (going on 3 now) years at TJ, I've found that being able to be around other people like me, who share the same interests as me, the same work ethic as me, and the same enthusiasm of math and science as me, has allowed me to enjoy school much more and succeed more. If TJ becomes mainly merit-lottery based, we lose that community. We are choosing people at random to come to TJ, ruining the dedication and the enthusiasm of the community. Without the selective process of admissions, TJ loses what makes it special, and it will just become another school for people with high GPAs. To conclude, I strongly disagree with the merit lottery system, and over the next few years, the community TJ was built for will be gone. To respond to the racial imbalance at TJ, I propose keeping the way the admissions process is, but taking out the admissions fee to

encourage people of poorer communities to take the test. Also, there are many students in FCPS that are immigrants, and their parents have to work very hard to support their family. This means that the parents often don't have time to be involved with the student's school life, and they are much less likely to be pushed to succeed in school and also apply to TJ. This is one large cause of the racial imbalance at TJ. To fix this, I believe there should be an in elementary schools and middle schools to help identify these kinds of students and recommend TJ admissions to admit them. Finally, I propose some form of a quota, where a certain amount of slots are saved for students that are part of the minority at TJ. - 1 or 0%

Keep the TJ admissions process as is currently. - 1 or 0%

Dear Sir / Madam, TJHSST is the Polaris or the North Star for schools across the country, and for a very good reason - check the US News Rankings for 2020 Best High Schools Rankings. TJ has been featuring in the top ten Best High Schools for the past decade. It has a national and international brand recognition being one of the best large public schools, due to its selection process. Dedicated faculty, supportive staff, exuberant student body and an excellent parental community sustains the enthusiasm that helps us to be the best high school in the nation. Students from FCPS and elsewhere aspire to enter TJ for its STEM focus and the excellent research lab facilities it provides and ensures the dreams of so many of its students to realize their potential. It motivates business and parents to stay who wish top schools to be available within the FCPS – do not let go of the Pole Star, by replacing it by a lottery system. The statistics for class of 2023 – shows 90% of kids entering TJ are from the public school systems and 10% are from either the private or the home schools. It is very encouraging to us that students from private schools also take the TJ admission test to enrich the student and parent community at TJ. Most students entering TJ from the public school systems spend zero dollars towards TJ test preparations. School board officials repeatedly cite the statistic of “tens of thousands of dollars”, without providing us information on how they arrived at that ridiculously high number. The TJ admissions committee should focus on how to bring up the standards of learning at the other local high schools taking TJ as the roadmap. Providing enhanced STEM related curriculum and extracurricular activities that are encouraged and nurtured at TJ should serve as a model for FCPS to boost performance of every student that aspires STEM as their professional goals. This can be done if sufficient time and energy is devoted, with a vision to achieve the goal to thereby broadening the demographic representation. A possible plan of action - 1. Adopt the standard SAT or ACT in the eighth grade for a merit based criteria besides a grade point requirement of 3.5 to appear in the tests. 2. Expand high schools choices that are available for the aspiring students. Refer to FCPS that are in top 10 rankings by US News. Each local high school (such as Chantilly, Oakton, or Madison) could reserve and limit up to 40 merit based students who will be able join there as well (besides keeping TJs intake of 480 per year). This will not only double the merit based intake to a thousand it will provide more flexibility to students to choose additional high schools. 3. Provide practice exams at local base schools for SAT and ACT for every student to participate in to improve demographic representation. It will improve performance of the students in the long run and increase representation for minority groups. As a reference the cost of TX04001 7th Grade Jumpstart: TJ Test Prep is \$322.00, which FCPS can budget into curriculums for low-income students free of charge. I humbly request that the approach should expand and should not be at the cost of TJ's admission criteria getting diluted. Regards, Prakash - 1 or 0%

The revised merit lottery plan is not much better than the plan proposed on 9/15. I understand that some changes need to be made in order for all members of the community to have equal and fair access. In order to achieve this the school board can not dumb down the entry requirements. This is not right or fair to the students who are currently at TJ, graduated from TJ, and particularly to those you are trying to get into TJ. How do the current Black and Hispanic students feel about this change? Are they happy with it? Are the new Black and Hispanic students going to feel better about getting into TJ after the entry requirements were made significantly easier to accommodate them? Are they ready to walk the halls of the number 1 school in the country knowing they are possibly there due to a lottery system that was put in place to accommodate them? Are they going to be ready for the academic rigors and challenges that current and past students are and have faced? The solution lies at the elementary and middle schools where all kids should be given equal access and coaching/learning based on their interests and abilities. The AAP program is a great example. In middle school perhaps the teachers can be motivated to identify kids with exceptional abilities and to refer them to a librarian or a department that can give them access to material to help them get through the TJ Test. Every child at TJ should feel like they are there because they have earned admissions through merit and not lottery. I am a minority woman who has worked extremely hard for everything. I was the oldest of 4 and raised by a single mother. I was definitely not privileged and I endured many injustices due to my ethnicity. I could not afford SAT tutoring so I used to go to the public library to study...that too when the library was open and when I could get a ride to and from. I still got into one of the finest universities in the country...as did my younger siblings. I strongly believe the right approach to diversity in admissions is access to learning

materials in middle school and encouragement from teachers. My child is at TJ truly based on merit...she had very little coaching or prep so we are a blessed family...we did not have to pay for prep...FCPS did a great job "prepping my child." Similarly, all other kids from different economic and racial groups can also achieve the same if they try. My daughter and I are prime examples of minorities who can achieve without any lottery systems in place. - 1 or 0%

I think this will change the goal and curriculum of TJ. The School and school board should be clear about it. - 1 or 0%

The top 100 should be the top 100 without experiential factors. TJ is a top school and deserves the top applicants whoever they may be. I understand the impulse to diversify as it is odd that most of the applicants come from 2 middle schools but to do it by lottery with such low standards is misguided. For example, have a TJ like class after school in seventh grade that is really challenging, it would weed out students who can't or don't want to do the work. At least you would get some sense of the student rather than a lottery. Having a problem solving essay that you do at home is worthless if students can get help. Bring them in for the essay. Limited quota setting by geographic enrollment does make some sense as the educational level in the Alexandria area is subpar to the west and it is not the students fault that Fairfax cannot get the level up to the West standards. Top kids in Alexandria should have a fair shot. Do not make TJ into AAP, where almost everyone is let in and it is a waste of time for your highest learners. Its better to dismantle TJ and use the money elsewhere than turn it into nothing. - 1 or 0%

While I support the inclusion of more kids from underrepresented communities, I don't see how this plan will address that goal. If anything, it will do more harm than good. For the last 6 years, I have been coaching kids for various competitions such as robotics, math, TSA etc. Every year, I see a trend - some kids are not really interested but are doing it either because they have been pushed by their parents or due to peer pressure. However, there are other kids who are genuinely interested and show elevated traits related to problem solving. They are not just smart but very focussed, diligent and determined. While others kids are watching movies, these kids are working on their science project, robot or something else related to STEM. These are the kids who have the potential to become brilliant scientist, engineers and doctors and we all know that TJ is the perfect school for them. However, a lottery system takes away that chance from them. Please don't argue that these kids will do good in their base schools because if there is no difference between TJ and those base schools, why do you even care if TJ does not represent the demographics of the region. Also, I don't understand how this new plan addresses the issue with wealthy kids getting paid coaching for the exam? It would be naive to think that they will not get coached for writing their interest statements. Lastly, to whoever who is working on the proposal, I believe that you are in it because you have dedicated your life to serving the public. You believe that you have the compassion and empathy to see things from different perspectives. You think that are "eligible" for your job and most likely, you are. How would you feel if getting this job was based on a lottery where someone had to pick one candidate out of hundreds? - 1 or 0%

A holistic, merit-based admissions process ensures that all students enter TJHSST with the same baseline for an advanced, accelerated STEM-focused curriculum. Changing this to incorporate a lottery will ensure that the entire TJ community (administration, teachers, students, and families) will face the challenge of educating students who are on unequal footing. While this would be difficult for teachers to teach accelerated courses when there are a wide variation of student baselines, this would also introduce added stress and unnecessary difficulties for lottery students who fall behind others that have entered the school based on merit (whose aptitude and learning styles which make them a good match for TJ's fast-paced, intensified curriculum). I have two children; while I would certainly find it convenient for both my children to attend TJ, the existing merit-based holistic admissions process helped to confirm that if admission were offered to a child, that child would likely be a good fit for the TJ curriculum and culture. If my second child were to go through the same process and not be offered admission, I would feel grateful for this evidence that TJ is not the best match and that a successful high school experience would be best found at my child's base school. (As a side note: Our family did not spend any money on test preparation; we purchased no books or courses and the only fee we paid was the application fee.) We strongly support the existing holistic, merit-based admissions process as an effective way to identify students who would best thrive at TJ. - 1 or 0%

As a student I have had an extraordinary education at TJ. I do not believe however, that I am the only one who "deserves" this. I have family support that would have made me successful even if I had not gotten to TJ, perhaps with a few different twists and turns. There are many who need TJ because they don't have the same level of family support, despite having the same passion for STEM. I also believe that the insane competition to get in bleeds over to create the same type of environment in TJ. That is not a great aspect of being a student here. There's no perfect answer, but I believe this REVISED MERIT LOTTERY is a step in the RIGHT direction. - 1 or 0%

For this current year and the next 3 years, I support this proposed change including the new revision presented on Sept 18th, provided that there is a set of well-trained people who actually do the

holistic review to select the "top 100" based on more than just grades and test scores (and more than just kids pushed by parents to over-achieve but don't actually have the passion for STEM) - and that the composition of that review group is diverse and trained in anti-bias. that said, I would prefer that an interview component be added for all applicants - whether in person or by video, much like MIT's interview process using Educational Counselors who happen to be trained alumni. I recommend adding that component as soon as fall of 2021 using best practices from MIT, Bowdoin, and others who use it. I am very supportive of a change in the entire pipeline from K-8, the admissions process for TJ, and the culture at TJ because clearly what has been tried in the past decade has not moved the needle. I am aware that there was an alternative approach tried back in the early 2000's that was working but received push-back as being an "affirmative action" approach by hand-selecting students from the qualified applicant pool to ensure diversity. I heard it was ultimately dismantled even though it was working very well with students thriving and succeeding. I also think we should be looking at MIT and others who have 25:1 applicant:admit ratios and are able to quickly down-select to about 9:1 very qualified applicants who make that first cut (and all of them would be highly successful and belong even in that pool of candidates). Then, the admissions team composes the final set of offered admissions group using many different factors including geography, gender, race, ethnicity, extra-curricular activities, passions for saving the world in various ways, tenacity/grit, and so much more - this creates a thriving, successful community of students that are top notch, but not necessarily top SAT or top GPA. it will take some work but is very possible and works for these top rated universities like MIT. - 1 or 0%

This school has a nationwide reputation of being a school of Science Technology Engineering & Math excellence. This proposal will not solve any of the stated problems. The school is extremely diverse currently and is blindly based on academic excellence, which is why it's one of the best academic schools in the country. This proposal will completely turn TJ into an only slightly better than average school and will lose all of it's reputation over time based on this proposal. I do understand the desire to drive better hispanic/latino, african american and white numbers to better match demographics, however, this is not the solution. I would propose a number of other approaches like free test prep, outreach, quotas, and many other alternatives over a Lottery. My daughter goes here and I am a Computer Engineer by trade, and I can tell you that slightly above average students with a 3.5 GPA would not be successful in general here. These are some of the smartest children in the multi county area here. This lottery is genuinely an ignorant attempt at solving the stated problem. The analogy would be to go to all high schools and for every sport, tell them, if you pass the physical, you can be on the team and /or be the captain / quarterback or pitcher, etc. Sports are based on putting the best players on a competitive team and it's based on skill level, not race. The same for TJ where the best students based on skill/academic excellence, make it in and they excel at it. TJ is generating tomorrow's scientists and engineers and this approach is destroying that. If this lottery passes, then we all must push to dismantle all sports processes and go to a lottery system. Every pitcher of every baseball team is purely lottery based. Every quarterback, every goalie, every tennis player, bowler etc. We will have the most average teams in the country and if we are going to apply this lottery approach to academics based magnet/charter school, then we must apply the same precedence to all sports and/or skill/academic based decisions we make equally. If you preach equality for all, then you cannot pick and choose how you apply it. I warn you now, that this decision will destroy all that TJ has stood for and is respected for nationwide. I employ you to revisit this decision and look for other alternatives to solve your problems. - 1 or 0%

1. Lottery has no place in education. We're educating our children to become the scientists, innovators, leaders, engineers, problem solvers in the 21st century. How can you use lottery to decide who can get into the #1 high school in the US? If you use lottery, what are you promoting in our children? Gambling? Hard work, perseverance, grit, excellence, and merit are no longer valued in the lottery system. Only random luck is. 2. Please stop using the phrase merit lottery. It breaks my heart. They don't ever go together. Merit stems from hard work. Lottery pops up from a blind draw of luck. They are never even remotely related. 3. Education should award merit and excellence. Race, skin color, socioeconomic status should not be a factor in the TJ admission. Only the most motivated, passionate, and highly talented students should go to TJ. If you use the lottery to balance the race proportion of the student population in TJ, you're dismantling TJ, the #1 STEM high school in the US. - 1 or 0%

I am against the lottery system and the revised proposal still doesn't give enough seats to students with true passion for STEM. It's unfair! - 1 or 0%

1. We agree the school should be more representative of the community 2. We disagree with the negative manner in which the school has been portrayed in the Town Halls and School Board meetings. Its a great school, don't bash it 3. We disagree with the TJ parents who seem to feel entitled to the slots for their children 4. We don't necessarily think the lottery proposal is the right answer. We think some of the moderate suggestions to include aptitude and interviews to prove STEM interest would help ensure the kids who are chosen for the lottery have the foundation to manage the rigor without re-introducing

extra stresses the school has worked hard to manage in the last few years. - 1 or 0%

I feel TJ needs reform, however, this merit lottery only makes the number look good, but it cannot solve the real issue. We have 10%+ TJ drop out currently with high standard selection. The number will increase significantly and eventually causes many issue with lottery. Plus, the region division is the worst part. Students live in different region has different opportunity? - 1 or 0%

1. Too drastic change that likely to kill TJ as we know it; 2. Like the idea of removing testing fee; 3. Gradual process to start with 30 to 40 underrepresented allocated and then evaluate; 4. Never use lottery; - 1 or 0%

In the statement It says FCPS Schools that are underrepresented. I live in Arlington and 6 kids, the most out of any middle school in our county, we're offered. Will this system apply to us? - 1 or 0%

Two-tiered plan will cause gap, stress and student split. Lottery students will inevitably feel the pressure academically and psychologically from the top tier. The top tire will not feel challenged if school has to lower course difficulty or to close some due to low attendance. My kid wouldn't loss one hour sleep in the morning and another hour sport in the afternoon to go to TJ if TJ excellence were not there anymore. Lottery is making my kid confused about core values of hardworking not luck, fairness not favor and striving for success not chance in this country. Qualified Black or Hispanic kids may loss the lottery. It is unfair to cap regions with more qualified kids. Same kid may get GPA3.5 in one school and 3.0 in another. Lottery is a cover-up solution to cover the fact that FCPS has been failing to fix pipeline issues. Black and Hispanic students are not given enough STEM awareness or programs or help during elementary and/or middle school, and suddenly thrown to the deep water of TJ via lottery. Revised plan should get rid of any lottery and come up with creative solution to get more qualified underrepresented kids to TJ in short term and to fix pipeline broken issues in long run. Don't gamble with kids/education/our future. - 1 or 0%

