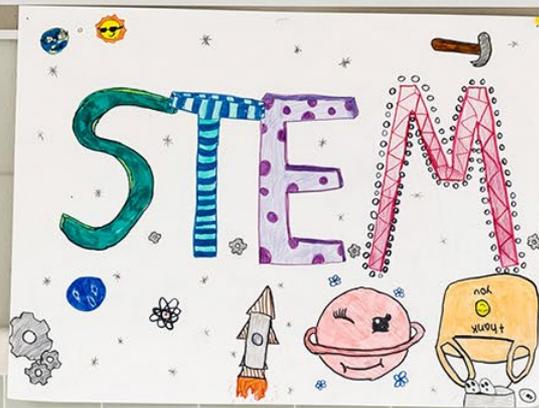


# TJ Admissions Process

Expanding Our Talent Search



# Agenda



- Background
- Key Decisions
- Research and Data
- Final Proposal
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Outreach/Communication Plan
- Accountability Metrics

# Leading with Equity at the Center

- Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST) should have a goal of improving ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic diversity
- Three-pronged approach
  - **Admissions**
  - **Enhanced wrap-around support for TJHSST students**
    - School Board work session 9/5/2020
    - School Board work session 10/6/2020
    - School Board regular meeting 10/8/2020
  - **Enhanced pipeline –**
    - School Board work session 1/21/2020
    - School Board work session 5/11/2020
    - School Board work session 5/18/2020
    - School Board forum 10/20/2020
    - School Board regular meeting 10/22/2020 - Talent Development Plan approved
    - School Board work session 10/27/2020

- School Board Policy states that students should “have demonstrated exceptional achievement, aptitude, commitment, intellectual curiosity, passion, and creativity in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.”
- The mission of TJHSST is to “provide students with a challenging learning environment focused on math, science, and technology, to inspire joy at the prospect of discovery, and to foster a culture of innovation based on ethical behavior and the shared interests of humanity.”
- TJHSST’s original charter included the following charges:
  - Maintain a close relationship with the business and industrial community
  - Create an environment for state-of-the-art instruction and learning experiences
  - Include specialized laboratories and provide interdisciplinary instruction
  - Design an exemplary and unique high school program with superior preparation for access to collegiate admission and other post-secondary opportunities and skills for immediate employment upon graduation
  - Obtain resources for a timely realization of the school
  - Design and equip an appropriate facility
  - Maintain a strong continuing program of teacher in-service with opportunities for younger student participation

## Initial Merit Lottery

- Application requirements
  - Core Class 3.5 GPA
  - Enrolled in Algebra I
  - Residency Requirements
- Revised Student Information Sheet to include questionnaire/essay
- Selection by merit lottery
- Rolling admissions to keep a class of 500

