

Nov. 12, 2020

Dear Fairfax County School Board Members,

As you consider changes to the admissions process at TJ, the core issue remains whether Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology will continue to educate gifted students who are passionate for science, engineering, technology and math as a Governor's School — or whether it will be diverted to other uses and fail its legislated mission to be a Governor's School, serving gifted students.

We are 152 parents -- most of us current and alumni parents of TJ -- and we are writing to oppose the actions of the Fairfax County School Board to undermine TJ's important mission to gifted students in STEM and demand that the school board correct its misguided course of action.

The only sensible course of action is for the School Board to do the following:

- Reverse the decision from its Oct. 6, 2020, work session decision to eliminate the standardized admissions tests to TJ;
- Quickly restart the admissions process as it was administered last year;
- Initiate deliberative proceedings that actually engage the public and honor the state mandate to educate gifted students at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.

The mission to create a nurturing environment for gifted students is a critical mission in which TJ serves at-risk, special needs students who are otherwise vulnerable to bullying, dropping out of school and facing socio-emotional challenges.

Academic Year Governor's Schools such as TJ receive certain benefits from the Commonwealth of Virginia, including special funding. At the same time, school districts that operate such Governor's Schools have certain obligations, including but not limited to operating them as schools for gifted students required by Virginia law.

We suggest that you ask Fairfax County Public Schools Division Counsel for a clear and comprehensive written analysis and then receive a full verbal briefing of the many interactions between Virginia's laws and regulations and the efforts to force an immediate change in the TJ admissions process. In the interim, we urge you to schedule a vote so that the Fairfax County School Board can vote to do what is necessary to ensure TJ's continued status as a Governor's School under current state law.

As you know, a lawsuit was filed last week by 17 courageous middle schoolers against Superintendent Scott Brabrand and FCPS school board members regarding the abrupt

TJ admissions changes. The complaint was served on Board Chair Ricardy Anderson and Superintendent Brabrand, but if you haven't received a copy you can read the complaint [here](#).

FCPS currently receives an extra \$3.5 million per year from the state because TJ is a Governor's School. For reasons explained in the lawsuit complaint, TJ cannot qualify as a Governor's School unless FCPS operates TJ as a high school for gifted students. Further, state regulations require FCPS to use a "nationally norm-referenced aptitude test" (Virginia Code Sec. 8VAC20-40-40) to determine whether a student is gifted.

During the September and October 2020 work sessions on TJ admissions, Superintendent Brabrand and his staff did not brief you on these state laws.

If you want TJ to continue qualifying as a Governor's School and for FCPS to continue receiving the annual \$3.5 million Governor's School supplement from the state, you should vote immediately to use a nationally-normed admissions test to admit students to TJ. This also will allow you to turn your attention to other urgent topics, such as distance learning, bringing students back into the school buildings safely and the FY 2022 budget.

Virginia Secretary of Education Atif Qarni has warned that he will change TJ admissions. Deferring wholesale changes to the TJ admissions process until the state finishes its deliberations will reduce the amount of time you spend on this issue. Any changes you make now will have to be reconsidered if and when the state changes its laws or regulations that apply to Governor's Schools. That means you will once again have to go through the time-consuming process of obtaining data (from staff or from members of the public who submit FOIA requests) on the potential impact of various TJ admissions proposals, then deliberating on what changes make the most sense.

With the COVID-19 surge on the horizon, you already have plenty on your plate. The Superintendent and his staff should have done some due diligence BEFORE they brought the last few TJ admissions proposals to you and other School Board members. Fortunately, it's not too late to rectify the mistakes that were made because of the Superintendent's failure to do a more careful and thorough job.