The TJ Admission process needs to be changed in order to increase equity at TJ. While a merit lottery is not a great solution, it may be better than the current process. However, in order to create a better admissions process, we need to consider the target applicants for TJ. These do not need to be students with the most STEM extracurriculars, or the "best" students. They need to be curious, willing to think, and excited to work hard throughout their time at TJ. TJ is a challenge, and that is the point. I am a current student tab TJ, and I see some of my peers bemoaning the work and thought we have to put into every assignment. Is that the attitude we want to foster? TJ needs students that want to do the hard work, ask the hard questions, and put thought into answering them. These are the students that will one day lead the world. The admissions process cannot just give a generic prompt and have applicants provide formulaic answers. I enjoyed the TJ testing process because I found it a great way to express my creativity, but the unequal test prep opportunities make the original admissions process unfair. TJ shouldn't need students who only prep to pass the test - TJ should want students with curious minds and a strong work ethic. While designing a new admissions process, we need to keep in mind the ultimate goal of the school in order to admit the most fitting applicants into TJ. - 1 or 0%

We commend the school board's efforts at righting past biases; however, a lottery still leaves too much to chance. Any student can get the grades needed to qualify for the lottery, but there are missing requirements, like the teacher recommendations which show how well the student interacts in the classroom and builds connections with faculty members. Why not just allot a certain number of seats to increasing inclusion by under-served or under-representated groups? A lottery just eliminates accountability and does not target the additional consideration to those who need it most. - 1 or 0%

The merit lottery plan defeats the purpose of a magnet school. Rather than pursuing this plan, the county should consider just shutting down TJ altogether if they don't want to have a magnet school – it would help reduce the county budget. A question to the policy makers/education board and Superintendent Brabrand, how is this plan address those who weren't randomly selected after meeting the basic requirements but are more talented than those who got selected? With the proposed plan, you are actually taking away the opportunity from those who really need the magnet school. Also, why should "English language learner" be a criteria? We all have had our own challenges in learning English whether you were born in this county or not; however, it's a basic fundamental skill for anyone who want to be successful in a magnet school. It's like asking a student who signed up for a Calculus if they have any trouble doing additions or subtractions. Those students should consider attending the base schools and not a magnet school – and we should fully support the English learning programs at the base schools. After they proved to be successful in the base school environment, they can apply for a magnet school WITHOUT any favoritism or biases, but WITH academic merits and their skills level. Based on the prior messages by the education board and superintendent, this whole concept seemed to be introduced to help certain minority groups to address a perceived discrimination. However, you are trying to address a perceived discrimination by creating an ACTUAL discrimination – discrimination against Asians. TJ and TJ community should review this incident carefully and should think about potentially pursuing a legal action. The Asians are being discriminated from all sides now, and TJ community and



everyone should take this very seriously. Those people on the Education Board and superintendent should stop thinking about getting the votes for their positions or political careers, and think about improving the education system WITHOUT any discrimination to any minority groups. - 1 or 0%

In additional to the leadership skills, quantitative and analytical skills should be evaluated as well as it's critical to the success to a STEM School. Also would suggest to increase to the merit based to 40% instead of the 20% to ensure a student body will be successful. We can decrease the percentage if the lottery system proves to be working without jeopardizing the success of the school. - 1 or 0%

I support the revised proposal of being more geographically proportioned based on student enrollment - that seems to be a fairer distribution among FCPS schools; however, I do not support the 100 most highly qualified students receiving automatic acceptance because certain schools again are favored. I do support the lottery overall. - 1 or 0%

1. For gifted students that are in in public school system, TJ provides an important avenue to challenge them and develop their talents. This is beneficial and is good for the community, which will benefit as these individuals become productive researchers and leaders. 2. Having a competitive system for TJ admissions raises the academic standards for schools in the entire Northern Virginia region because our kids compete. By eliminating the entrance exam, the incentives for the "race to achieve more" will be reduced. Academic standards are likely to fall. 3. The State of Virginia can make available more tutoring resources to all interested students so they are able to compete successfully. 4. The State of Virginia should consider opening more schools like TJ, where students have access to additional STEM resources. This will help better prepare the next generation for the workplace of tomorrow. 5. The answer to our problems is not to lower standards (I guess that most middle school students have a GPA of 3.5 or above), rather to help our kids compete in the global marketplace for workers. - 1 or 0%

TJHSST is a STEM focused school. It is a place for students who have high interest, passion and aptitude for STEM. The lottery system is not a right process or a tool for identifying such students. The revised merit lottery plan uses two standards. It creates real challenges to work together between two group students who are admitted based on two different set of criteria. This will also bring negative impact on students mental health. If our end goal is to make demographics in TJ to represent FCPS, we need to do better job to promote STEM starting from elementary and middle schools, so kids can be equally qualified for TJ. - 1 or 0%

Both the original lottery plan and the revised lottery plan is rushed and ill-thought out plan with very limited community outreach and input. The revised lottery proposal is worse than the original proposal as it introduces systemic bias among the student body. In the name of diversity, policy makers have successfully divided the communities and pitted one against and another. In the name of diversity, policy makers have shown great bias and not treating everyone fairly. During this time of social isolation and in the midst of a global pandemic, when families are juggling work and distant learning and several families facing potential furloughs and layoffs, the proposed last minutes admission changes and more importantly the rhetoric from the policy makers is causing extreme emotional stress and psychologies trauma for students and families. Several school board members had openly accepted that we have to do something and the proposed approach may not be the perfect one but how can that justify gambling with future of our kids and using them as spawns for their self-motivated agendas. Change cannot be achieved by dividing communities but by uniting them, and addressing systemic root causes and not taking shortcuts! - 1 or 0%

TJ is a school for those who want to be academically challenged and creates a community for these students. Using the Merit Lottery Plan undermines the purpose of TJ and destroys the community that has been built up for so many years. - 1 or 0%

While I understand the need for diversity at such an elite school, the merit lottery is not a viable way to solve the issue. I think the revised plan is a step in the right direction, but rather than 400 seats be selected randomly based off the criteria, I think 400 seats should be holistic, fully merit-based. - 1 or 0%

This proposed plan fixes nothing. This new system pits races against each other. You want to boost Black and Hispanic students at TJ, start where the problem begins, elementary school. You don't start at the top and work backwards. If the ultimate goal is to see more minorities at TJ, why is no one looking at who this lottery system will benefit? - 1 or 0%

The proposal and the revised proposal don't acknowledge a total merit based process. Students should be assessed based on their talent and hard work not pick their names from a lottery bowl. When you have a school like TJ ranked number 1 in the whole nation you don't come up with ideas to change it or destroy. You cannot use examples of less ranked High Schools and take them as a prototype to follow. Other High Schools should follow the example of TJ not the contrary. Meaning TJ as it is now not as you are planning to change it or destroy it. I know somebody who goes currently to a lottery school. His parents want him to be able to attend TJ because they think that his experience in a lottery school did not add anything to his ambition and hard work. His parents think that by being in a lottery school with diversified students is not challenging enough. He wants to move to TJ. He is studying hard since

the beginning of the Summer trying to pass both tests. What you are doing now. You are killing his chances of proving himself capable of competing in a STEM school. Students who want to be in TJ want also to be with nerdy students whose protocol is to study and thrive in an educational environment. Why do you think parents choose TJ? To be in a diverse school? No!! They choose TJ because they know it is a good fit for their academically advanced kids. Advanced learning has to start early in Elementary and Middle school. Why not change the learning process in these schools to prepare students for TJ? TJ should remain an Icon for Advanced students who are able to get in based on the results of 2 tests, their Middle School GPA and 2 teachers recommendation. Anything else will destroy TJ!! - 1 or 0%

The new plan is discriminatory against some minorities. We need more schools like TJ. Keep the merit admission process but focus on outreach to minorities in elementary and middle schools. Merit is the basis of how you enter into college and get a job. Merit is how you get promoted. TJ should mirror that. We have worked hard and sacrificed so much to instill in our kids the value of hard work. The new plan will deny our kids the opportunity to reap their efforts. Keep politics out of TJ and our schools. Shame on the policy makers for taking everyone's attention during a pandemic, when we should all be focused on how to get the best education to our kids remotely and how to bring them back to school safely. You are failing us and our kids. - 1 or 0%

Lottery system would be the worst kind of admission plan for TJHSST. Kids who are genuinely smart and capable of challenging courses in TJ will be the ones impacted. Lottery system will enable any kid to get into TJ, that does not mean the kid will be able to cope with the challenging rigor courses of TJ. I am a mom of 2 current TJ kids and I disagree with any lottery-based system completely. - 1 or 0%

TJ admission should be merit-based. FCPS should come up with other ways to address the diversity issue, not through lottery. Lottery doesn't solve diversity issues. It would be ridiculous that a magnet school's admission policy is based largely on lottery. - 1 or 0%

Start implementing stem In elementary and middle school. Or make another High school A steam school. Don't fix what's not broken - 1 or 0%

I believe this plan will not achieve the goals set forth by the superintendent. In fact, this plan will significantly deteriorate the overall quality of the school. Diversity is a problem at TJ; however, the roots of this problem are in the elementary AAP identification process, not at TJ. The critique that TJ is an "affluent" school is baseless. I have not seen any evidence that supports this claim. Please keep the test for admission. - 1 or 0%

Portrait of a Graduate looks at desired outcomes for graduating 12th graders. We cannot expect this of 8th graders. GT STEM kids, especially boys, lag behind their peers in social and emotional growth. You are going to miss exactly the kids who need to be at TJ. This proposal awards admission to the "nice" boys and girls who have figured out how to navigate to social intricacies with peers and teachers. 3.5 GPA? Include the sliding scale of GPA and test. Rolling admissions to keep class at 500? FCPS will need to fund additional positions in all content areas to support increased class size, especially with students who might not have needed background. How cruel to drop students into TJ after a month has gone by. FCPS will need to hire specialists to support just those kids trying to catch up. That is setting them up for failure. - 1 or 0%

With 35 years TJ admission data available at your fingertips, FCPS came up with the projection that the Merit Lottery Plan would reduce Asian to 52%, Increase White to 25% etc.. how did you get these numbers? Why they exactly matched last year's all TJ applicants racial distribution percentage? If you use One Fairfax region as your project, then why you intently you divided your anti merit lottery into 5 regions? With all 8th graders racial and AAP data public available on FCPS School website, it only requires pre-algebra skill to include the estimated 5 region effect into your projection. There are two possible reasons I can think of: 1. FCPS intentionally try to hide the 5 region effect on the projection. If this is the case, share on you! 2. Dr. Brabrand and his stuff couldn't get simple math straight. If this is the case, Dr. B should ask TJ Alumni Action group to help out. I am sure both of them will be happy to see the new projection chart. The new revised plan is getting worse. This time you couldn't even do 2nd graders math (addition) correctly. The adjusted 5 region allocation number won't even up to 350! Isn't ironic these kinds of people try to change the future of #1 STEM high school in the nation? Everyone with a common sense should know what kind of future they try to lead to. - 1 or 0%

I still strongly feel, the admissions process should be the same as it is now and should be maintained for ever. Diversity is also very important, but not at the cost of MERIT. I am totally against the revised Merit Lottery Plan. - 1 or 0%

This process does not address the academic rigor tied to being a student at TJ. Assuming that doesn't change, its likely more students will require outside tutoring help. - 1 or 0%

We support equity , which is equality of opportunity, to allow students to pursue their opportunities. TJ is a special school dedicated to allow the hard working and talented students, regardless race and family background, with strong passion in STEM to excel. The lottery component is not the way to

achieve this but to convey the wrong message to young students about the value of hard work vs. luck. Lottery is not the solution. The proposed "merit lottery", with the wide range of aptitude and academic achievement among those that meet the criteria in the lottery pool, deprives the high achieving students their opportunities they deserve and create undue pressure for those who need to catch up if the rigorous standards of TJ is to be maintained. The way to support equity is to provide the equal opportunities to all students from the start in elementary or preschool stage, to support every student to grow, and to improve the education in all high schools to meet the needs of students. - 1 or 0%

The major arguments I have seen about changing the TJ application process thus far speak to the root cause being an inequity in elementary school and AAP resources for underrepresented minorities. While I don't argue this, the solution is not to change the rules of the game at the highest level. The solution is to fix the availability of those resources at the elementary and AAP levels and then be patient and watch your efforts materialize over a 10-year period. This plan is inherently pitting races against each other, whether you want to believe it or not. - 1 or 0%

There has been insufficient research, time, consultations, feedback and deliberation to make any material changes at this time. The entire process feels rushed, driven largely by political correctness and a desire for quick — and relatively easy — feel good optics. The fact that this is all occurring virtually in the time of Covid adds insult to injury. The issue is important — but because it's important it should not be subjected to moral suasion and PC pressures. TJ's rigor and reputation are its "goodwill value" in the business sense (like Coke's brand, bottle shape, etc). The rush to a so-called merit lottery will damage TJ's goodwill quickly, and it is not an easy thing to regain. Continue to look at this issue including the systemic reasons that cause it — raise and improve the system, don't lower the standards of TJ. Thank you. - 1 or 0%

Lottery is the most pathetic way to cover up the fact that FCPS failed/didn't try at all to promote STEM interest among African-American and Latino children from an early age. TJ is a STEM school for students with passion and motivation to thrive in this environment. It's a shame that a school as an educational institution is used as leverage for politicians to execute their radical social reform ideology. The lottery proposal sends a message to young children is that no hard work is needed, you only need to be lucky! The original and revised lottery proposals have no data backups, no data projections. It will not increase the targeted diversity as it claims, i.e, increase the enrollment of black and Hispanic students at TJ, the only increase it will cause will be white students. It's so ironical that the Superintendent wants to deny qualified Asian students' right of good education when Asians are the minorities in the society, while trying to grant more white students a chance for a good education while they are already dominating in most areas in the society. How does this look like equity and anti-racial??? Are equity and anti-racial only for non-Asian people? - 1 or 0%

The Revised Merit Lottery Plan should call Revised Lottery Plan since it has little to do with merit. This plan will not solve any problems if there are any issues during the admission processes. I am totally against this plan, it failed to reach out the disadvantaged students and families, instead this plan will have negative impact on students' mental health, every student will be judged by skin color or pure luck. Students will feel they are in TJ only because of their skin color and pure luck, not because they are meritorious and they are deserving the opportunity. - 1 or 0%

Don't make TJ bad. - 1 or 0%

I strongly agree for more diversity in the schools. The solution lies in providing support to the students at the foundational level to raise up and bring the best out of them. The support that I am mentioning is very similar to the special education or ESOL etc. Receive inputs from parents who are underrepresented or financial needs etc. Based on their desire, provide them additional resources/avenues to hone the students skills to stand up and compete. Just like many families who think their student need a challenging academic environment, there are many families who think that their children does not have to go thru rigorous academic environment. If such students are chosen in the lottery, then either they will drop out of the lottery or will perform very poorly in TJ. Students lose self confidence, if they cannot stand up to rigor of TJ. A student who loses self confidence will suffer thru out his life. For the sake of diversity, do not put life of (any) student at risk. Let the TJ be TJ that was envisioned. If there needs to be diversity, please invest more money either in 1. Providing needed support or grooming at elementary or middle school 2. Create more magnet schools Please, please do not rush this proposal. Think alternatives. This proposal will certainly remove FCPS from the radar of top school districts. - 1 or 0%

To retain and maintain the TJ brand of equity the current process of merit should be continued. - 1 or 0%