## Hybrid Merit Lottery

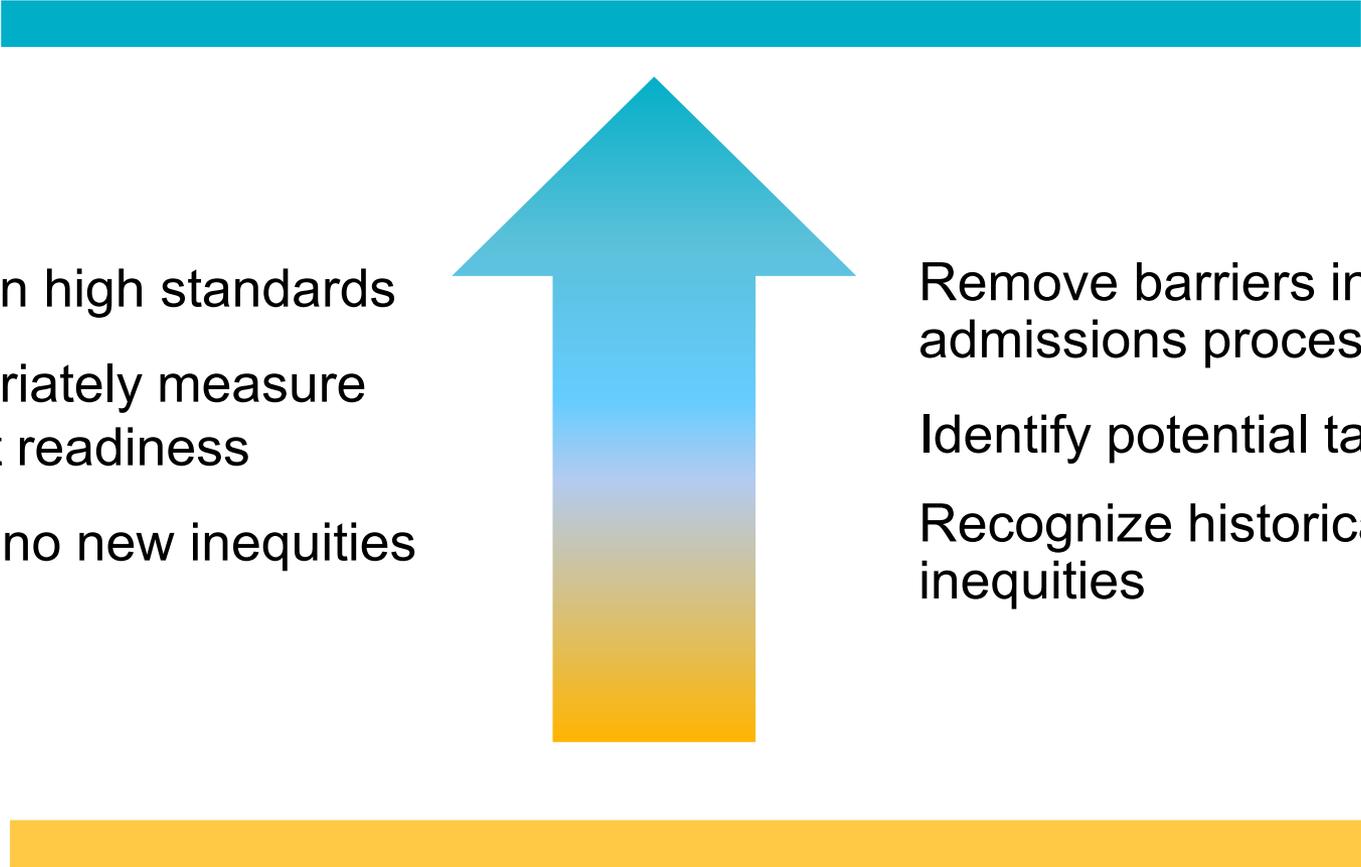
- Application requirements unchanged
- 100 highest-evaluated students will be offered a seat based on a holistic review of their application
- Remaining 400 seats will be filled by merit lottery
- Rolling admissions to keep a class of 500

- This presentation presents **two approaches** for the School Board consider:
  - Hybrid Merit Lottery (revised)
  - Holistic Review
- **A vote to select the desired approach is scheduled in December 2020 for the School Board to select the process to be used for the THJSST Class of 2025**



- Examined admissions processes of schools similar to TJHSST
- Conducted literature review
- Reviewed FCPS policies and procedures with an impact on TJHSST admissions
- Received direct advice on proposals from known experts:
  - Dr. Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, Virginia Commonwealth University
  - Dr. Dominique Baker, Southern Methodist University
  - Dr. Jonathan Plucker, Johns Hopkins University
- The experts agreed that the current admissions criteria, including the test, can be barriers to traditionally underrepresented students. The use of lotteries is a way to increase diversity.