Sincerely,

**Class of 2032**

1. Kalpesh Upadhye, Parent, Marshall Road Elementary School, Class of 2032
2. Kate Liu, Parent, Chesterbrook Elementary School, Class of 2032
3. Shan Dong, Parent, BASIS Independent McLean, Class of 2032
4. Jianhong Shen, Parent, Forestville Elementary School, Class of 2032

**Class of 2031**

5. Zinnia Zhang, Parent, Spring Hill Elementary School, Class of 2031
6. Fuhu Xia, Parent, Forestville Elementary School, Class of 2031

**Class of 2029**

7. Tracy Du, Parent, Chesterbrook Elementary, Class of 2029
8. Jennifer Xu, Parent, Haycock Elementary School, Class of 2029
9. Vineet Sinha, Parent, Rachel Carson Middle School, Class of 2029

**Class of 2028**

10. Qingqing Cao, Parent, Forestville Elementary School, Class of 2028
11. Melody Chen, Parent, Churchill Road Elementary School, Class of 2028
12. Yahong Gu, Parent, Willow Springs Elementary School, Class of 2028
13. Long Chen, Parent, Haycock Elementary School, Class of 2028
14. Tao Xu, Parent, Haycock Elementary School, Class of 2028
15. Danyi Wang, Parent, Haycock Elementary School, Class of 2028
16. Kapil G, Parent, Haycock Elementary School, Class of 2028
17. Ying Cao, Parent, Haycock Elementary School, Class of 2028

**Class of 2027**

18. Xi Su, Parent, BASIS Independent McLean, Class of 2027
19. Steven Yi, Parent, Spring Hill Elementary School, Class of 2027
20. Rubing Li, parent, Homeschool, Class of 2027
21. Priya Rao, Parent, Stone Hill Middle School, Class of 2027
22. Manish Saraf, Parent, Louise Archer Elementary School, Class of 2027
23. Himanshu Verma, Parent, Churchill Elementary School, Class of 2027
24. Stacy Z, Parent, Spring Hill Elementary School, Class of 2027
25. Chunlei Li, Parent, Churchill Elementary School, Class of 2027
26. Mike Nie, Parent, Lanier Middle School, class of 2027

**Class of 2026**

27. Aneel Advani, Parent, Nysmith School for the Gifted, Class of 2026
28. Jia Li, Parent, Luther Jackson Middle School, Class of 2026
29. Xinyi Ma, Parent, Rachel Carson Middle School, Class of 2026
30. Haifeng Sheng, Parent, Rachel Carson Middle School, Class of 2026
31. Sowjanya Rajavaram, Parent, Rocky Run Middle School, Class of 2026
32. Narayana Sundaram, Parent, Rocky Run Middle School, Class of 2026
33. Yi Wang, Parent, Longfellow Middle School, Class of 2026
34. Qiang Zhang, parent, Cooper Middle School, Class of 2026
35. Vineet Sinha, Parent, Rachel Carson Middle School, Class of 2026
36. Lakshmi Velusamy, Parent, Rachel Carson Middle School, Class of 2026
37. Wei Wang, Parent, Longfellow Middle School, Class of 2026
38. Li Yu, Parent, Cooper Middle School, Class of 2026
39. Swati Aneja, Parent, Liberty Middle School, Class of 2026

40. Jayaram Udayakumar, Parent, Rachel Carson Middle School, Class of 2026
41. Krish Agarwal, Parent, Rocky Run Middle School , Class of 2026
42. Yvonne Zhu, Parent, Rachel Carson Middle School, Class of 2026
43. Harry Jackson, Parent, Rachel Carson Middle School, Class of 2026

#### **Class of 2025**

44. Carine Chase, Parent, Rachel Carson Middle School, Class of 2025
45. Yanling Liu, Parent, Lake Braddock Secondary School, Class of 2025
46. Vivian Sun, Parent, BASIS Independent Mclean, Class of 2025
47. Lan Yue, Parent, Longfellow Middle School, Class of 2025
48. Longni Li, Parent, Rachel Carson Middle school ,class of 2025
49. Jinglei Li, Parent, Longfellow Middle School, Class of 2025
50. Lijuan Su, Parent, Cooper Middle School, Class of 2025
51. Lie Wu, Parent, Cooper Middle School, Class of 2025
52. Shiru Zhou, Parent, Cooper Middle School, Class of 2025
53. Qingying Lu, Parent, Frost Middle School, Class of 2025
54. Ying Chen, Parent, Longfellow Middle School, Class of 2025
55. Jiangtao Ding, Parent, BASIS Independent Mclean, Class of 2025
56. Lakshmi Radhakrishnan, Parent, Rocky Run Middle School, Class of 2025
57. Qing Feng, Parent, Longfellow Middle School, Class of 2025
58. Kapil G, Parent, Longfellow Middle School, Class of 2025
59. Kai Zhang, Parent, Longfellow Middle School, Class of 2025
60. Sherry Yang, Parent, Nysmith School for the Gifted, Class of 2025
61. Vivian Li, Parent, Cooper Middle School, Class of 2025  
Min He, Parent, Cooper Middle School, Class of 2025