I am strongly against this merit lottery proposal. It is half-baked and is not at all designed to identify "gifted students" in line with the purpose of Virginia Governor's Schools and VDOE regulations requiring gifted education. Governor's Schools are designed "to assist divisions as they meet the needs of a small population of students whose learning levels are remarkably different from their age-level peers." The

proposal ignores the best practices and pedagogy for the identification of gifted students and relies heavily on general "Portrait of a Graduate" criteria applicable to all FCPS students that are unrelated to STEM education. Identification of gifted students requires recognition that "their aptitudes and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special programs to meet their educational needs." 8 VAC20-40-40A. Dr. Brabrand's proposal is not at all complete or comprehensive. This whole process is too rushed, lacking in transparency, and is outcome determinative without careful consideration of the consequences for truly gifted students. Applicants for TJ must be assessed using multiple criteria by trained evaluators who have experience in gifted education and the specific focus area of TJ on STEM education. Further, the teacher recommendations should be maintained. The role of teachers who have worked with the applicants on a day to day basis is crucial for spotting and nurturing gifted students. Moreover, who is going to carefully review the "Student Portrait" sheets in the application process? It appears that there will possibly be thousands to review given that there is no semifinalist process in the new plan. There are simply too many unanswered questions and holes in the plan to make it viable. The revision of the application process should be delayed until all of these factors can be worked out in a transparent manner. I agree that it is unacceptable that under-represented minorities seem to be disproportionately excluded from TJ and that this needs to be improved. However, this is a problem with inequities in elementary education, a lack of rigor in math and science education in the early grades, and the refusal by FCPS for many years to offer accelerated math instruction to all students at all elementary schools, rather than a select few schools in certain higher income areas. The problem is not with the application process in 8th grade for TJ applicants. It is with inadequate rigor and identification of gifted minority students in early childhood education. Please do not rush this process and harm gifted students who truly need the environment of TJ to thrive. - 1 or 0%

While I appreciate the attempt to add a problem-solving component to the admissions decision, this plan is still poorly thought-out, has not been given sufficient public engagement and would still likely result in either unprepared students or a watered-down TJ. The consideration of Portrait of a Graduate factors has little to do with STEM interest and STEM aptitude. It should not be a consideration for TJ admissions. The plan is very vague -- how are the Experience Factors considered? The proposal says applicants must have "minimum" Experience Factors. Does that mean students who have none of these factors are not eligible for the lottery? Who will be reviewing the significantly larger number of questionnaires and essays? Without the reduction in numbers of the first-stage testing, there could be a significant number of applicants and FCPS has not addressed who will be reviewing them. The total lack of consideration of teacher recommendations -- even as little as a "thumbs up" from two MS teachers -- prevents a truly holistic view. The School Board should not approve this half-baked idea. It must demand: 1) actual details of ALL the factors that will be considered before a student gets in the lottery pool; 2) details on what the "minimum" standards are for the questionnaire/problem-solving/Experience Factors are; 3) details on how the questionnaires/essays will be completed, who will be reviewing the essays and questionnaires, and what they will be looking for. FCPS has not allowed for community input -- three weeks, two plans and two hours of town halls (during a pandemic!) are insufficient for such a drastic change to a very well-known high school. - 1 or 0%

N/A - 1 or 0%

Any modification that has a lottery as part of it is not acceptable. It only shows how short-sighted and disingenuous for anyone to propose, support, and use it as a solution to anything. - 1 or 0%

The TJ admissions process is good as-is. All this will do is fill the school with idiots and ruin its reputation as one of the best schools in the country. If this bill is passed, TJ will become just like every other high school. They will have to dumb down all of the classes or else half the students will end up dropping out anyway. You imbeciles think this will help combat racial inequality, but this IS racial inequality against the Asians who worked hard to prepare for the admissions test. Not only that, but the regional quotas make it harder for Fairfax and Loudon county to get in, and easier for students from other counties. How in the heck is that fair!? I would give thirty spots for the holistic review and leave the rest merit-based. Or, maybe we should just friggin keep the admissions process that has worked for years. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. - 1 or 0%

Please work on the pipeline first. This is a hard yet long term solution rather than a patch work proposal. Our leaders need to have the courage not to opt for a short and near sighted approach. The goal should be to improve the quality, diversity and experience for all at all levels, including but not limited to students, educators and management for FCPS. - 1 or 0%

You will end up with a school within a school. It will have 100 profoundly gifted students struggling to get the academics they need. It will have 300 students who are not necessarily comfortable being in the school because they will be intimidated. You're fixing the problem from the top down. Have you reached out to communities you are trying to bring into the fold to ask what they want to do? Is this where and how they want the problem solved? I hope whoever designed this took a lot of time to assess what the communities you're trying to help have asked for rather than making assumptions. - 1 or 0%

The policymakers need to study the effects of the change would have on the curriculum. Could the curriculum change address the special needs of the gifted students is a primary question. There are no IEPs for the truly gifted students. TJ is the only place to address this special needs. - 1 or 0%

This is the #1 public school in the country because of the students who are motivated and prepared to learn without remedial intervention. This proposal may create an unwanted caste system. - 1 or 0%

If this proposal is to give fair opportunities to all students, we should give opportunities to students who are interested in studying at TJ. I would recommend to accept free applications with admission test, and consider Merit lottery plan among applicants. - 1 or 0%

1) the revised proposal will create two-tier admission process and the criteria of holistic review is vague and has no clear definition of STEM characteristics. It'll also take too many resources to review all the applicants' packets to get top 100 students. 2) the revised proposal with lottery process is the discrimination against Asians and hard-working students including URM hard-working students. The STEM are hard skills and we need rely on the most capable for our health, cyber security, inventions etc.. We need bring URMS up all together slowly and steadily when it comes to STEM, not other people down. 3) the revised proposal doesn't fix the root cause which is the pipeline issue. - 1 or 0%

IF increasing the diversity (e.g., more minority students, African Americans, Hispanics, etc.) is your sole motive, not decreasing the Asian Americans and increasing White Americans, then I would support it. One year after this is implemented, if I don't see an increase in minority students, rather an increase in White American students, then this would be an utter failure and I will conclude that your motive has been extremely biased from the beginning. - 1 or 0%

It is totally ridiculous. This plan would punish the diligent and smart kids, and at same time kick them out of TJ. The School board needs seriously consider why TJ could become the No.1 high school in USA. Please give the fairness and justness to these kids. - 1 or 0%

Even worse than the 1st version. It seems cost more time and money to not gain anything as majority 400 is still lottery based. The proportion should be reverse. It is also discrimination against "academic strong" students. Lottery is already reducing the chance of these students going to TJ. Set aside 100 slots for "experience based" make it even worse. - 1 or 0%

This is a terrible proposal made worse. The existing process works. I have two children currently attending TJ. Our family is Hispanic. Diluted standards are insulting. To increase opportunity to disadvantaged groups, start in elementary school. Provide a solid foundation of education and opportunity. Lowering the standards for admission to TJ will damage the school. If there are no longer enough students qualified to take classes like multivariable calculus, they will no longer be offered. Lowering the standards is detrimental to all TJ students. - 1 or 0%

This revised proposal still doesn't reflect an unbiased view of the admission process. ONLY tests can measure the ability of a student to be in the top high ranked STEM school in the USA if not in the world. Why are we still fighting over which « colored skin » student should get in! Reflecting the demographics of an area doesn't necessarily reflect the intellectual level of all ethnicities and races living in this specific area. This is common sense. Let « Merit » be the judge. Don't install yourselves as judges to people's mind and hardworking students!! No lottery, means NO Lottery whatsoever. What message are you giving young people when you are using double standards in an admission process? With the first proposal and the second proposal you are disturbing 13 and 14 years old children and make them skeptical of all the system. Don't fail them once and twice. Let kids focus on their hard work and succeed. Don't put sticks in their wheels!! Double standard message is unacceptable for both parents and students! Go do your homework again on the elementary and middle school levels. Kids are doing theirs. Not a single place in the world, where White, African, Asians, Caucasians, Hispanics, etc. coexist, has to reverse the standard of a successful school or institution only because of skin color. You are sending a confused message to the future generations that their hard work doesn't matter anymore. What matters is only their skin color and where they come from. Aren't we supposed to be NON RACIST?!!! - 1 or 0%

1. The standard to pick up top 100 is very vague and subjective. 2. The TJ admission staff will have to review more application because the application pool is too big. 3. It will divide the TJ student body. 4. This revised lottery plan did not solve the basic problem. If the holistic review is better than lottery to pick up the qualified students, why the holistic review cannot be used to determine the admission for all the students? - 1 or 0%

The kids who have gotten into TJ have worked incredibly hard to earn that spot, including my son. I agree that the test could be amended or revised since it is the hardest of all HS entrance tests. All other private schools require an exam (HSPT or SSAT) for which students have to study. This is no different. Our entire school system is based on exams, so what happens when they all of a sudden are forced to be in a highly competitive and challenging environment. Eliminating the test all together is like you have just said - we don't know what else to do so let's just get rid of the test. Keep teacher recommendations. This is a great way to learn more about a student's aptitude and hunger for learning that can't always be

captured by a test. You have eliminated any way for a student who may not have a perfect record on paper to help elevate themselves. Finally, crack down on "TJ Prep" camps and schools especially the ones that cater to particular communities. If you want to make it equitable - offer FREE TJ prep classes to Middle School students the summer before the exam. TJ kids can help tutor these kids - there is no shortage of TJ students who want to help others and tutor other kids. My guess is some parents will take advantage of it while others would not. I think you will find most kids do not want to study over the summer. This is TJ is unique. The students who are there genuinely have worked hard for it and want to be there. Also, what happens to regular but strong students who all of a sudden find themselves in super rigorous classes - where every class is Honors level. There is no choosing between regular and honors. Set a timeline for next year. Work on this more. Don't rush and change a system for the sake of changing it. GET IT RIGHT. There has to be a better way. Work for a strategy to implement changes for Fall 2021. - 1 or 0%

Similar lack of diversity can also be seen in various other aspects such as football teams, music etc. is this to imply that these teams will also be picked by lottery. We encourage grass root level efforts to make more students be interested in STEM and apply for TJ. Lottery is not the way to go. It will encourage top talent to go to other schools and communities. It's not the four walls of school that makes it great, it's the students and with the exodus of the top talent from TJ, the school's reputation will soon become history. - 1 or 0%

No point in having a magnet school unless it's going to be competitive enough for students to apply. - 1 or 0%

I will make this as simple as possible. The entire goal of the majority of the American society right now is to get rid of discrimination. We have had the blessing of seeing so many civil rights movements growing and standing up recently against racial discrimination. Being in FCPS, one of the top and most ahead-of-the-game school systems in the country, I assumed they would refuse to accept racial discrimination but instead you are doing just this. Also, have you even considered disadvantaged students getting bullied for being accepted. Students could mock them and wonder if it was just because of their race or economic standpoint that they got in. If you stuck to the current system they should feel more accepted and deserving. Along with this, a great deal of money has been put into seeing the correlation between expensive prep courses and admissions test scores. As TJ repeatedly reports, there is no correlation! Even if there was, rather than cheating to get schools that look more diverse, maybe the state government should actually do its job to help those out of economically disadvantaged states. Maybe you could just try promoting TJ more at other schools? I hate to say this, but after quite a few people have died this year because of their race, I am perturbed you are not taking more PUBLIC consideration and debate into this. - 1 or 0%

While this approach is not perfect, it is a very good way to balance dual goals of diversity and excellence. Having the top 100 students offered admission automatically will make sure that the students who most need to be at TJ will be able to attend. Thank you for the revised proposal, which, by the way, is nearly identical to the suggestion I submitted. - 1 or 0%

Please keep the current admission process! - 1 or 0%

The School Board and Dr. Brabrand have removed essential parts of the TJ application, blithely calling those parts "biased" without any evidence or showing that they are -- other than the fact that few Black or Hispanic students are admitted to TJ. The School Board's discussion of AAP is parallel. They have asserted that teacher recommendations are a source of bias, and that the AAP equity study says this. It decidedly does NOT say this. (What it says is that the GBRS is too powerful a factor in gifted identification and that parents sometimes abuse it by asking teachers to revise it.... it also says that sometimes teachers are a student's best advocate, and that because the central committee sees racial identities Black and Hispanic children are MORE likely than other kids to gain admission to AAP once they are in the "pool." This study does NOT say that teacher recommendations are a source of racial bias.) The AAP study also suggests that while non-verbal tests are sometimes used in an effort to remove bias, the NNAT is duplicative of the CogAT scores and thus could be removed without consequence. School Board members refused to listen to the data on this and argued in a Work Session that because parents were "prepping" kids the CogAT was illegitimate and biased. TJ is a school for gifted children, period. Virginia has committed itself to creating strong resources for advanced learners because these children need distinct resources to be properly supported. FCPS must stay the course and maintain a solid identification process that admits students of merit. The proposals on the table do not assess merit, and they are not targeted toward TJ. (Why would you evaluate student essays on the basis of "Portrait of a Graduate" criteria, which have nothing to do with giftedness or STEM?) - 1 or 0%

A basically racist policy discriminating against Asian Americans, and a terrible idea in general. To promote diversity but basically draft a plan that reduces the minorities is ironic. Sometimes stupidity can affect people, but this time it really did a number on the Superintendent. - 1 or 0%

TJ has an extremely rigorous curriculum that is a lot more challenging than the base high schools.

A lottery system without tests and screening will buy the entry tickets but not necessarily the exit tickets for many students. If majority of students are selected based on lottery, why bother with TJ? How can TJ be differentiated from base high schools, other than longer commute time? - 1 or 0%

Has the board considered keeping the testing that is in place (maybe with some change to which tests are administered for math) but change the cutoff for the test to not compare the students taking the test to each other to establish a cutoff? To be successful at TJ, students need to have the drive and passion and basic knowledge to score in the top 75% (or higher) of the country in standard testing. The 3.5 cutoff for a GPA in middle school is too low and will be setting kids up for failure. Most kids have a 4.0 in all honors classes admitted today. The real issue keeping people from the semi-finalist round is that the bottom 50% of the people taking the test in math are immediately eliminated (swayed towards keeping those who have prepped the most for math). This does not mean they did bad on the test, they just weren't in the top half that day. Keep some form of testing and change the criteria for the semifinalist round to a nationally normed test and you fix the biggest issue while ensuring people are still qualified to attend. People can prep, this is how people work hard to get ahead and if they are not compared to each other but meeting a baseline, then there is nothing wrong with that. Our focus should be on bringing up those who we think are underrepresented vs. lowering the overall standards. - 1 or 0%

I believe the lottery style to be unfair to those who tried their best, and would have gotten in, but did not. The merit lottery plan flattens the curve of the admissions process, but it should have curve. After all, only so many people can get in. Shouldn't it be the ones who did the best? I also believe that to limit the number of people accepted in each region, would be to deny people entry based on location and luck. Instead of offering an equal chance to everyone, those who live in certain areas may find it easier to achieve admission, while those in areas of with more applicants would be less likely to pass. Higher scoring applicants may be denied entry for favor of students with lower or middle-ground scores. TJHSST is an amazing school with resources that should be offered to everyone. This approach suggests denying people, not because they did not try, or even because they were not suited for the school, but because of where they live. With this plan, admission would be based on chance, not skill. Those accepted would be those lucky enough to pass the lottery, not those with the determination and passion to attend. - 1 or 0%

Waiver of the application fee was the best feature of the original plan. I would like to see it included in this plan. Outreach to Middle School Students directly, and their schools, should begin in 6th Grade for schools that start in 6th Grade and 7th Grade for the others. Outreach in 8th Grade is too late. Also, have a few community presentations for private and homeschooled students. My final recommendation would be for actual visits by 7th Grade students to the school on field trips. Increasing interest and therefore applications should be the goal. - 1 or 0%

I like the revised conditions, though the 100 seats for the lottery is concerning. - 1 or 0%

Lottery is not a solution to any problem but the best excuse to save yourself from an informed decision making process. I strongly believe that the school system should have conducted meetings to find a real solution to solve the problem of diversity at TJ by including the input from existing and alumni students. The lottery solution is not only unfair to the students who strive and deserve to be placed in an excellent school like TJ without spending a fortune to take admission into a private school, but it will certainly ruin TJ's reputation as the best high school in the country. The exams are not only necessary to assess students who have a passion for STEM, but also helps bring the entire group of students at the same level of academic standard, so they do not struggle during the school year. One of the solutions that I support, brought up any a TJ student, is to provide academic support and guidance to students who are inclined towards STEM, If this survey was conducted earlier on, the board could have evaluated several, intelligent solutions that various people would have provided to solve this problem. Finally, I am disappointed that the board has taken such a rushed approach to solve such a serious problem as diversity at TJ and, along the lines, are creating another problem. - 1 or 0%