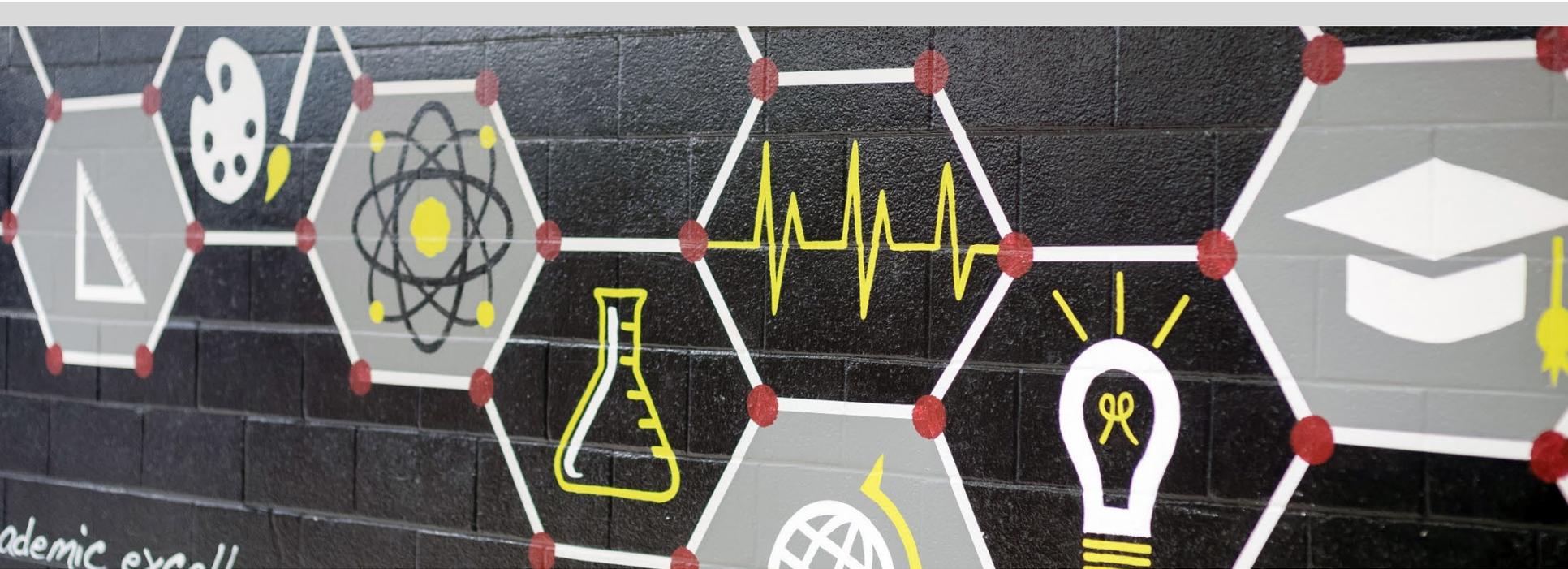




Maintain high standards  
Appropriately measure  
student readiness  
Create no new inequities

Remove barriers in  
admissions process  
Identify potential talent  
Recognize historical  
inequities

# Final Proposals



Hybrid Merit Lottery

Holistic Review

# Selection Process Proposals

Application requirements  
with enhanced merit

Holistic review of all  
applications

Proposal 1: Merit Lottery

Offer 100 seats to highest-  
evaluated students

Select remaining using a lottery  
approach

Proposal 2: Holistic Review

Offer 550 seats to highest-  
evaluated students



- Exhibit Portrait of a Graduate attributes and 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills in a Student Portrait Sheet
- Display problem-solving skills and STEM aptitude by writing a math or science problem-solving essay
- Achieve an unweighted 3.5 GPA in core classes *while*
  - Displaying math aptitude by being enrolled in Algebra I or a more advanced math
  - **Demonstrating strong preparation for TJHSST coursework by being enrolled in both math and science honors courses**
  - **Indicating overall academic rigor by being enrolled in one additional honors course (English or Social Studies) or being identified as a Young Scholar**



Bolded elements are changed from the initial proposal

# Holistic Review Elements

- GPA
- Student portrait sheet
- Problem solving essay
- Experience Factors
  - Economically Disadvantaged
  - English Language Learner
  - Special Education
  - Underrepresented Schools
- **Capacity has been increased to a class of 550 students**



