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### Parent Experiences Navigating the Hartford Youth Scholars Program Application

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“Parent Experiences Navigating the Hartford Youth Scholars Program Application”

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EDUC 400: Senior Seminar

Educational Studies Program

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Trinity College - Hartford, CT

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## **Abstract**

In the United States, large disparities in education and educational attainment across racial and ethnic groups continue to exist. To combat this disparity, families may look for opportunities that will help their child succeed such as academic programming/enrichment. Hartford Youth Scholars (HYS) is one such program, located in Hartford, CT. While programs such as HYS exist, these programs are usually in demand and unfortunately due to lack of resources and funding, there are only a limited number of students programs have the capacity to admit. While this is the case, it's important that all families have a fair shot at applying to programming. Through this qualitative study, I interviewed 13 parents in both English and Spanish and asked them questions pertaining to their experience navigating the HYS program application and the accessibility of the application. Based on my analysis of parent interviews, participants found the HYS application to be accessible for Spanish, Bilingual, and English-speaking parents, however, some parents pointed to obstacles inside the organization, such as the limited number of Spanish-speaking staff, or related to the organization's application process (such as the requirements like teacher recommendations, etc.). Parents overcame these difficulties through their motivations of applying to HYS and through the help of supportive and accessible staff within the program.

Families want what's best for their children and to do this, families may look for opportunities that will help their child succeed whether it be in school, in their communities, etc. In order to help their children, families may look for programming or extracurricular activities that may help their child integrate with like-minded individuals who are also looking to improve and succeed, not only socially, but academically as well. There are opportunities that allow students to participate in programming that may benefit them at the moment, but there are also others that are dedicated to helping their futures. While these programs offer enticing opportunities and advantages for those who are a part of them, some of these programs have a limited number of students they are able to help due to the limited number of resources they have, may it be space, money, etc. Some of these academic enrichment programs, especially those dedicated to helping students go to college, have rigorous application processes that consist of many parts and take many things into consideration. Programs such as the focus of my research, Hartford Youth Scholars, do not just accept anyone and while it is an unfortunate situation, the lack of resources and demand make it a competitive process.

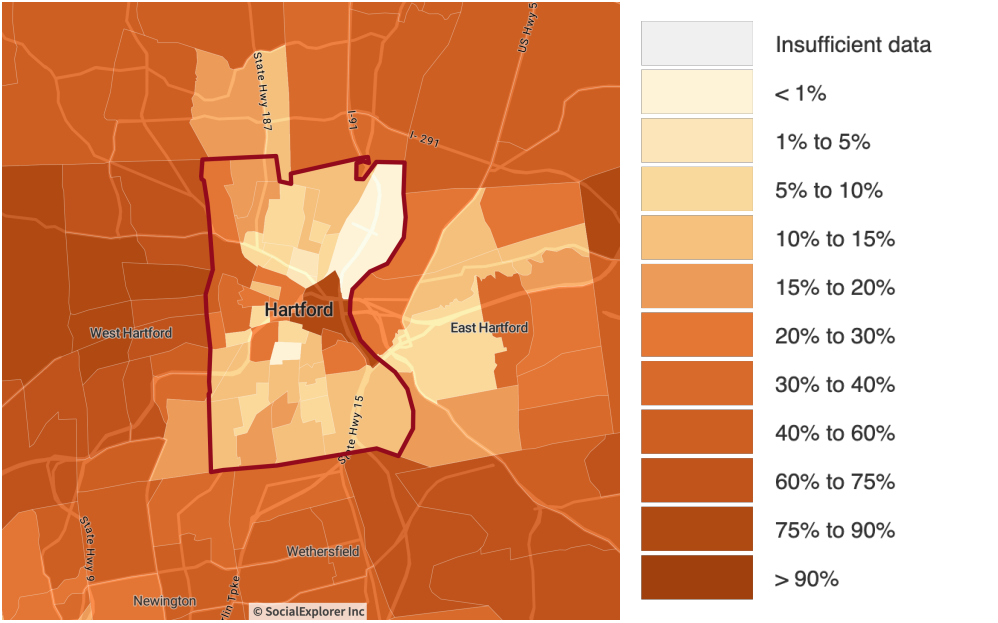
While this is the case, it is important for all families to have an equal opportunity to apply. Families of color overall tend to have fewer educational opportunities due to obstacles that may be correlated from their social and economic classes. Spanish speaking and bilingual families on the other hand, tend to have a harder time due triple segregation they might face, which is segregation that has to do with not only race/ethnicity and economic class, but language as well with it being a third barrier. This third barrier that language can be, may lead to Spanish-speaking or bilingual families not having a fair shot at applying to programming, like Hartford Youth Scholars.