The lottery should not have a place in education unless it is for elementary school. Please do not destroy the reputation of the Best High School in the USA. Talk to teachers and get their perspective. TJ is not just any high school. This high school is for very motivated and bright kids. - 1 or 0%

There will be many drop outs at the end of freshman year until teachers bring down the rigorous curriculum. - 1 or 0%

1: there are honor classes with weighted gpa, does the students with honor class get any more GPA benefit? 2. 100+400, does that mean TJ admission will expand with 8% more head counts? I would support make it go up to 550 3. Holistic approach normally meant the admission shall have 80% or more of student bodies selected using TJ rigor scientifically, not 80% by lottery... so upside down 4. Define critical thinking and the 'talent', how are the Must-admit students selected? 5: what makes thinking there is only 100 true gift in FCPS every year? How was that number made up? Have the superintendent and admission offices been given critical thinking training and certified? Am not joking - 1 or 0%

The lottery system will gradually lower the rankings of TJ nationally and less hardworking students

will get in that deserves to get in. TJ will no longer bring honor and glory to Virginia because of the lottery system. If you really want to use the lottery system, at least make it 4.0 GPA. Or offer admission to 250 people and the rest use the lottery system. - 1 or 0%

I am not sure why the superintendent and the school board feel the need to make this change in the middle of a pandemic. It would be nice if they put half this amount of energy into getting all the students in FCPS including the current students at TJ back into school. Isn't everyone under enough stress right now with online schooling to add this additional stress for 8th graders who were hoping to go to TJ. I think they can take time to come up with a plan to improve minority representation and success at TJ but how about we address 1 crisis at a time. Obviously, they already realized that their first plan (just the lottery wasn't very good). When it is such a high stakes decision that will impact so many students, take the time needed to come up with the best plan. Get students back into school and then worry about what schools they attend. - 1 or 0%

Not agree with the experience factor, why would those be a part of the holistic view? Do you think those kids will do well at a strenuous curriculum of TJ? The lottery process is just a joke. What about race blind merit process without the experience factor. - 1 or 0%

Any lottery-based admission to a selective school is giving a message that luck is more important than effort. All the schools listed in Dr. Brabrand's original proposal have very high dropout rates in order to maintain the overall performance. So a lottery-based admission will either bring down the school performance or lead to high a dropout rate which impacts students' mental health. The revised plan has two admission systems which are even worse to students' mental health. An admission plan with any format of the lottery will only make the demographic number look good. It will either bring down our school performance or have a bad impact on students' mental health, likely both. - 1 or 0%

I am writing this to strongly suggest reconsideration of the proposal for changing the TJ admission process. Lottery is NOT the solution! TJ belongs to all of us, not a certain race or group of people. The merit process is by far the fairest way. It provides the equal opportunity for all students who are interested in pursuing rigorous STEM courses. The testing is completely race blind, therefore it is the fairest! We all agree we should have a more diverse student body. There are many ways the FCPS school board can try to improve, so why choose the worst option? A lottery seems fair to everyone, but on the contrary, it is the most unfair way, especially for education!! School is like a mini society, and studying is like how you live your real life in this mini society, it is all about choices and consequences. If you want something, you work hard for it. You can not depend on just luck. If so, why do athletes have to train hard to compete in the Olympics? Just use the lottery and decide who gets the gold medal. Why do companies have to go through interviews? Lottery can solve everything. Why should there be different pay for different jobs? Just use the lottery to decide who gets the higher pay, a person's ability, job difficulty, time put in the job etc should not mean anything. Lottery decides! Let's skip all the process to elect school board members and depend on the lottery to fill all the positions! Or let the lottery choose all elected officials! It would be a chaos if the whole society depended on a lottery system, so why are we having to use it in school and destroy the system from the beginning? Education is a long term process. There is no quick fix. If the FCPS school board really cares about diversity, start the help from the elementary and middle schools, hire more good teachers, do something real. Be patient, wait for the students to grow up and see what changes all your effort can bring to the whole county. Please don't use Lottery to destroy our hard-working ethic and discourage the true talented future! - 1 or 0%

It is a number 1 school in the country and with the proposed changes the number 1 could become a million. Proposed changes are going to make the great school worse. If you change the method of admission, the incoming unqualified students won't sustain the curriculum and lots are going to drop out after getting admission - 1 or 0%

The fact remains, TJ is already diverse with students from immigrants from Japan, India, China, Vietnam, and South Korea to name the few, each with unique cultures and languages. To round these multicultural individuals and treat them as "un-diverse" and "Asian" is simply racism. Further, calling for "diversity" by grouping these multicultural and multiethnic individuals into a monolithic term "Asian", a slap in the face for children who have done nothing wrong but do their best to study and pursue their individual American dreams. Since when did the American dream become less important for some race over the others? Proponents for the Plan forget that the underprivileged students exist for ALL race. Also, simply because a particular group is under-represented does not mean that everyone in that group is underprivileged. As to the underprivileged and under-represented students, since when did it become acceptable that innocent children must now pay for the failures of the adults? Ask yourself what the Plan will do for our country that is already divided. Our children are smarter and have more access to information than our generation. What will our children think about this? The Plan will sow further racism with many of our children with resentment towards the fact that they were denied of what they worked for, simply because of the color of their skin that happens to be darker than white but perhaps not dark enough. Is this really what the adults believe is in the best interest of our children? If the adults really



want meaningful and fair change to help the underprivileged, please help these children early on and help them learn to "catch the academic fish." You are doing no meaningful service to these children by quickly "handing them the fish" right before college. Finally, we are in the middle of a pandemic. All our children are already stressed with online schooling and missing their teacher and friends. Really, was this the best time to spring the Plan to our children prepared by-in-large in secret? What are we teaching our children?? In sum, please vote against the Plan to change the TJ admission process because it is wrong. At the minimum, we owe it to our children to discuss and come up a new strategy after the pandemic. - 1 or 0%

The TJ Alumni Action Group (who represents just 7% of alumni) claims to represent 1,000 alumni because that is the number of people on their Facebook Group whereas being a member of this group does not necessarily mean one agrees with their views. I totally support diversity, but future scientists and STEM talents are not supposed to be picked based on race percentage and equality. A lottery is not the solution to a social problem. Surely our elected officials wouldn't want their position to be based on a lottery rather than on merit. Why were teacher recommendations taken out of the new proposed admission when teachers know their students to their core? A lottery does not view a student holistically - it doesn't view them as individuals at all, beyond a blunt cut-off of "qualified" or "unqualified." The high standards at TJHSST will get diluted as a result of the lottery system if students cannot handle the current rigor of classes and if the GPA at TJHSST drops, something has to give; either the standards will be lowered or lottery students are going to suffer. TJHSST is the number one high school in the nation, therefore, TJHSST academics should be a model for all FCPS schools and rather than change TJHSST, the bar should be raised for other FCPS schools. Just as student athletes spend extra hours on training to make a sports team, TJHSST students earned their seat through hard work and studying. A lottery system based on regions will undermine TJHSST's mission to serve the gifted population and goes completely against the governor's school mission. A lottery would limit space for exceptionally gifted students who need TJHSST to thrive academically. This can't be a rash decision - a true collaborative conversation among administrators, parents, teachers, and educational experts often involves months of forums, panel discussions, unlimited opportunities for testimony, open meetings, task forces, brainstorming sessions, etc. It took a half a century to nurture TJHSST into a great STEM high school and this drastic, rash, proposal could destroy it overnight. - 1 or 0%

I think it is time for a change to the TJ admissions policy. - 1 or 0%

It's a disastrous plan that won't fix the current problems but create more future problems. - 1 or 0%

I am a TJ alumni as well as a TJ parent. I would like to state that I am opposed to the proposed merit lottery system. I think that the admissions merit lottery system, as proposed, will compromise the goals and mission of the TJ experience and even more importantly will not achieve the desperately needed diversity at TJ that we are seeking. We are looking for students who will be successful in the TJ environment. These students not only need to have a proven ability to handle academic rigor and drive to work hard, but need an INTENSE PASSION AND CURIOSITY TO LEARN. The admissions process needs to have a significant component that takes this into consideration. Merely having a 3.5 GPA or higher and writing a short essay will not accomplish this goal. While I don't necessarily think an admissions test is necessary, and understand the implicit bias when some take prep classes while that opportunity is not available to others, I do feel strongly that the admissions process needs to be involved enough that it requires students to put in significant effort. This is paramount in vetting students for admission. If a student isn't willing to put significant effort into the application, then TJ is likely not the right environment for them. Additionally, I feel that teacher recommendations are uniquely suited to assessing a student's desire to learn and should continue to be included. While they also can introduce a degree of bias, the insight they can provide on applicants is critical to assessing a student's passion and curiosity in an academic environment. I am not opposed to a lottery system IF all the students in the lottery pool have demonstrated the criteria mentioned above. - 1 or 0%

The revised proposal again pushes the quota system instead of merit based enrollment. In addition some of the qualities mentioned in the "student portrait sheet" is completely against the students who naturally fit in the STEM area due to their "nerd" nature. Instead of lowering the standards and eventually failing every stakeholders, FCPS board and Superintendent should focus their efforts to target students that are under represented by providing coaching, educational support, mentoring by existing TJ students in preparing them to join this merit based program. It is unfortunate to bring divisive politics of Washington DC and Richmond to a public educational system that is relatively doing well for narrow political & ideological reason. - 1 or 0%

The proposed plan does not reflect the governor's school mission. The DOE of VIRGINIA states that "The Virginia Governor's School Program has been designed to assist divisions as they meet the needs of a small population of students whose learning levels are remarkably different from their age-level peers. The foundation of the Virginia Governor's School Program centers on best practices in the field of gifted education and the presentation of advanced content to able learners." The current TJ

program and admission process seems to fit the purpose and the mission of the Virginia Governor's school. It is understandable that the school board wants to develop a different admission plan to support more diverse student body. However, we need a more thoughtful middle ground proposal, which is not so drastic and extreme. I believe one of the main factors that motivate TJ students is realizing that they earned their seat. The lottery system will take away such motivation by thinking they are there by chance. Therefore, a gradual change should be made after careful consideration and a more middle ground proposal needs to be developed over years. By the way, my child was just accepted into TJ. I want to let you know that we did not spend anything on prep classes. My child has been receiving special educations due to being autistic and I am very grateful that FCPS supports him throughout all these years to meet his specific educational needs. Despite of his weakness, he excels in math and science and has been taking two or three years beyond his grade levels. He wanted to take classes with his peers from the same grade and TJ was the only choice for him to meet his unique educational needs. - 1 or 0%

Earning a 3.5 unweighted GPA and taking Algebra 1 by 8th grade identifies approximately 40-50% of students as eligible for TJ admissions, and the proposal will select 400 students randomly from that pool. TJ is not intended to be a school for above-average kids. It's a designed for gifted kids and advanced learners. As the Virginia DOE website states, "The Virginia Governor's School Program has been designed to assist divisions as they meet the needs of a small population of students whose learning levels are remarkably different from their age-level peers. The foundation of the Virginia Governor's School Program centers on best practices in the field of gifted education and the presentation of advanced content to able learners."

Clearly, a pool of 40% or more students does not have a learning level that is "remarkably different from their peers." TJ is inappropriate for kids who don't have well-developed algebraic intuition as well as strength in proportional reasoning and multi-step reasoning. If we do not administer a math test as part of the entrance exam, the County will have an embarrassing awakening about the quality of Algebra I courses across the county — and unfortunately it will be the students who pay for it. It's not a matter of whether the kids can "catch up"; it's a matter of whether they can enter a demanding program and *at the same time* make up for less developed math skills. FCPS will also fail to identify the 100 students who most need TJ, because they are removing sources of information that differentiates among kids. Why wouldn't we trust our teachers who can speak to these children's strengths?

A good process for admissions identifies the most gifted kids in our county, to the extent that is possible, with a high ceiling that can involve tests, letters of recommendation, interviews, challenging problem-solving, or other ideas. It also ensures a meaningful floor so that students are ready for TJ rigor, and that any student admitted to TJ will thrive. Let's begin the hard work of building community and interest in TJ, encouraging the habit of excellence, and gaining insight into which admissions processes can be simplified to offer less advantage from familiarity with the TJ admissions process, but still identifies top students and maintains a high standard overall. Let's also invest more seriously in addressing learning gaps/achievement differences, but not by renaming programs so differences don't get measured. We cannot do this cheaply, expediently, and without community input. The result will only be increased anger and suffering, with the greatest cost paid by students, while TJ will achieve neither diversity nor excellence. - 1 or 0%

It isn't two years and 2 months (test taken start of Jr. year) at TJ that created 132 of FCPS' 212 National Merit semifinalists—it's the students and their families. This school was created to encourage bright kids to achieve, to give them an environment in which to thrive. A lottery will create a larger divide between the haves and the have-nots as those who can afford to will now send their high achieving kids to private schools in the area. BASIS McLean must be loving this; it's like they've just won the lottery. FCPS needs to fix the elementary and middle school issues. Why not create a 2nd similar high school in the county to meet the needs of so many high achievers? It will make the area more attractive to businesses. We pay a lot of property tax to live in Fairfax County, and I'm ok with that as long as I feel the schools are excellent. We will move, as will others, when that is no longer the case. This decision appears so rushed and conveys degradation of the entire FCPS system. First the Blackboard fiasco this spring and now this. - 1 or 0%

This revised merit lottery proposal is even worse than the previous one. - 1 or 0%

This is a good plan. The introduction of the problem solving essay makes the plan still selective enough to allow critical STEM based thinking skills to be evaluated, while avoiding the test prep disadvantage for many economically disadvantaged children. The fact that 100 seats will be reserved for the highest merit children is also very commendable. Thank you for coming up with this excellent compromise, Dr. Brave and. - 1 or 0%

I think this modified proposal is a completely knee-jerk reaction just like the 9/15 proposal was. It

seems now the "race" for admissions is going to be even more toxic given that there are 100 "merit" seats instead of approximately 500 as in the current setup. This proposed change, if implemented, will impose unimaginable pressure on kids and their parents to increase the odds of being on the top 100 "merit" list and not leave anything to chance of getting a seat at TJ from the lottery pool. Admitting top 400 students based on merit and opening up 100 seats exclusively for underserved schools and students makes more sense to me instead of FCPS playing "Russian Roulette" with the kid's future. FCPS leadership does not fail to disappointment. Actually they continue to find new and innovative ways to disappoint us more each passing day. - 1 or 0%

Please save TJ. - 1 or 0%

Any education policy reform should be considered after thoroughly and scientifically approaching the problem based on facts and solid data analysis. However, the current school board, superintendent, and Education secretary appear to be rushing to a solution that is not vetted with experts, nor have considered the feedback from the community. Most of the information presented so far have been half baked or contradictory. An entire community of students' achievement has been painted in a bad light and equated to consuming performance-enhancing drugs causing severe emotional distress to students who have worked extremely hard to get here. There have been accusations of privilege, prep, racial harassment made by the school board, administrators, and students but no documented evidence of any has been presented to the community. Personal anecdotal experiences should not be used to shape the education policy that affects the county in the long term. Besides, the solution proposed has no "merit" in actually solving the lack of diversity issue. Rather, the solution that aims to address the lack of diversity is simply shifting from one race to another which is ironic. This is not the year to bring in a large scale change of this nature when the student community is already confused with the problems brought about the pandemic. I strongly urge the board to solicit feedback from the community, involving both sides of the community in the discussion (not just one viewpoint), analyze accurate factual information, and arrive at a long term solution that truly addresses the problem and not put a band-aid against a bleeding wound. - 1 or 0%