# Selection Process Proposals

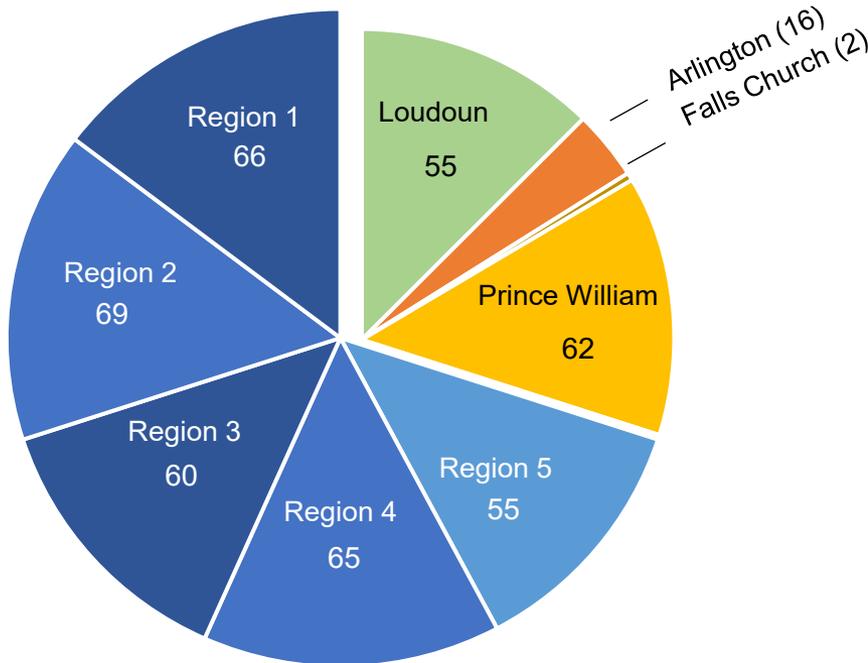
## Proposal 1: Hybrid Merit Lottery

- Highest-evaluated 100 are offered admission regardless of pathway
- Remaining 450 students are chosen by random lottery from highly evaluated applicants within pathways
- **Top 100 students will not be counted toward pathway caps**
  - Addresses concerns of partner jurisdictions

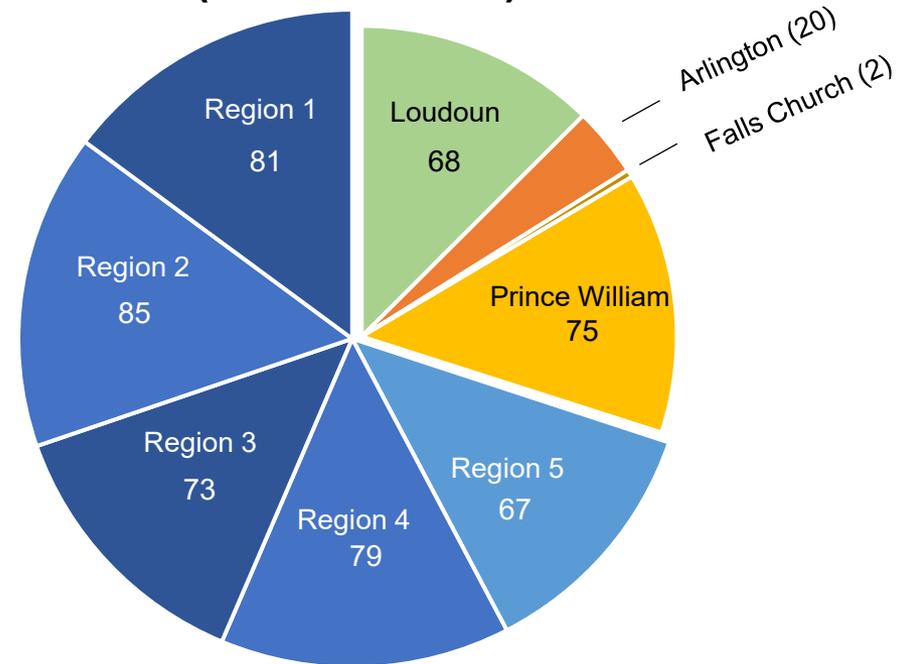
## Proposal 2: Holistic Review

- Highest-evaluated students are offered admission
- Students will be selected by pathway until the cap is reached

### Proposal 1: Hybrid Lottery Pathway Composition (450 students)



### Proposal 2: Holistic Review Pathway Composition (550 students)



*Pathways would be designed by region in FCPS. Numbers would be based on the selected proposal.*

Advanced Academic Programs Advisory Committee (AAPAC)  
Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee (MSAOC)  
Middle School Principal Association (MSPA)  
Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD)  
Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA)  
Fairfax County Council Parent Teacher Association (FCCPTA)  
TJHSST Alumni  
Participating Jurisdictions





Present to students in every public school (FCPS and participating jurisdictions)

Present to parents and the community in evening sessions



Send recruitment emails/letters to all eligible students



Conduct a virtual open house to include a tour, student speakers, teachers presenting their programs, and an overview of student supports



Conduct targeted recruitment of underrepresented students, with input from liaison counselors and school counselors

*All elements of this outreach plan will be available in multiple languages*

- Engage Parent Liaisons, TJHSST PTA Diversity Committee, alumni groups
- Provide additional equity-focused professional development to Advanced Academic Resource Teachers, counselors, STEAM teachers
- After-school and summer enrichment programming
  - Family STEM activities
  - Family showcase
    - Gallery walk for students to present their work
- Partner with local government agencies and business partners to identify additional outreach opportunities