Through this qualitative interview study, I aimed to see if any of these factors have impacted Hartford families throughout Hartford Youth Scholars' (HYS) application process. The purpose of this research is to understand how parents experience the HYS application process and their views on how accessible the application is. I also seek to understand how parents view barriers they may have encountered and how this may have affected their experience. This leads me to ask: According to parents who expressed interest and applied to the Hartford Youth Scholars (HYS) program in the last 3 years, how did families experience the application process and how did families navigate and negotiate barriers they may have encountered? What are parents looking for when enrolling their children into HYS? Although the HYS application was viewed to be accessible by Spanish, Bilingual, and English-speaking parents, some parents pointed to obstacles inside the organization, such as the limited number of Spanish-speaking staff, or related to the organization's application process, such as the requirements like teacher recommendations, etc.

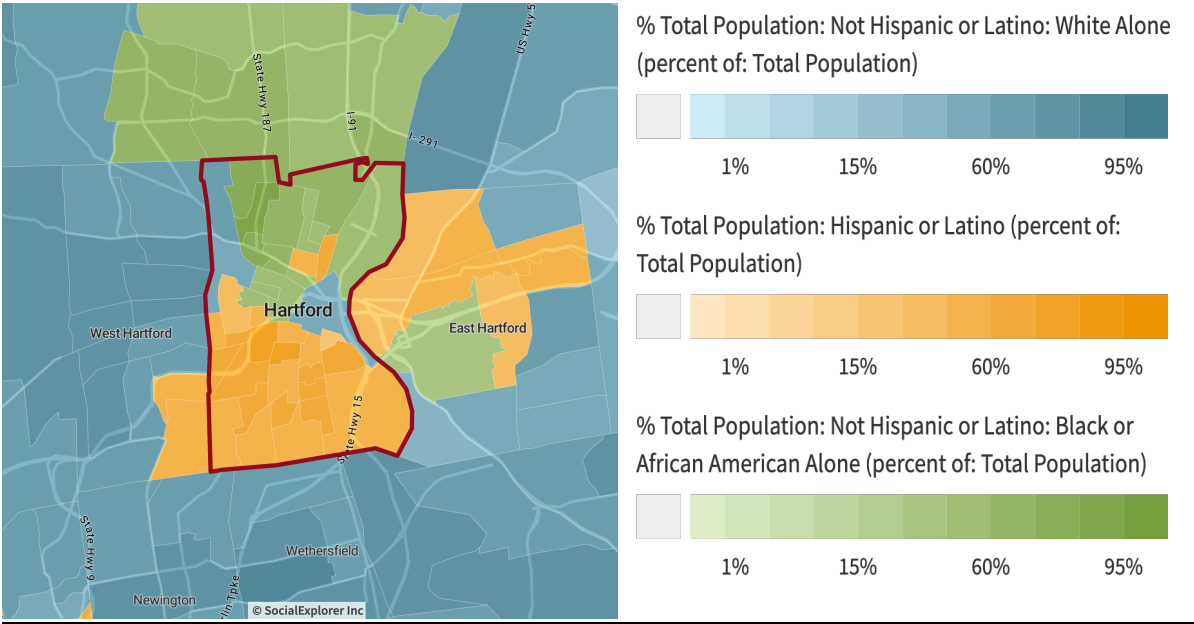
### **Background**

In the United States, large disparities in education and educational attainment across racial and ethnic groups continue to exist. According to the US Census (2016-2020), in Connecticut, only 18% of Hispanic or Latino residents and 23% of Black residents had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher, versus 66% of Asian residents, 45% of White non-Hispanic residents (CTData). The maps below show the educational attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher for those 25 years and over in Hartford, CT and the total population in Hartford, CT in regard to race. These maps contain data from the American Community Survey (ACS) from 2021.

Map #1: Educational Attainment of Bachelor's Degree or Higher for Population 25 and Over (Hartford, CT) ACS 2021



Map #2: Total Population - Race (Hartford, CT) ACS 2021



Looking at these maps, there is an obvious gap between the affluent towns (West Hartford, Wethersfield, and Newington) that are mostly populated by Non-Hispanic or Latino Whites and Hartford that is a majority Hispanic/Latino and Black populated city. Map #1 shows us that Hartford, a majority Hispanic/Latino and Black populated city, has a lower educational attainment when it comes to those 25 and older while surrounding cities are shaded way darker which indicate a higher educational attainment. If Hartford was not highlighted on Map #1 (these maps outline Hartford to make it more visible and show the area), you would still be able to tell it apart from other cities which speaks volumes. Parts of the surrounding city of East Hartford are also heavily populated with Hispanic/Latino and Black residents. Map #1 shows that these areas also have a lower educational attainment. Research shows (as I explain in subsequent sections) that students and families of color typically have little to no access to educational resources that may be able to help them pursue post-secondary education. Accordingly, families of color may apply to college access programing, like Hartford Youth Scholars which is the college access program I will be focusing on in this study.