Lottery is the wrong solution. The current process can certainly be improved. However by resorting to lottery, FCPS leadership is abdicating their responsibility to provide our most talented kids the opportunity to thrive, to ensure those admitted to TJ are prepared to keep up with TJ's rigorous programs, and to uphold TJ's academic excellence. Deferring to randomness is cowardness, not leadership. - 1 or 0%

I don't like lottery part at all. I believe lottery won't increase URM students as expected and lottery will severely damage the education in TJ. I recommend to Set aside 100 seats for URM students who has passion on STEM, while rest of seats are still from merit based admission. Thanks for consideration!! - 1 or 0%

The revised plan that looks at the student as a whole and includes essay prompt and Student portrait sheet is a fantastic revision. I believe it addresses the need to give real STEM students a magnet school to go to and for the rest of the seats, the lottery system seems fair. I believe the students should still qualify as above but instead of splitting hairs at that point, the lottery system will offer students an unbiased decision. Eliminating the tests (and hence the test prep), is great - especially at this young age. - 1 or 0%

By limiting the pool to 100, we are limiting the talent pool. Rather we should have 400 based of the talent pool and 100 up for lottery. TJ is considered as an elite high school that is STEM focused unlike other high schools. Even at work before you introduce something new you go through a proof of concept, looks at the results, seek approval and then go ahead. I have yet to see a proof of concept showing that lottery system will increase diversity in TJ which is what it is hoping to achieve in the first place. All in all this has just become political and I sadly feel it has nothing to do with kids anymore. - 1 or 0%

The revised admission criteria still seem very subjective. Moreover, it is still unclear how the revised proposal will address the issue of under representation originally identified. Was any modeling done? Were the results peer reviewed? Can they be share publicly? How was the number of 100 merit based seats arrived at? Why not more? - 1 or 0%

TJ's mission statement is to provide the students with a challenging environment and the current admission process provides a fair field for every student to prove their worth and study in the number 1 in high school in the county. There is a reason why TJ is the number 1 high school in this country. It is due to the rigor of the course as well as the merit students who are qualified to attend this school. As a parent of the student who is attending TJ, I am very much concerned about the proposed changes in TJ admission process. First, in the name of equality, with the proposed lottery system or quota system - you are penalizing the kids who are really hard-working, academically qualified. School Board and Supervisor are proposing changes without identifying the proper reason and making decisions quickly which will not only impact the morale of the merit students but also will bring down the value of TJ. Here

are my questions to the board: 1. Have you reviewed the TJ applications and evaluated why the kids from less representative communities are not applying for TJ? 2. Have you considered an outreach program to have the students from each middle school apply for TJ? 3. Why can't you make it one of the responsibilities of middle school principals to ensure at least X percentage of each school applies for the students? 4. VA Education Secretary made a comment about additional preparation by the kids to get into TJ. Would you consider our country's Olympic participants' additional preparation in the same way? 5. Why cannot the school board, ask the middle schools to identify the top students, and provide the additional training for TJ? - 1 or 0%

TJ is a STEM focus school, even has that in its name. I don't see the new lottery plan mention STEM in anywhere. This seems to be an extension of the 'cancel' culture. What's the rationale to remove the teacher's recommendations? And if we think the entrance test doesn't truly identify talented students we should try to devise a better test, not just cancel it. Lottery is easy to implement and less work on the FCPS part but that's just avoid the responsibility. Diversity at TJ needs to be improved but that should be carried out through a more sophisticated plan and start at primary school years for the students. - 1 or 0%

Strongly against both merit lottery proposals. Merit should be a reflection of innate ability, dedication and hard work. Merit is not a lottery. Nor should the current merit-based race-blind system to re-engineered under the rubric of "merit lottery" that is justified by racial quota. School should be a place to teach our kids the value of hard work. School should never be a battleground for people to gain their political interest. - 1 or 0%

This proposal is even worse than the previous one. How could additional points be given to candidates because of special education? Would anyone want to be treated by, for example, physicians who were admitted to medical school through a lottery, rather than based on merit, and benefitted from additional points from special education or from being an English language learner. We are now living the socialist dystopia "Harrison Bergeron." Imagine these criteria -- and racial quotas -- applied to professional sports. There is an election in a month, and I hope that all interested parties understand that voting has consequences. Otherwise, this proposal will likely end up in litigation, like in 1997. - 1 or 0%

Terrible. Fairfax County Public schools is throwing TJ under the bus to distract attention from the fact that it has systematically neglected middle schools from underserved areas. Fairfax county should clean up its worst schools instead of tearing down it's very best one. - 1 or 0%

I strongly opposite any lottery components in the TJ admission plan (100% or 80%). It is naïve even arrogant to assume that TJ is capable of turning anyone who enters its door into a top STEM mind. The only responsible way to ensure proper stewardship of a regional magnet school with a top-notch reputation is to maintain a rigorous admission process. The lottery process does nothing in selecting qualified STEM students from the general or underrepresented Fairfax residents. It is only devised to disrupt the semi-selective process based on GPA/Algebra I/essay – one step forward, two steps back. Anything less than further selective steps is a betray for the purpose of why TJ was established. Please consider some of the proposals out there to specifically improve the diversity at TJ such as the second-look finalist proposal by Coliation4TJ – this is a much more deliberate genuine effort to help the underrepresented population than the lottery plan. - 1 or 0%

I find nothing to like in this revised proposal. It creates a two-tiered system not based on merit at all. The "Holistic review" process is vague and open to subjectivity and the bias of reviewers. What message are we sending to our students that luck counts more than hard work in achieving a goal? Nowhere else in life is a lottery the means of selection (except in Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" - a memorable short story from my high school years, in that it was such a terrifyingly awful premise.) The one portion of the proposal I DO like is the emphasis on more outreach and engagement with prospective students and their families. This is something that should have been done all along. I was dismayed listening to the report on Minority Education in FCPS last week and hearing that many of these same recommendations about the math curriculum / math levels at some schools, AAP issues, and others have been on-going for many years and HAVEN'T BEEN ADDRESSED BY FCPS ADMINISTRATION. You are blaming the TJ Admissions process for weeding out underrepresented students and low socioeconomic students, whereas it is FCPS that hasn't done the job of improving education in our lesser-performing schools and providing STEM opportunities for these students. FCPS should focus on the pipeline and not contort the admissions process at TJ to reach an 'acceptable' demographic. TJ is already one of the most - if not THE most - racially diverse schools in FCPS. - 1 or 0%

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology is a school known as one of the best schools in the nation. It has always been that way. As a parent and as a student, people of the TJHSST community worked their way to get to this place. Students spent time doing their best at school and mostly teacher recommendations are a key factor to admissions. Teachers spend the most time with their students, so they know the best about whether or not their student is fit for the TJHSST

environment. We must not only keep teacher recommendations but also remove the merit lottery system. TJHSST is a school for students who are not only passionate about STEM, but also for those who can perform well, show responsibility, and be committed to STEM for the next four years. Why has TJ remained at the top for all these years? Because the competitive system and hardworking students kept them up. Those who deserved to get in got in. TJHSST will no longer be TJHSST, but just another normal high school with a new merit LOTTERY system. I think that's all I need to say. - 1 or 0%

There are plenty of better schools in DMV area. The whole original purpose of TJ was to be a school that honors merit and excellence irrespective of class, color or social status including poverty. An objective way of holistic assessments is testing which institutions like NASA or US Army or many other commercial organizations use. California's CCTDI or CCTDS which doesn't require any prep classes is a good example of objective unbiased testing. If you eliminate that then there is no purpose for TJ and it's unfortunate that the proposal will be a disaster in the long run for the future of TJ. Are we going to have similar standards for sports ? - 1 or 0%

Replacing TJ's rigorous admission standards with a random game of chance will inevitably degrade its educational standards. Almost all students entering TJ have excelled at geometry; lowering the standards to merely completing Algebra I means admitting applicants at least a year behind. As the Fairfax County Association for the Gifted notes, "An A in Algebra I Honors is not sufficient for TJ success." And please note: the proposed system wouldn't even require applicants to have received an A, only to have passed Algebra I. An influx of less proficient students will compel TJ to shift teaching resources to remedial math and away from advanced math courses such as multivariable calculus, matrix algebra and differential equations - the very things that make TJ what it is. Equally important, TJ's hard science courses would have to be watered down to accommodate less proficient students. The degradation of TJ's teaching standards would rapidly be recognized in US News & World Report and elsewhere. The business community, and especially the tech sector, would rightly question the atmosphere for investment in a state that willingly takes an axe to its premier institution of secondary STEM education. If Mr. Qarni succeeds in killing the goose that lays the golden eggs to pursue his version of social engineering, Virginia will damage its reputation as a leader in STEM education, with long-term negative economic consequences, especially for Northern Virginia. - 1 or 0%

I am voting against the revised proposal because it does not address the main problem - the lottery system. Lottery will not increase diversity among African-American and Latino students (as has already been determined by modeling) but will instead make the school more white, so LESS diverse overall. It will also lead to the lowering of academic standards, since admissions will no longer be judged by merit (and thus many admitted students will not be able to handle the academic rigors of the TJ curriculum). Therefore, it is a bad solution in all aspects. The only way to increase the share of black and latino student at TJ is to improve the quality of STEM education in elementary/middle schools across the county (especially among those schools that have historically been less represented at TJ). Another idea is to establish free prep classes at TJ for middle school kids from under-represented areas. I would also urge everyone to please read the letter from current TJ students to the FCPS board - it is a thorough assessment of the failure of the Lottery Plan to address the issue at hand, and also includes a number of valuable ideas about how the issue can be fixed. - 1 or 0%

Both the original and the revised lottery plans purport to be merit-based, but they are not. The proposed plan establishes minimum criteria to be eligible for the lottery; beyond meeting those minimal criteria, it is simply that - a lottery. The revised plan states that the 100 "top performers" will be admitted, but the plan does not say how those who are in the pool will be ranked or evaluated. The "holistic review" includes a host of non-merit-based factors that renders the concept of actual "performance" meaningless. At least the revised plan makes clear that the problem-solving essay is retained, but we still don't know how "top performers" are identified. Ultimately, saying the 100 "top performers" will be admitted, and calling it a "merit" lottery system, are just ways to disguise what the plan does - move away from a merit-based system to one intended to reach a desired outcome with respect to underrepresented populations. Rather than scrapping an actual merit-based admissions process (like the existing one), the better approach would be to engage in greater outreach to underrepresented populations, beef up K-8 education (particularly in math and science), and offer resources to students with demonstrated need. - 1 or 0%

Would the academic requirements remain the same in TJ? Would the consequence remain the same if students cannot meet the academic requirements of the TJ? Would you use the same merit lottery plan to supplement students? - 1 or 0%

The combination of a vague and non-transparent holistic review and lottery will create a "two-tiered" class at TJHSST, by Fairfax County Public School's own admission, with 20 percent of students chosen by merit and 80 percent chosen by luck. ● As a result, 20 percent of the class of TJHSST will be top STEM students, and the other 80 percent of the class at TJHSST will not be the top county STEM students. ● Fairfax County Public Schools has added a "Holistic Review" for students accepted into the

lottery, including a qualitative "Student Portrait Sheet" with new jargon "designed to draw out qualities in areas aligned to Portrait of a Graduate and 21st Century Skills." These "qualities" include being a "Creative & Critical Thinker," an "Ethical/Global Citizen" and a "Goal-Directed & Resilient Individual" — all elements that have been used in application processes as proxies for race. That process is ripe for bias. Moreover, the Portrait of a Graduate was designed to describe goals for all graduates of FCPS, and has nothing to do with STEM. • At issue is the fact that school staff members are not diverse, and their view of students has so far failed to identify and vet qualified minorities for more than two decades. The Plan B selection process -- when combined with the messaging of Superintendent Brabrand and other School Board members -- will be prone to bias against Asian-American students. - 1 or 0%

TJ is a Governor's School for Science and Technology. With the current admission policy, TJ admits top students with passion in STEM. TJ's rigorous curriculum is designed to meet the needs of these talented students. I don't see how a merit lottery system will help TJ to stay on its focus and its purpose. - 1 or 0%

TJ was created for the purpose of serving gifted students. The Board's proposal does not adequately meet the legal requirements delineated under Virginia law for the identification of gifted students and, thus, I believe it is illegal. That being said, I do agree with the merits of increasing URMs at TJ, but this is not the answer. The Board has stated that there are plenty of URMs who apply to TJ, but that they tend to get shut out of the process at the testing phase. I suggest the following revisions to the existing admissions process: (1) have the testing phase test applicants on algebra 1 and scientific reasoning (developed by TJ teachers so that it assesses reasonable skills that a TJ student would need; and openly publicize the subject matter and sample questions so that everyone can prepare for it if they want); (2) assign extra points on the test to all FARMS students and students from underrepresented middle schools; (3) advance all applicants who score above a certain point threshold to the SIS/problem solving essay phase; (4) get rid of ltrs of rec; (5) don't ask about extracurricular activities; (6) assign extra points to all FARMS students and students from underrepresented middle schools at this second stage as well; and (7) the highest scorers get offers of admission. I believe this is a fair way to better identify gifted students, ensure that the accepted students are capable of thriving in an advanced STEM curriculum, quell the TJ craziness that can be found in some pockets of the county, and better capture the demographic that is the target of all of these efforts to begin with. But, really, the only way to truly fix this problem is to fix the pipeline in elementary and middle school, but FCPS hasn't been willing to put in the money and effort it takes to execute this with true fidelity over the decades, and has just been kicking the can down the road, so we are forever forced to just fix the optics of the situation. - 1 or 0%

Keep the merit-based admission process at TJ. I do agree that there is an issue of diversity as well as the deep-rooted history of systemic racism in our country, but changing the TJ admission process in order to try to alleviate these issues will not help to solve anything. TJ is a place where students who are already strong in STEM can have access to resources, that they may not have access to otherwise, and help challenge them and grow their passions. TJ is not a place for students to discover that they have an interest in STEM. There are many actions that the school board could take to help integrate STEM into the curriculum at an earlier age to expose students to STEM concepts and help them to find their passions. However, changing the TJ admission process is not one of them. - 1 or 0%

It will be much more meaningful if the revised proposal reads "100 seats will be offered to top performers who have demonstrated extraordinary accomplishments or interest in STEM" instead of "highest-evaluated students based on the holistic review." It is unclear to me why the highest-evaluated students based on the proposed holistic review factors would necessarily be interested in STEM. Under the proposed Merit Lottery admissions process (both the original and the revised versions), not enough STEM-related factors are considered during the "holistic review" process. The "holistic review" under the proposed process is so much more subjective and more vague than under the current process, therefore, it can be easily manipulated to achieve any racial-balancing goal that the FCPS is not allowed to state explicitly. Also, why can't the top 200, 300, or 400 performers be offered admission and the rest be selected by a regional quota or lottery? What's so magic about the number 100? - 1 or 0%

Before making a hasty change of the TJ admission process, fix the circumstances that block children from underrepresented families. Both the original lottery proposal and the revised one should result in better statistics superficially because both of them were designed to be looking good in terms of group distribution. But, was that the objective of TJ? TJ is for the talented and over-interested in STEM. The focus shouldn't be on lowering door sill, but on raising the accessibility of underrepresented children who have potential but don't equally have chances. Both proposal do not correctly address the main purpose except the "next step" items such as outreach plan. Both proposals lowering the door sill equally to those children from advantageous families who would have never been admitted in the current admission process. They will be the true - even more in number - beneficiaries of this change. But, what will be the benefit? The consequence is quite predictable. It is going to be impossible to offer the courses and experiences that make TJ special because the students cannot follow the level. TJ will lose

its identity, become one of the public school. Is that what everyone wants? - 1 or 0%