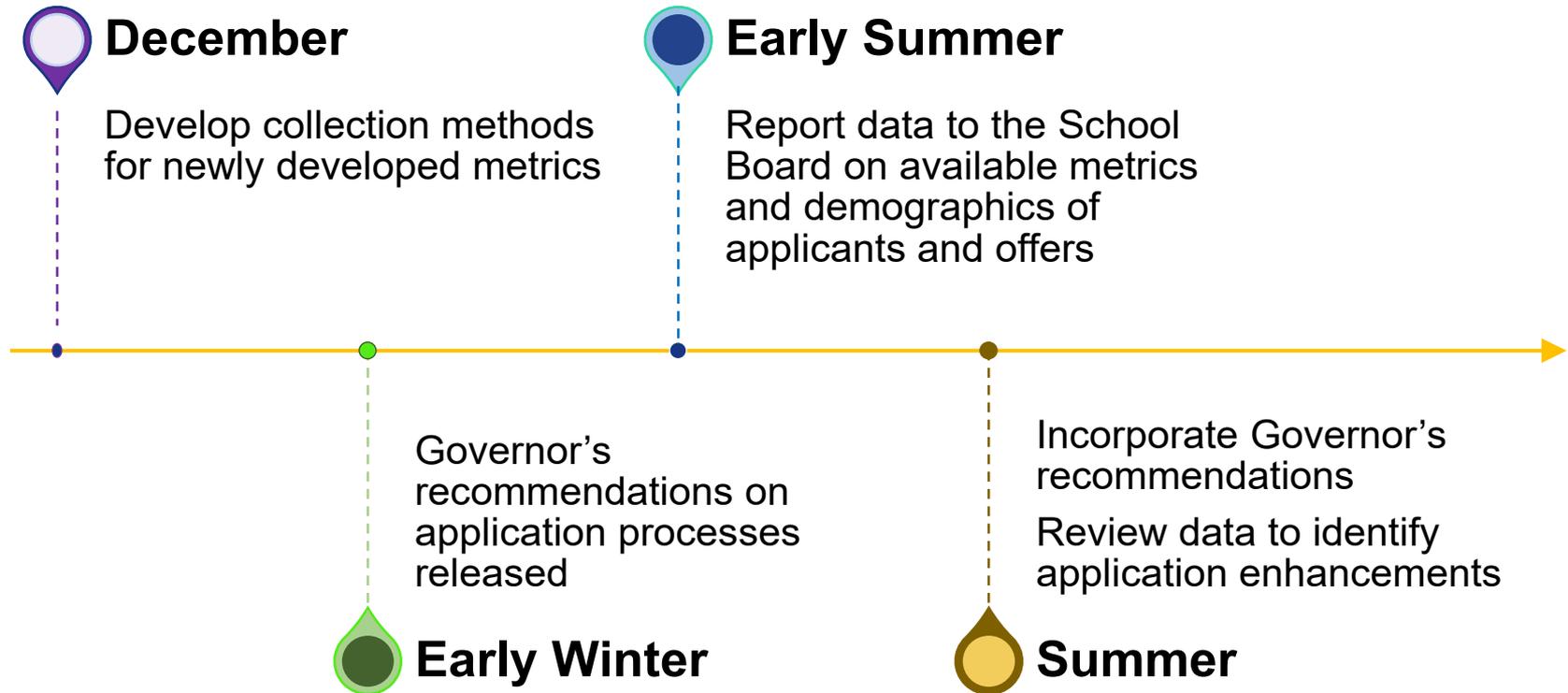


- Internal Communications:
  - Middle School Principal Association Meetings
  - Principal and Middle School Counselor Briefings
  - Employee News
- External Communications:
  - News Release
  - News You Choose
  - Social Media
  - TJHSST website
  - Letter to current TJHSST families
  - Advisory committees/stakeholder group meetings



- Percent of student diversity  
Diversity of school will more closely mirror the diversity of applicant pool
- Percent of middle school students who believe that they belong at TJHSST
- Number of families who attend TJHSST outreach meetings
- Percent of students who feel respected and included at TJHSST
- Percent of parents who feel respected at TJHSST





# Questions and School Board Dialogue

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Should TJHSST admissions be selected by  
a Hybrid Merit Lottery or  
Holistic Review?