## **Literature Review**

### **Hispanic Student and Family Segregation**

Marginalized families of color tend to have fewer educational opportunities due to social and economic class. As the United States continues to become an even more diverse country with people who might not speak English or are Bilingual, it is important to take these people and families into consideration as well. Bilingual and Spanish-speaking families especially face these barriers and may also face an extra challenge when looking for educational opportunities for their children, with language being a potential third barrier. This is known as triple segregation, or the segregation of ethnicity/race, social class, and language.

In her article, *Overcoming Triple Segregation*, Patricia Gándara explains, “Similar to African Americans, Latinos are segregated by race/ethnicity as well as by poverty, and each type of segregation carries its risks. However, Latinos who are Spanish speakers are segregated, even isolated, by a third factor—language—and this carries a particular disadvantage with respect to schooling”, (Gándara 61). She goes on to explain that some challenges that both Latino and African American students may face when it comes to schooling are the lack of strong staff, negative stereotypes, lack of resources within the school, and more, but when it comes to Latino or English learning students, other obstacles that students may additionally face include poor communication between schools and families and students being linguistically isolated in their own schools. Gándara says about communication between families and schools, “My own research has shown that one of the most frustrating things for teachers who do not speak their students’ languages or understand their students’ cultures is their inability to communicate with parents. Unfortunately, there are relatively few Latino teachers in our public schools and even fewer bilingual teachers available to bridge this gap”, (Gándara 61). Not only are Latino students having to go through racial and socioeconomic segregation in their daily lives but these students are also facing this linguistic and even cultural segregation which is affecting them in school. Like Gándara says, there is a huge gap and need for Latino and bilingual students as representation and accommodation for bilingual students is essential and needed for their success. Not only that, but families of Latino and bilingual students may even feel isolated from the school community and not welcomed because of this linguistic segregation and may even feel like they have nothing to contribute because of it. For this reason, families may be less likely to participate in their child’s school and therefore, may be less involved in their child’s academic success.



This is further discussed in Mary J. Fischer and Marta Tienda's chapter in the book *Hispanics and the Future of America* edited by Marta Tienda and Faith Mitchell. Their chapter called *Redrawing Spatial Color Lines: Hispanic Metropolitan Dispersal, Segregation, and Economic Opportunity*, examines the implications of the Hispanic dispersal for segregation patterns, homeownership rates, employment etc. (Fischer & Tienda 101). They explain one implication of this is school segregation. Although integration and desegregation of schools was court-ordered in 1954 following the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Hispanics were not considered in school segregation litigation until 19 years later (Fischer & Tienda 120). This has further led to the segregation of Hispanic/Latino students. Fischer and Tienda further show us the barriers students of color in general face in school by explaining how schools in which minorities are disproportionately concentrated are poorer than predominantly white schools and tend to have less qualified teachers and fewer advanced placement classes which leads to Black and Latino/Hispanic students to score poorly on standardized testing (Fischer & Tienda 120). In their chapter, *Barriers to Educational Opportunities for Hispanics in the United States* (from the same book), Barbara Schneider, Sylvia Martinez, and Ann Owens get into barriers that may hinder Hispanic/Latino educational success. They explain how initial disadvantages of Hispanic students stem from parents' immigrant and socioeconomic status as well as lack of knowledge about the U.S education system (Schneider, Martinez & Owens, 179). This combined with other disadvantages mentioned earlier such as inadequate school resources and weak relationships with teachers due to cultural/linguistic differences contribute to the huge education gap between ethnic groups, specifically Hispanic students who have the lowest rates of high school and college degree attainment. Schneider, Martinez, and Owens further explain how teacher and student relationships are essential to a student's educational success by saying that students who

feel a sense of belonging in their classroom due to the way their teachers interact with them “are more likely to value and pursue academic or school-relevant goals and thus are more likely to participate in the classroom (Finn, 1989)” and that, “Students have to believe that the teacher respects and cares about their well-being. When this bond is not established or fully developed, students resist teachers both personally and academically, become detached from school, and consequently are less likely to succeed in school” (Schneider, Martinez & Owens, 198). Again, student and teacher relationships are important for student success. If teachers aren’t able to connect with their students on linguistic or cultural terms and if teachers’ perceptions of Hispanic students are based on stereotypes and are degrading, it can definitely contribute to the segregation of Hispanic/Latino students in schools.