TJ is among the top public schools in the nation not because of its curriculum or teachers, but because of its exceptional student body. The student body is selected by a rigorous, but imperfect set of tests. The children who qualify are among the best and brightest of NoVa, deemed able to "survive" the grueling 4 years of mental labor, 4-6 hours of sleep a night, and countless anxiety attacks that graduation from TJ entails. And after the 4 years, the TJ graduate will likely not get into the college of her/his choice ( because the competition will be their fellow classmates ). And for what reward? To take college level courses before college? To hang out with people who are like minded ( no concept of football, basketball or dating ) and maybe bragging rights which mean nothing after high school? A student may be selected to TJ, but she/he has to choose to stay in TJ ( a parent who forces a child to stay in TJ would be guilty of nothing less than child abuse ). The student body of TJ has this year provided 132 of the 369 National Merit semifinalists in Virginia and 150 students qualifying for the AIME. No other high school in the country comes even close. And TJ has done this year after year. All students in TJ deserve to be in TJ. By changing the selection system to a lottery that has such a low bar in qualification would mean that the curriculum would have to be watered down. It would also mean an eventual loss of prestige. If the Board is willing to do this then what would be the point of TJ? Is the goal to make TJ to be just another "good STEM" school ? - 1 or 0%

TJ Admission should base on academic not lottery base! America award intellectual, hard-working on STEM, not racial, same as TJ's mission. We are first generation of immigration to USA, we worked hard, value and support our children's education. Lottery based admission will punish intellectual, hard-working children which are large population. It eventually damage this country's future. Please keep TJ Admission Merit based! No lottery! - 1 or 0%

This proposed plan undermines the work ethics of the hardworking students and gives unwarranted advantage to certain group(s) solely based on their race or under-represented status. As a parent of a student who recently went through the admission process and got accepted, I adamantly disagree with the sentiment that my child was somehow more privileged, had years of prep classes, or did not face adversities along the way. The proposed plan sends a message to our children that their hard work doesn't matter. In the end, they'd have to leave it up to luck or chances. TJ is not what it is today because of a forced artificial social engineering. It boasts its reputation and success due to its competitive nature that fosters the cream of the crop students. TJ is a STEM school. If one cannot crack the entrance exam, they do not belong at TJ. Lottery may guarantee an acceptance but does not guarantee one's success. Besides, getting a GPA of 3.5 in middle school is almost a joke, it's not a solid standard. This notion that the "minority" students in under-represented areas have less access to STEM programs is simply false. TJ as well as FCPS currently do tons of outreach in these areas not to mention pouring millions into STEM programs. FCPS will be better served, as a matter of fact, ALL students in FCPS will be better served if it focuses its efforts on strengthening its overall STEM curriculum in earlier grade levels. - 1 or 0%

This is only going to ruin the community of diversity and inclusion. - 1 or 0%

This new proposal is a band-aid/lazy solution akin a mad-scientist experiment to provide 'equity in education'. The failure in FCPS' prior efforts should not punish eligible STEM students by this rushed proposal. Please address the problem at a grass roots level. The best way to close the education gap between high and low income students is by increasing the funding in schools with high populations of economically disadvantages students. By just admitting the students without the readiness will be detrimental to the students. There is a big disparity in the quality of education between elementary and middle schools in FCPS, address this issue to bring 'equity in education'. Just for fun, draw the students in a public lottery and see if you can reach your targeted economic and ethnic diversity. You will not, according to probability theory. - 1 or 0%

Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Scott Brabrand, Education Secretary Atif Qarni, Fairfax County School Board Members Karen Keys-Gamarra, Ricardy Anderson, Karl Frisch, Abrar Omeish, Melanie, Merin, Rachna Sizemore Heisner, Karen Corbett Sanders, Laura Jane Cohen, Elaine Tholen, Stella Pekarsky, Megan McLaughlin, Principal ANN BONITATIBUS, the TJ Alumni Action Group, the TJ Partnership Fund and the TJ PTSA have FAILED our special school, her families, her students and her staff. Each and every person and group has smeared, demeaned or harassed our families and students, or stood watching by silent, like bystanders to BULLYING. You should call be ashamed of yourselves. Each and every person organization has stood silent or participated in the ANTI-ASIAN ATTACK on our immigrant families. It angers families and it breaks their hearts see such betrayal and COWARDICE. Ann Bonitatibus spread the LIES about families spending \$10,000 on test prep. She should be FIRED. STOP THIS MADNESS immediately. Take care of our students. Stop with your activism and return to education. There isn't a single grown up in the room to manage this situation with leadership. Everyone should be recalled or fired from their jobs for their failure to protect vulnerable, beautiful students, whom you have sent into depression, anger and TRAUMA with your assaults upon

their integrity, character and "culture." Shame on all of you! Show some heart now and do right by the Black and Hispanic kids you fail and protect our TJ kids from this abuse and assault. - 1 or 0%

This plan does absolutely nothing for improving the under-represented minorities at TJ. The true gifted kids who are URM will be adversely selected by this plan. There is really no STEM focus on the accomplishments, just some general portrait as a student criteria that are obviously created to allow biased and selective cherry picking of favored superficial demographics without actually selecting the capable students. Where in the plan is there an actual goal for improvement the scientific and mathematics skill set for the URM population? Just adding a lottery selection and then diluting down the TJ curriculum to include only the formal calculus requirement and a senior lab is just making TJ like any average FCPS high school. What is the point of having the magnet school then? Everyone should just go to their own neighborhood school and the gifted upper middle class or asian kids will know what is what and just stay at their home schools. This plan is clearly and brazenly about unconstitutional racial engineering and not about pedagogical outcomes improvement for disadvantaged kids. I am amazed that the at-large members and minority members of the school board don't see through the reasoning and bromides from the educrats. - 1 or 0%

I would prefer a less randomized approach to admissions. I would prefer to see FCPS develop stronger qualitative selection criteria that result in a body of learners at TJ with greater diversity of backgrounds and experiences. I believe leaving admissions decisions to "chance" may not result in a desirable outcome. However, I also strongly believe that TJ students would benefit from a student body with more diversity. Currently, most TJ students are very similar in terms of upbringing and socioeconomic status, educational experiences, and STEM interests (sometimes to the exclusion of other interests). We do TJ students a disservice by not bringing together a more diverse body of learners. The current students leave TJ lacking real world perspective and not fully prepared for the college environment. Thus, I concede that the proposed system is a reasonable first step towards admissions reform. - 1 or 0%

The Revised Merit Lottery Plan has little to do with merit, and won't solve any real problems. It's just an easy and cheap cover up for FCPS's failures to reach out to disadvantaged students and provide support to help them succeed. The plan will divide the community, destroy TJHHST's mission, and cause long lasting damages to FCPS students. Lottery admission is sending wrong message to the students. It's basically telling kids that in order to get what you want, all you need to have is luck. You don't have to work hard. This is going to destroy the young generation and the country with this mindset! - 1 or 0%

The current process is race blind and is dependent on only the merits of the student. Yes, TJ my be overwhelmingly crowded with students who prepare for the test. However, those standard tests just gets the kid in the door. Once in, the students have to work very hard over the next 4 years. No test prep helps them there. Instead of the lottery system (even with the revised one), FCPS should focus on improving the pipeline. There should be more AAP centers and the standard of education should be better in every single elementary and middle school. TJ needs diversity without doubt. However, the lottery system will deprive really strong STEM students who are not in the top 100. Instead, 250 seats should be based on pure merit and the remaining 250 students should be based on merit and lottery. The teacher recommendations should be reinstated under the new plan. Irrespective of whether a kid gets additional coaching or not, the teachers know which kid can withstand the rigor at TJ and which kid will benefit from a STEM education at TJ - 1 or 0%

I would like to know what this means for the non-FCPS jurisdictions that feed into TJ. One consequence will be that many students who would otherwise get into TJ will remain at their base schools. For FCPS kids, that is probably not too bad. Those base schools probably have robust AP programs and could probably even "up their game" to cater to those highly motivated, high achieving students. The problem is for PWCS kids who would otherwise go to TJ. There really is no alternative to TJ in PWCS (the Governor's School at Innovation Park has a different emphasis and doesn't begin until junior year). Most of these kids will end up at their base schools, which are not equipped to cater to these highly motivated, high-achieving students. I do not see the suggested alterations to admissions can occur without altering the TJ curriculum. If the curriculum is not altered, FCPS is setting kids up to struggle and fail. A 3.5 GPA is a relatively easy baseline to achieve in middle school, as is enrollment in Algebra I by 8th grade. The County will end up with 4/5 of TJ's student body potentially unprepared for the rigors of the curriculum, so the curriculum will have to change. Currently, it takes a tremendous amount of work for students to keep up and get good grades at TJ -- and that's for kids who had to compete to get in. I can't imagine how kids who have only had to "throw their hat in the ring" without any real rigorous academic track record will survive without TJ changing drastically. Perhaps a better path would be for the County to take additional steps so that a broader variety of students are qualified to attend TJ by the time they are in 8th grade. - 1 or 0%

1. Slow down the process. This proposal is being rushed through. Introducing the "merit lottery" plan



with only three weeks to review and comment is no way to deal with a change of this magnitude. In addition, there has been little or no outreach to any of the affected student communities. The School Board and the public need time to see more details on the proposal, as well as the data behind it, in order to analyze it properly, have a comment period, and consider the best options. 2. Carefully and Fully Analyze the Consequences. We have no idea if the merit lottery will actually do what the Superintendent says it will. This needs further study. There is no reversing this process if it turns out badly as predicted by several groups. 3. Evaluate the most recent admissions changes. The admissions test was changed just 2 years ago. Has a study been conducted analyzing the effects of this most recent change? That should be the starting point. - 1 or 0%

I think these proposed changes will completely and totally dilute TJ! I'm very much against making TJ admissions into a lottery system. The community at TJ are not simply high achieving students. Many of these students are brilliant minds that do not have a chance to interact with like minded peers elsewhere and cannot access the courses TJ has to offer at their local high schools. If this proposal passes, FCPS will be doing a huge disservice to these students who absolutely need TJ. I have 3 children, all of whom are very smart and talented and all were accepted into AAP starting in 3rd grade. My oldest NEEDS TJ. My younger 2 can access what they need through honors programs at their local high school. He is able to access classes at TJ which he would not be able to anywhere else and is surrounded by like minded peers. This is not about having a 3.5 GPA. FCPS is missing the entire picture if this is what they believe is required for admission at TJ. While I do agree that changes should be made to allow for a more diverse community, these proposed changes are not acceptable and would ruin the whole idea of TJ. TJ would become just a regular high school in a matter of 3-4 years. Go back to the drawing board and figure out a more equitable way to be equitable! - 1 or 0%

Webster merit is defined as "the quality of being particularly good or worthy, especially so as to deserve praise or reward". A lottery is "a process or thing whose success or outcome is governed by chance." These two things contradict one another. The selection process for a school designed for the most gifted and talented students should be merit-based and color blind. Colleges don't use lotteries. Neither do employers. Life isn't random. What message does it send children if getting into TJ is at least half determined by 'the luck of the draw'? Our elected officials and educators should be rewarding and celebrating hard work and achievement, not discouraging it. This proposal is a "quick fix" to a hard problem. The focus is misguided. It should be directed at younger kids and the multitude of factors that impact their ability to compete at the highest level. This proposal will make some people feel good without addressing the underlying issues. Hard problems usually don't have easy solutions. - 1 or 0%

No matter what system the TJ admissions takes, I think it's bluntly unfair to use a luck of the draw system that requires an unstructured process, even with all the requirements and rules that go along with it. - 1 or 0%

The admissions merit lottery system, as proposed, will compromise the goals and mission of the TJ experience and even more importantly will not achieve the desperately needed diversity at TJ that we are seeking. FCPS needs to look for students who will be successful in this environment. Success is not defined how high grades are or what top university they go to, but rather in how students fully embrace and are inspired by the experience and most importantly, whose curiosity and desire to learn is propelled by attending TJ. These students not only need to have a proven ability to handle academic rigor and drive to work hard, but need passion and intellectual curiosity. The admissions process needs to have a significant component that takes this into consideration. Merely having a 3.5 GPA or higher and writing a short essay will not accomplish this goal. While I don't necessarily think an admissions test is necessary, and understand the implicit bias when some take prep classes while that opportunity is not available to others, I do feel strongly that the admissions process needs to be involved enough that it requires students to put in significant effort. This is paramount in vetting students for admission. If a student isn't willing to put significant effort into the application, then TJ is likely not the right environment for them. The argument that students' profile will remain the same with lottery is incorrect. The current hard data do not provide enough information about their profile. Among other (soft) factors, it's the sense of accomplishment among the TJ students, endogenous to the rigorous vetting process, that defines them: "We made it, we'll stick together and help each other throughout these tough four years. But we also compete, work more and sleep less than others." This will be lost with the lottery. But we need such an environment for TJ to help the more talented kids to achieve things they wouldn't even know they can achieve in most HSs. The reform as envisaged will destroy the fundamental nature of the best school in the nation - without really helping the minorities. - 1 or 0%

I agree that the overall selection process should be more holistic. However, I think the lottery process is too random and deviate from the purpose. I agree on minimizing the weight on testing, because rot preparation can skew the results. I think the following factors should be included in the selection process: \* Problem solving essay \* Statement by student and parents about why he/she wants to attend TJ. \* Recommendations by the teachers \* Math/Science/Reading testing (but the weight should

be minimized.) - 1 or 0%

This is not a good plan. Please consider helping all students in FCPS earlier in Elementary School with better math/science curricula. - 1 or 0%

Superintendent Brabrand's revised lottery proposal is a flawed solution that conveniently covers up FCPS utter failure vis a vis Hispanics/Latinx low income students. It is also unconstitutional and it will be disputed at a court of law. - 1 or 0%

Other than the use of a lottery being used for admission to a Governor's School being inappropriate. The bar of a 3.5 GPS is too low a ceiling, and implementing it will be infeasible, as there could be more than 7,000 applicants to screen for admission. It is also unnecessary. Under the merit-based system, a student was competitive for admission to TJ if they had a GPA of 3.8 or greater (not including test scores). From the class of 2024 that applied to TJ, 317 students were white, with GPAs of over 3.8 that were denied admission. There is a pool of applicants to increase the white population to more desired proportional percentages that the lottery system is designed to address. Neither plan provides a lasting solution to increase Black and Hispanic enrollment. Any increases from the plan will result only it being implemented in the current school before families in the region most severely impacted (region 1 and region 5), move to other regions, such in the Twain and Hayfield school district, to increase their odds. Neither proposal addresses the likelihood of parents moving to 'game' the system, and decreasing the odds of the random selection of Black and Hispanic students. The plans also do not address the root cause of low Black and Hispanic enrollment at TJ, the pipeline, which FCPS could address could be either eliminating, or allowing retakes of the CoGAT, and increasing the diversity in the hiring of staff to identify and place underrepresented minorities in G&T programs. - 1 or 0%

Please consider the Second Look Semifinalist proposal put together by the Coalition for TJ. It is a fair solution to combat test bias in underrepresented schools while keeping a merit-based admissions process. It allows each middle school to select up to 5 students who don't pass the test but are gifted students with a passion for STEM. If a middle school already has 5 students who pass the test, they do not get any Second Look Semifinalists. So it's geared to those underrepresented middle schools. Those second look candidates get a bump up in their test score to the average score of the kids who passed the test. Their names are published with all the other students who passed round 1, no distinction for being a second look semifinalist. Then they have a fair shot at round two, which is the problem solving essay, student statements and teacher recommendations. This way the semifinalist that make it past round 2 will feel like they earned it, not just lucky in a lottery. I believe these underrepresented middle school math and science teachers would benefit from a free seminar on how to write a TJ recommendation. I know a gifted math teacher who worked at Longfellow for many years and wrote numerous TJ recs who would volunteer to run those free seminars. This will allow underrepresented students to get a fair shot at earning their way into TJ. Please consider voting on this proposal so we can show the board that it is popular and fair. - 1 or 0%