#### **Class of 2024**

62. Sudha Jain, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
63. Haiying Liu, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
64. Norma Margulies, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
65. Anu Saraf, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
66. Himanshu Verma, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
67. Jun Wang, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
68. Leqin Wang, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2020 and 2024
69. Sudhanshu Sood, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024

70. Sandeep Neema, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
71. Qun Zhang, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
72. Sanjay Seth, Parent, Thomas Jefferson high School of Science and Technology, Class of 2024
73. Sunny Sun, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
74. James Chu, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
75. Lin Chen, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
76. Jinxiu Zhao, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
77. Yifeng Zhu, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
78. Tao Yu, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024
79. Jiang Huang, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024 and 2020

**Class of 2023**

80. Edward Breinig, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
81. Ming-Feng Chin, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
82. Suparna Dutta, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
83. Shishir Shrivastava, Parent , Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023 .
84. Bhaskara Reddy, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, class of 2023.
85. Nirmla Shastri, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023.
86. Murali CS, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023.
87. Hongli Cao, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023.
88. Zhijun Yao, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023.
89. Larry Feng, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
90. Tina Williams, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023

91. Anil Kumar, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
92. Jennifer Li, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
93. Jay Satpathy, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
94. Swati Aneja, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
95. Lee Hsu, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
96. I B, Student, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
97. Ajay Divekar, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
98. Kaushik Ray, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
99. Cindy Liu, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
100. Gurmeet Singh, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
101. Ye RUAN, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
102. Yunfeng ZHU, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023
103. Min He, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2023

**Class of 2022**

104. Glenn Miller, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2022
105. Helen Miller, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2022
106. Manoj Bisht, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2022
107. Shuchita Bora, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2022
108. Emily Li, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2022
109. Cheryl Hu, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High for Science and Technology, Class of 2022
110. Jenny Zhang, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High for Science and Technology, Class of 2022
111. Leo Li, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High for Science and Technology, Class of 2022
112. James Chu, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2024

113. Michelle Li, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2022

**Class of 2021**

114. Xin Cao, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2021
115. J. Cui, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2021
116. Tamy Dalal, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2021
117. Sean Li, Parent, Rachel Carson Middle School, Class of 2021
118. Nan Li, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2021
119. Rong Liu, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, class of 2021
120. Jun Meng, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2021
121. Asra Nomani, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2021
122. Sharon Peng, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2021
123. Sam Sun, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2021
124. Haiyi Tu, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2022
125. Sumei Wang, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2021
126. Jun Xu, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2021
127. Alice Zhang, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2018 and 2021
128. Susie Zhou, Parent, Rachel Carson Middle School, Class of 2021

**Class of 2020**

129. Yuyan Zhou, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2020
130. Suchita Kediya, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2020
131. Shilpa Vaidya, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2018 and 2020
132. Xiaohua Li, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2018 and 2020
133. Yingping Guo, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2020 and 2022

134. Chuan Wang, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2018 and 2021
135. Lisa Qian, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2020
136. Ke Xiao, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2020
137. Pradyot Rai, Parent, Fairfax High School, Class of 2020
138. Payal Neema, Parent, McLean High School, Class of 2020
139. Jyothi Apsani, Parent - TJHSST, Class of 2020

#### **Class of 2019**

140. Hanzhen Zheng, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2019
141. Jason Gan. Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2019
142. Martha Huang Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2019

#### **Class of 2018**

143. Jeannie Yee, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2018
144. Lisa Zhang, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2018
145. Kairong Zhou Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2018
146. Bei Li. Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2018

#### **Class of 2016**

147. Hongyan Zhang, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2016
148. George Wang, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2016
149. Yuyan Zhou, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2016
150. Ke Xiao, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2016
151. Yiheng Shi, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class of 2013, 2021
152. Weiwen Yang, Parent, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Class 2021