I am a parent of a current TJHSST student, a resident of Fairfax County, and I support the proposed merit lottery. For too long we have accepted a definition of merit that is based on high stakes testing, math prep classes, and the need to sacrifice all activities other than academics in elementary school in order to prove that a student 'deserves' to be at TJ. We have also accepted a definition of academic success based on unscientific school rankings and the number of merit scholars TJ possesses. It's time to expand both our idea of merit and our definition of academic success. The current TJ admissions process ignores a huge swath of our local population with great undeveloped talent. Their families may not have the resources for test prep or the knowledge of how to push to get their kid into AAP. The kids may have responsibilities that preclude them from seeking outside tutoring or participating in STEM clubs at school. We need to stop writing these kids off!! They will add a depth of different perspectives in every classroom they sit in. They will teach TJ students how to better collaborate with people who have a different background and story. They will go on to be valuable members of our community. For too long, too many people (usually the ones who make the most noise) have been hoarding resources. I commend FCPS for this bold attempt to expand opportunity to more underserved communities in our county. The assumption that this will 'dumb down' TJ, I believe is offensive and racist. Not all smart kids possess the test taking prowess of the current members of the TJ student body, but I'm willing to bet they have much to offer to our TJ community. - 1 or 0%

I strongly object to the TJHSST Revised Admissions Lottery proposal. If implemented, the proposal will cause severe damage to the reputation and quality of the nation's No 1 STEM high school, without achieving its stated equitable goals. First, eliminating admission tests, teacher recommendations, and problem-solving essays amount to a drastic lowering of the admission standard. Based on the admission statistics of the 2022 class available online, more than 70 percent of those offered TJ admissions had an unweighted GPA of 4, and more than 95 percent have taken math courses more advanced than Algebra I. The lottery proposal will significantly change the distribution of academic preparedness of incoming students. Second, the projected impacts of lottery on the application pools of 2015, 2018 and 2024 on

the superintendent's original proposal slides (pages 18-20) are wrong and misleading, for the simple reason: The elimination of test and recommendation requirements may lead to a completely different application pool from those of the three previous years. Many who would not have applied because of the rigor of the admission standards would have applied now. Fairfax County taxpayers have supported TJ for decades and helped build its reputation as the nation's number 1 STEM high school. The FCPS Superintendent owes taxpayers a comprehensive analysis of how the lottery proposal would affect TJ's STEM curriculum and its capability to prepare the next generation of scientists and engineers to compete with global powers. There may be brain drain not only of gifted students, but also of dedicated teachers specialized in teaching the curriculum suitable for highly gifted students. I urge the FCPS superintendent to withdraw the flawed lottery proposal, conduct a diligent analysis of the impact on TJ of any potential reforms, and seek common ground with all stakeholders in this process. - 1 or 0%

The new proposal to change TJ admissions is not fair at all. It is not fair to merit based students who could get admission to TJ based on their merit. But now their fate will be decided by a lottery which is very unfair. It will also bring down TJ's overall quality by diluting the student body admitted to TJ. - 1 or 0%

The alleged objective of the changes is to increase black and latino enrollment. However, the proposal would increase those populations a little while increasing substantially the enrollment of white students. As such, the proposal does little to improve the lives of black and latino students. Instead of tinkering with TJ's admission, FCPS should focus on bringing additional resources and funding to minority schools to increase their academic potential, be that for entering TJ or for their future - 1 or 0%

There is, without a doubt, a problem with diversity at TJHSST. However, giving admission to people based on lottery does not find the STEM students that TJHSST needs to be TJHSST. Previously, TJHSST had a holistic review process that was 100% merit. There are plenty of kids in FCPS that HAVE the talent that is required to get into TJHSST- and less than half of the students who apply actually end up getting in to begin with. You already have this amazing pool of incredibly talented students that is enough to fill in the required slots every year, and now you want to disregard that talent and purposely disrupt the selection process by deliberately selecting students randomly through a lottery. A lottery! TJHSST is not a factory that produces STEM kids. STEM kids come to TJHSST and grow at TJHSST because the environment fits their learning needs. Merit is merit, and the kids who got into TJHSST without aid deserved it, without a doubt. What about all of those kids? What about the kids who would have gotten in because they deserved it, but their spot was taken by someone who wasn't even meant for the school just because of the new weighting factors? The best way to solve the diversity problem is to start from the root of the problem- early education. Start focusing more on STEM education at an early age, especially in these underprivileged areas, because almost all of the kids who belong at TJHSST developed their love for STEM at an early age. Look at the demographics of the applicants- most of them are Asian to begin with- you have to encourage more diverse groups to APPLY to TJHSST in the first place as well. - 1 or 0%

Do not bring down the educational values. If you are really interested in supporting the under privileged, then start providing the basic support system rather than downgrading the entire education system. Already we in US are not in the level of other countries and this would further bring our educational values down. - 1 or 0%

Please keep an objective and totally merit-based evaluation process for TJ - 1 or 0%

Please keep the TJ admission process 100% merit based. - 1 or 0%

Choosing students to enter the top high school in the country should not be done by random selection, regardless of whether or not they have a GPA of over 3.5. Selecting only 100 students to enter based on skills doesn't really help, because there are still students being chosen through the lottery. A 3.5 GPA does not determine how smart or capable a person is, so there is a much higher chance of less qualified people being selected (I am not trying to claim that the current admissions system is perfect, however this new system will be even worse). Also, while everyone seems to agree that the problem is that minority groups do not have access to the level of education that many white people and Asians do, they seem to think that the solution is allowing them in through lower standards (yes, random selection is lower standards). Later in life, however, this will not benefit the majority of these people at all, as they will still not have the same level of education as Asians and White people. Instead, it would be better to try to focus on providing good education for all racial groups. Many people seem to think that this is not an "excuse" to not fix the TJ admissions system, however since the current admissions system is race blind, by giving good education to all people, more minority groups will naturally be able to get into TJ. - 1 or 0%

TJ is an extremely challenging academic environment. No one should be let in or encouraged to attend who is not prepared. The result would be to diminish the academic rigor and quality of the school and/or to cause mental and emotional anguish for the unprepared students. More effort needs to be made to identify a diverse pool of children at an early age and prepare them for the rigors of TJ. - 1 or 0%

0%

In the 21st century, our country is facing the upmost challenge from all over the world to keep our competitive edge. As a citizen of united states, I willfully agree to spending my tax to support a magnet school like TJ based not on race or gender but only on academic excellency because I believe that is the best way or most likely the only way to maintain our leadership in science and technology in the world. We should not comprise the academic excellency for any other reasons in a magnet school like TJ because our national interest depends on it. The proposal pursued by the Fairfax school board is very worrisome. With no shame at all, the Fairfax board of education is pursuing the admission process TJ based on race. Any discrimination based on race in K12 public school or any school cannot be constitutional. The Fairfax board of education is explicitly and implicitly pointing out that the demographic of students in TJ is not diverse and wants to change the admission process. However, the Fairfax board failed to show that the current admission process is racially biased. Most of all, the intent of the Fairfax school board cannot be constitution in K-12 public school. We should teach our kids that any form of racial discrimination is not allowed in this country. Unfortunately, the Fairfax board of education is doing the opposite. What the Fairfax board is saying that working and studying hard to enter a school like TJ is not enough because he/she does meet the racial criteria. Is this serving the national interest of this country? The Fairfax school board is one of the most racially skewed entities. Such a body is trying to pursuing a racially motivated process in K-12 public school in this country. I strongly oppose to it. The supreme law of the land in this country should not allow it. - 1 or 0%

The Revised Merit Lottery Plan has little to do with merit, and won't solve any real problems. It's just an cover up for FCPS's failures to reach out to disadvantaged students and provide support to help them succeed. Lottery admission is against all commonly accepted education beliefs and theories. Lottery makes kids to rely on luck instead of working hard. It will not solve the problem of underrepresented groups. More solid plan should be implemented in improving the underrepresented group from elementary school, rather than lowering the bar of TJ. - 1 or 0%

It's much better than it was before (thank you for taking some top students first, and for making regions more balanced). But I fear the lottery is a "lazy excuse" to stop trying to fix the underlying problems and systemic racism. Now FCPS can say "mission accomplished" - we have diversity - and give only a half-baked effort on outreach. A lottery should be a SHORT TERM solution until FCPS fixes many underlying and systemic problems in the pipeline. They need to start outreach to much younger students in more diverse backgrounds. FCPS needs to give minorities and less wealthy students better STEM opportunities (classes, clubs, extracurriculars, seminars, etc.). I like the idea of taking the top 100 first, However, there's zero visibility/transparency HOW the "top 100" will be selected out of thousands of applicants. This should be a fair, objective, and transparent process - but there seems to be insufficient information to guide this decision since there's no longer any test. This process now a "black box" which seems ripe for bias and politics and parental "lobbying" at worst and randomness at best. - 1 or 0%

This proposal is anti-Asian. TJ is extremely diverse, but apparently this particular diversity is unacceptable to you. While there are already a number of twice exceptional students at TJ, you will see a surge in parent requests for 504 plans and IEPs so that their kids will get a bump in the Experience Factor category. You will see families moving to communities where there have been very few students admitted in the past. Teachers will be encouraged to inflate grades so that more of their students are eligible. I think that it is a huge mistake to remove teacher recommendations, using the excuse that teachers in lower-achieving schools don't know how to write well. First, that is a huge insult to our teachers. Second, even if the teacher doesn't use fancy vocabulary, they can clearly distinguish between a student who will thrive at TJ vs. a student who will struggle. Another huge mistake is to remove the first-round tests. An average student who was given a bump in grades will flounder at TJ. The tests are absolutely necessary to determine whether the applicant can handle the rigor of TJ. Unless, of course, this plan is designed to "dumb down" TJ. Secretary Qarni wants TJ stripped of the #1 ranking, so perhaps this is part of the end goal. Funds need to be allocated for improving early education, offering rigorous AAP services in more schools and creating more centers so that students who are bussed to centers don't spend hours on a bus each week. Tutoring and test practice should be free for all kids whose parents don't have the means to pay for it. Younger students need to be exposed to older students who can serve as role models. This plan is a not-so-subtle attempt to appease politicians and is taking away opportunities for the academically gifted, hard-working students. - 1 or 0%

I am very satisfied with both, the added problem-solving essay (in case if it is timed) and some seats reserved for "highest-evaluated" applicants. I would only increase the number to 150-200. This way the most hardworking and talented kids will be guaranteed with the admission, while the TJ prep industry will be nearly eliminated, and kids from underrepresented communities will have a chance to be admitted. - 1 or 0%

This mixed approach is flawed in that you will be leaving behind many qualified candidates based on biased criteria that ultimately won't provide the fix that is really needed, which is to diversify the TJ

student body with the most qualified students across FCPS. This is like putting on a broken band aid which will only mask the true issue temporarily until it breaks down. FCPS and state policy makers need to more thoughtfully drill down to the true heart of the issue - reach and identify students starting in elementary school who may not otherwise have the academic or other means to learn about STEM opportunities at TJ and foster those interests and skills over time which can successfully lead them to go through the rigorous admissions process that has made TJ so successful to date. A mentoring program divided across the county's elementary schools through TJs current student body could be a win-win for all involved. - 1 or 0%

Keep the current merit based admission standard, or allocate less than 100 slots to economic disadvantage students, but definitely no lottery base! - 1 or 0%

The push for "Justice" and "Equity" are just deceptive tactics to impose classic Marxism and redistribution of wealth based on Government Mandates. It will cause much failure just like all other Marxist programs tried in history. The recent actions in Venezuela has shown that although Free Markets and Capitalism are not perfect, Marxism is catastrophically far worst. But apparently facts and historical truth are ignored, and manipulated feelings of "justice" and "equity" has invaded the school system who could care less about by their imposed destruction and harm. No longer are the hallmarks of the American Way of excellence, hard work, investment, and merit rewarded. No longer is the goal to attract the best, brightest, and those motivated to attend and succeed at the prestigious school. Lost is the knowledge that this way lifts more up with it, as clearly showcased by the vast success of America across all its peoples. Instead the racist school system is now targeting Asians and Caucasians in their latest scheme, and deliberately discriminating against them by decreasing their enrollments to make up for decades of Democrat control and failures. The Fairfax County Public Schools is run by Democrat School Board members and activist educators, who have been in charge of the school system and county for decades, where they have already spent tens of millions of dollars on programs and policies to try to improve the education of minorities. Yet their solution to their continued failures is to deflect attention from themselves, and instead blame Asians and Caucasians, punish them for their successful priorities and to divide our population into fictitious camps of oppressors versus oppressed. We need programs that align us all into one large team full of great achievers showing and helping each other onto the most successful way. - 1 or 0%

1. It will significantly increase the amount of work for evaluators/administrators. Going through over 3000 applications is a lot of work, especially during the pandemic. 2. Holistic review can be biased. What are the criteria to make sure the review is fair and equal across all applicants? 3. I suggest to leave 100 seats to URM applicants, keep 400 using the existing application policy 4. Teacher recommendation is very important. Teachers know if the students have potential/passion in STEM - 1 or 0%

It would be helpful if the evaluation criteria has weight on the STEM academic excellence. The current semifinalists review has been a holistic one and it works well. It'd be good if the proposed review process is inline with the current one. - 1 or 0%

Lottery should not be used to address diversity issues in TJHSST. It should be merit based. - 1 or 0%

TJ is currently ranked #1 in the country. Why fix what is not broken? This new TJ admission lottery system will make TJ just like any other school. It will take away the amazing student body that TJ currently enjoys. - 1 or 0%

The TJ Admissions Revised Merit Lottery Plan, like the original, does little to address the root of the problem - certain segments of the community that are eligible to attend TJ are under-served in elementary and middle school. The Lottery Plan does nothing to raise the overall skill sets of those under-served communities. For example, what will be the commitment of FCPS to ensure greater enrollment in Algebra 1 for communities that are under-represented at TJ? As a basic requirement, enrollment in Algebra 1 will continue to disenfranchise many - especially those for which the fundamental mathematics education has failed to prepare them to take the course in eighth grade. The purpose of TJ, like all Governor's Schools, is to "... meet the needs of a small population of students whose learning levels are remarkably different from their age-level peers." Introducing random selection for 80 percent of an incoming class does a disservice to a great many students who not only meet the qualifications but have shown interest in STEM over the course of many years - both through in-school programs as well as extra-curricular activities undertaken on their own. FCPS and the surrounding communities would be better served by concentrating their efforts on identifying students of great potential much earlier in their educational careers and supplementing the opportunities available to those children. The Lottery Plan also offers no empirical basis for its structure. For example, what led to the choice of 20 percent for the highest-evaluated applicants? Why not 15 or 25 percent? Further, the revised Lottery Plan is also vague with respect to how the holistic review would take place. No details have been provided of the relative weight of the three major factors (i.e., Student Portrait Sheet, Problem-Solving Essay, and Experience Factors). Nor have sub-factors been explained in any detail.

Finally, from the Virginia Department of Education website on Governor's Schools: "Students can only attend an Academic-Year Governor's School program if... students are selected ... through a competitive admission process." How does the implementation of a Lottery Plan fulfill the letter and spirit of this requirement? - 1 or 0%

We only have one child and he will be graduating in 2022 so our family doesn't have a vested interest or personally will be impacted by FCPS TJ admission decision. Needless to say, like all the other parents we too especially since we are also immigrants are all for increasing diversity and providing opportunities to underprivileged students but we also believe in principles of hard work and meritocracy. Our main concern with the original plan which now given its revision clearly shows that it was hastily thought out and put together was that it didn't take into consideration the needs of highly exceptional students in our area. Just as FYI there are a bunch of kids out there who have IQ scores (Wisc IV, CogAt, NNAT) that placed them in 99% percentile, who have got accepted to programs like JHU CTY and took online classes there as well as with other sites like Khan Academy and Coursera, enrolled in various STEM summer camps along with sports ones, in 6th grade had to get up earlier than their peers so their parents can drive them to a middle school to take Algebra I, and then after waiting for them in the car for an hour drive them back to their elementary school; took the SAT in 7th grade and got a perfect score in math and finished 8th grade having completed Algebra II. The system is broken if a kid like that doesn't get into a school like TJ simply because of randomness presented as a 'merit' based system. At least the new proposed plan reduces the chance of not providing an opportunity to excel at TJ to other highly exceptional students assuming they are usually only about 100 or 20% of each class. Now to what degree relying on randomness to institute a merit-based system for the remaining 80% of candidates is right is something that I'm not too sure of. Although standardized tests do have some flaws the issue with TJ isn't simply because of the test but as many others have suggested it is with the pipeline. Policymakers should focus on changing or sparking the interest in STEM education in both students and their parents in elementary schools. Lastly, FCPS should also consider expanding its STEM curriculum in base high schools to offer some of the courses that are offered at TJ. - 1 or 0%

I support the concept of a merit lottery as a way of increasing equitable access. I believe that FCPS can learn from the results in Texas and California, both of which adopted "top 10%" type policies similar to the merit lottery. The results in both states suggest that (1) the students who gained access to the top state schools as a result benefited; they weren't overwhelmed or harmed by the challenge, and (2) students who lost access—in California, primarily white and Asian students—would do fine wherever they ended up. That's a win-win in my book. See Sandra E. Black et al., *Winners and Losers? The Effect of Gaining and Losing Access to Selective Colleges on Education and Labor Market Outcomes*, Oct. 2019 [https://economics.yale.edu/sites/default/files/rothstein\\_-\\_winners\\_and\\_loosers\\_abstract\\_10\\_2019.pdf](https://economics.yale.edu/sites/default/files/rothstein_-_winners_and_loosers_abstract_10_2019.pdf); Zachary Bleemer, *Top Percent Policies and the Return to Postsecondary Selectivity*, <http://zacharybleemer.com/>; Zachary Bleemer, *Affirmative Action, Mismatch, and Economic Mobility after California's Proposition 209*, Aug. 2020, [http://zacharybleemer.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/AA\\_Mismatch\\_Paper.pdf](http://zacharybleemer.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/AA_Mismatch_Paper.pdf). My kid is wonderful, but so are a lot of other kids. A lottery, along with continued improvement in all our schools, is a fair way to deal with TJ's limited space. - 1 or 0%

The Revised Merit Lottery Plan has little to do with merit, and won't solve any real problems. It's just an easy and cheap cover up for FCPS's failures to reach out to disadvantaged students and provide support to help them succeed. The plan will divide the community, destroy TJHHST's mission, and cause long lasting damages to FCPS students. Lottery admission is against all commonly accepted education beliefs and theories. It's a shame for FCPS to propose lottery admission. I am totally against it. - 1 or 0%

I think policymakers should first clearly articulate their vision for TJ going forward. To share mine: my understanding was that this school is a STEM academy that exists to provide high-level instruction and facilities for students who want and need that academic rigor. As someone who has taught academically advanced students, I have always considered TJ a good use of my tax dollars—even though I did not expect that either of my kids would ever attend. (So no, we didn't prepare. The "everybody does test prep" claim is wildly exaggerated.) Many of these kids are already doing thinking and research that will put them on a path to help solve the complex issues in environmental science, medicine, and tech facing our world today. I hope we can all still agree that our country needs its best young minds working on those issues. So, the question is how to identify them, and that's where the debate becomes polarized and devolves into namecalling. From what I see on social media, support of the current race-blind admissions policy at the school earns you the label of "racist." I am against the lottery proposal—but please do not hear that as "TJ is fine the way it is." When current TJ students from underrepresented minorities feel they are in an unwelcome environment, that's a problem. When there are elementary- and middle-school students from URM's who have the interest, drive, and intellect to succeed at TJ, but are not getting there, that's a problem. These kids need to be getting recognized and

supported through targeted instruction way earlier than the 8th grade. Instead of throwing out all of the admissions assessments, we need to create a system where these kids are in a position to excel on the test. And what that test should be is certainly open to discussion, but I think it's reasonable for a test gauging math and problem-solving skills to be a criterion for admission to a STEM school. I also believe in the value of teacher recommendations. I don't see how alignment with "Portrait of a Graduate" qualities makes sense as a criterion. STEM evaluation should be the primary consideration for admission to the STEM school, and then the (very worthy) POG goals should be addressed at TJ. Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of this whole debate has been that people who don't seem to know the school itself very well have promulgated the view that it is universally affluent, elitist, racist, nondiverse--in short, the enemy. I would urge all involved in this debate to keep it from becoming a commentary on the 1,800+ students who are there now. In a year that was already uniquely challenging, their school has been more or less labeled as racist in public media. They should be proud of where they are, and not made to feel as though they're there because their wealthy families somehow gamed the system. Not only is that inaccurate--it's gross stereotyping that is being allowed to stand, and is even actively perpetuated, by elected officials. I have seen some appallingly anti-Asian sentiment in the course of this debate, and I happen to believe that the proposed changes are in fact anti-Asian (and no, my family is not Asian). If the goal is to get more URM students admitted to TJ, the current proposal is just a Band-Aid to meet it. But surely the goal should be to ensure that URM students in FCPS have fully equal learning opportunities--in which case your intervention needs to start about 8 years before the TJ application. - 1 or 0%

Any proposal needs to be based on the data available and needs to show deterministically that it will address the issue. But unfortunately that is not the case with the current proposals. Also the current proposals seem to be rushed and a band-aid approach. FCPS region schools need to extend their programs to provide economically disadvantaged and under represented communities to prepare them from a younger age. By helping students to prepare themselves for rigorous STEM related courses, TJHSS can still keep the courses un-diluted and also avoid discouraging/undermining students who deserve and have put in their hard work. - 1 or 0%

This is another terrible plan. Admission to TJ should continue to be based on proven merit, not luck. FCPS has failed minority students for over a decade - defunding programs like TJ Outreach, Focus Schools, and poorly running programs like Young Scholars. The reading proficiency rate for minority elementary students is barely over 50%. Schools like Justice High School are not accredited because of failing test score, the dropout rate in FCPS is at an all time high, 190,000 students are locked out of school because the Superintendent failed to produce a Return to School plan and still doesn't have one. FCPS is dealing with many, many issues in addition to being in the middle of a pandemic. Public school social engineering activists are taking over our schools and our school board. They are hurting kids but care more about their political ideology than students. TJ is a school for extremely high achieving students. Open another STEM program in the county so more kids if everyone academic level can participate in STEM. Don't destroy TJ and the accomplishments of all the TJ students to cover failures of FCPS to education minority students. And don't blame it on the AYGs Diversity Report. That is red herring intended to be general, aspirational, not tied to funding, and developed with community input as to long term goals. Not at all what Braband has said. - 1 or 0%

Lack of diversification at TJ is not because of the TJ admission process, it was the result of FCPS's failure of implementing a system to boost academic performance in under-served area. Many TJ parents are first generation immigrants who came to the US penniless. Through their hard work and dedication, they realized their American Dream. They are the Role Model for those who really want to excel; they are the living proof that a person can turn their fate around and live a decent life through hard working; they are exactly what we should promote to people and show how a person coming from low income minority background can thrive. Their next generation, should Not be discriminated against by their chances of excellent education being taken away by this lottery system. Their kids deserve the the same and equal chance of excellent education, just as those for the black and Latinx's. - 1 or 0%

I think while the aspirations behind lottery plan are right - increase diversity, the methodology proposed will lead to a sub optimal outcome. It will decrease the quality of education and it will make life tough on pupils who are selected but are not really capable of handling AP/College level coursework. In that case, either the quality of TJ curriculum will have to be watered down OR kids will end up with really bad grades. None of those are desirable outcomes. I went to IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) for my undergrad. These are elite Engineering schools with admit ratio of 0.1%. When I was in 2nd year, some administrators came up with the idea of capitalizing on the value proposition of IIT education through special paid seats where fees was so high that ultra rich can afford it. Mind you for merit-based students the education was fully funded by Indian federal government. Expat parents, who can afford to pay USD fee, jumped at it and got their kids enrolled. However, by end of first semester the value proposition for parents was not looking great. Average grade for paid-seat students was D. At that point, the schools

administrators had to make a choice - water down the curriculum to accommodate for paid-seat students OR discontinue the program. Being the elite institutions, the schools kept the high level of curriculum and instead chose to discontinue the program. In the proposed lottery program, the classes will be majority with subpar students. Within 1 - 2 semesters, school admins will come upon a stark fork in the road - dilute the quality of education OR discontinue the program. I have a Senior and a Freshman. I can tell you, that teachers are preparing course modules assuming certain level of comprehension and understanding. If your majority class is subpar, the course modules will have to come down OR the teacher's look bad. Teachers will of course silently bring down the quality. Now, in this case who is losing - merit based students. So over the course of few years, merit based students will stop preferring TJHSST. In near future I can see it losing the shine and then I have to question why it should be called Governor's school. - 1 or 0%

There are two important characteristics that need to be identified in order for a student to be successful at TJ--(1) do they have a passion for STEM and (2) will they be able to handle the curriculum based on natural abilities, hard work, or a combination of the two. This lottery proposal will not identify the most promising STEM students in the county. Even the "revised" merit lottery fails to meaningfully identify students that will be successful at TJ without requiring TJ to modify its curriculum. The Superintendent is rushing this proposal to appease the VA Secretary of Education. The TJ admission process could use some revisions--the current process is too gameable and creates a stressful culture before the kids arrive. But this merit lottery is a hatchet approach to addressing legitimate concerns. It feels like the Superintendent threw it together in 20 minutes without thinking things through. Slow down. Get input from other sources and stop only listening to the one alumni group. If that group really cared about current TJ students, they would be willing to talk to them. My child has offered to speak with several of these alumni to come up with a different proposal and they have refused. This alumni group is politically motivated and driving a progressive agenda with complete disregard for the current TJ students. We should ignore them and come up with modifications to the TJ admission process that achieve multiple goals without politics being the driving force. - 1 or 0%

"Redefining Merit" based on Race is both UnConscionable & UnConstitutional. It does NOTHING to prepare Black & Latino students for TJ's rigor. It is cheap cover for FCPS Superintendent total failure to reach out to disadvantaged students and provide the support to help them succeed. It creates a two tiers system that top 100 students will be bullied by lower tier 400 students. It divides the TJ community, destroys TJ's mission, and causes long lasting damages to FCPS students. Lottery admission is against any principle of education beliefs and theory. It is totally against CIVIL rights. If the ANY lottery based admission is baked in the TJ admission process, and we will pursue the legal action against FCPS. And we will fight up to the Supreme Court. - 1 or 0%

Change gpa to 4 to ensure students can truly meet TJ academic requirements. Keep algebra1 and SIS and maths problems. These are a great filter. Stack rank students based on that however and NOT on random lottery. Agree with dropping reading and maths test requirements Offer more TJ like schools to meet demand - 1 or 0%

If the ranking of TJ drops as a result of this plan, will the board reverse this plan and restore the more competitive admission plan? - 1 or 0%

How do we explain to kids that are getting to ready to a test based on expectations the school board set, not parents that the school board decided arbitrarily that they suddenly want to change the process at the n'th minute? If the school leaders don't follow discipline with the expectations they set, what message is it sending to kids? What example are we setting to kids by introducing such drastic changes with all those confusing jargons at the least minute? This is highly irresponsible to introduce such changes keeping either elections in mind or to tick a box for the governor. From what I read, the governor only asked for a plan, not immediate changes without any consent from the parties impacted. We are being railroaded and haven't gotten a platform to discuss our concerns with management. If we object, we are being portrayed as opposed to black and Hispanic kids. This tone was set by the leaders at the top with their incendiary comments. Conducting a virtual town hall for 1hr with 2-3 callers given opportunity to talk is not a platform to discuss and the superintendent gave the same dismissive answer to all of them without addressing the concerns raised. - 1 or 0%

I oppose the Revised Merit Lottery Proposal for the following reasons: 1. It does not guarantee the objective that it was created for. 2. Holistic Review of over 8000-10000 applicants will not be thoroughly done and the right 100 candidates may not be selected. 3. Holistic Review prone to the personal bias of the reviewer. 4. Smart, talented, STEM oriented kids who do not belong to the under represented or the special categories mentioned are at a LOSS. Being born, race should never restrict the ability of a meritorious individual from a gifted STEM education 5. Not enough details on the whole process. 6. This seems very rushed particularly for the class of 2025. What did the class of 2025 do to deserve such a rushed change of process? 7. A top STEM school needs top quality meritorious students who are capable of learning the enhanced rigorous curriculum. Just to suit the goals, I fear a dilution of the



rigor/curriculum which will bring down TJ, the top employers/STEM companies can no longer rely on gifted/top quality STEM students for solving the future problems. - 1 or 0%

Test the ability of student in STEM area. - 1 or 0%

TJ is recognized as #1 public school on US News. This has approved that our current admission procedure is a great success in promoting STEM and meeting needs of those gifted kids. If a NFL team wins the super ball, will you fire the head coach and replace the whole winning team? Absolutely not! The original and the revised Merit Lottery Plan have little to do with merit, and won't solve any real problems. It's just a cheap cover up for FCPS's failures to reach out to disadvantaged students and provide support to help them succeed. The plan will divide the community, destroy TJHHST's mission, and cause long lasting damages to FCPS students. Lottery admission is against all commonly accepted education theories and experiences. It's a shame for FCPS to propose lottery admission. I am totally against it. Scott Brabrand failed students/families this Spring in online teaching, and confused students/families/staffs with the one-year commitment survey in August. Now Scott proposed the Lottery trying to distract the community. Brabrand should be fired and let this position be determined by a lottery if that's what he believes in. - 1 or 0%

1) On what basis was it decided that 20% of the students would be decided based on merit. Why was it not 50% or 70%? 2) There is no transparency in the merit process. Is there a weightage given to each of the factors? 3) When there is a lottery for the remaining 400 seats why do we need experience factors listed again? Those are the factors already been considered in those. By adding this we are making the pure merit quota even lower. 4) What happens to other districts that are participating like Loudoun, prince william, ... with the 20% merit. Is it going to be for the 20% of the Loudoun students? 5) We all agree that diversity is important but there are better ways to make this proposal. Take all parties involved and come to a decision together rather than just implementing some half baked proposal. - 1 or 0%

The concept of a lottery does not make sense. It sends the wrong signal that "luck" or "lottery" instead of "merit" and "capability" opens doors. The FCPS Administration and our policymakers are solving the wrong problem here - they want to show metrics that just make them look good, and they can declare a token win - without actually addressing ANY of the core issues - like participation in STEM from an early age, investments in elementary & middle schools to encourage STEM development, mentoring, etc. The focus needs to be on early education, versus removing legitimate and proven measures of selecting talent. - 1 or 0%

If the admission requirements are changed, TJHSST will not be the same. Keep the admission requirements as they have been. - 1 or 0%

I fully support FCPS efforts to increase diversity. I also understand that no plan is perfect and will not yield desired results fully and immediately. But I do believe that this revised merit lottery is an ESSENTIAL step in the RIGHT direction. Thank you! - 1 or 0%

absurd proposal fabricated by racists - 1 or 0%

The admission should be based on merit largely; otherwise, TJ won't be a great school as it is today going into the future. Our revised proposed is as follow: 450 seats will be offered to "highest-evaluated" applicants based on "a holistic review of their application." The remaining 50 seats will be filled by lottery to account for diversity. - 1 or 0%

First, this plan will dis-encourage students morale. Students no longer need to work hard to excel. They just need to meet the minimal requirements and then depend on luck rather than their hard work. Second, if the current curriculum rigor stays the same, some kids may not be able to the keep up the course work. Consequently, the students could either drop out or the course rigor is compromised. Neither is good to keep TJ STEM rigor. - 1 or 0%

We have submitted our comments directly to our representatives, and encourage everyone to do the same. - 1 or 0%

## Statistics from this Ballot

2 of 2 Issues have been voted on.  
 There are 577 pre-registered voters.  
 356 voters have started their ballots,  
 but only 317 voters have completed this ballot