### **College Access Programing**

College access programs are programs that are typically designed to help students from underrepresented backgrounds access post-secondary education by providing students with resources they may not typically receive. Tierney and Hagedorn’s (2002) definition of college access programs is "enhance[d] programs that supplement a school's regular activities and are aimed at low-income youth who otherwise might not attend college" (Tierney & Hagedorn, 2). Programs like these help reduce (to an extent) the existing gap between minority and underrepresented students by providing students with guidance and resources they may need to help them access post-secondary education. In Cherrel Miller Dyce, Chervil Albold, and Deborah Long’s article, *Moving From College Aspiration to Attainment: Learning From One College Access Program*, they conducted a survey in which collected data from 75 parents and high school students regarding how students and their families prepare for college. These parents and students expressed interest in applying to a college access and success program called Noble

Academy (pseudonym). According to the data collected, Dyce, Albold, and Long say that “Despite 75% of the families stating that they were not confident that they could support their student financially in attending college, an overwhelming 92% responded that they were confident they could support their student psych emotionally in their pursuit of college” (Dyce, Albold & Long, 162). Although 75% of parents weren’t confident, they could support their child’s pursuit of post-secondary education in financial terms, 92% stated that they were able to support their child emotionally which shows both child and parent motivation (Dyce, Albold & Long, 162). Not only that but it shows that college access providing parents with financial resources and information regarding school aid can be a huge help to these families who might not know this information. Although these programs cannot change the larger social inequities that exist and deny underserved students access to adequate academic preparation for post-secondary education, they most definitely serve as a bridge that connects students who have the opportunity to resources they may not typically receive.

Kenya L. Reese’s *Bridging the Educational Gap through College Access Programs* also explains how these programs serve to help students of color get information regarding college access. Reese explains how students of color, students with a lower socioeconomic status, and first-generation college students, typically have trouble accessing education as a whole because of existing disparities (Reese, 54). She mentions, just like Schneider, Martinez and Owens (2006), that these disparities may exist because teachers expect less from these students and do not relate or are familiar with issues they face because of these existing disparities. For her study, Reese examines the effect that a college access program called Collegiate Candidates, Inc. has on students who participate in the program. Collegiate Candidates, Inc. selected 26 high school senior, male students to participate in the program and students were students of color, came

from a lower socioeconomic background and identified as first-generation students (Reese, 55). Her study found that students who participated in the Collegiate Candidates, Inc. program demonstrated higher college application rates than their non-participant peers (Reese, 56). In regard to the programing itself, students gave programing satisfaction, usefulness, and relevancy rates of over 90%. Reese's study shows that programs like these are helpful to students obtaining post-secondary education. Not only that but students feel like programming like this is worthwhile and helpful. While again, these programs are only able to help students of color and of lower socioeconomic status to a certain degree, those who participate in these programs do benefit and because of these programs are able to change their lives through education.

### **College Access for Hispanic Families**

As mentioned earlier, Latino parents and students are more likely to face language barriers when looking for post-secondary resources and opportunities. Not only do parents face this linguistic barrier, but some also face cultural barriers that further create a gap between families and their ability to obtain these resources. In her article, *Engaging Latino Parents in Supporting College Pathways: Lessons From a College Access Program*, Susan Auerbach explains that although Latino/Hispanic families and students have educational aspirations, they are underrepresented in colleges and universities. She explains that "According to the Latino Eligibility Study, the single most important barrier to college access for Latino students in California is lack of instrumental knowledge of the steps needed to go to college. (Gándara, 1998,2002)" (Auerbach, 126). As mentioned earlier, families, specifically Hispanic/Latino families may not have knowledge or access to resources that inform them about the college process because of their socioeconomic status as well as lack of knowledge about the education system in the United States (Schneider, Martinez & Owens, 179). Her article discusses data she

gathered from observing meetings from the Futures & Families (F&F) college outreach program as well as data collected from surveys and interviews. Auerbach explains that most of the parents in the program were low-income or working-class Spanish-speaking Mexican immigrants (Auerbach, 129). Although they lacked knowledge of the college process and some didn't go to college themselves, Auerbach noted that many of these parents were supportive of their children, they just lacked knowledge which is what the program was for, to help them gain a better understanding of the college process for their child. One counselor that Auerbach talks to says that the point of "F&F was to "educate the parents about how to play the game" of college preparation" (Auerbach, 130). Auerbach also says that the principal of the school the meetings were taking place at said "We need to make sure that your parents have the same information that other parents do," referring to the school's more privileged parents" (Auerbach, 130). As we see, both the counselor and the principal were aware of the barriers that these parents may face when helping their child apply to colleges. The F&F program is designed to combat these barriers. According to data that Auerbach received from surveys and interviews she did with parents, parents said that the main source of their college information was from F&F meetings meaning that prior to attending the meetings, parents had little to no knowledge but the meetings were helping them obtain knowledge. Not only did the F&F program provide knowledge for families, but it also provided opportunities for families who attended a chance to create social networks with other participants. Auerbach says, "Like working-class parents of color in other programs and studies, F&F parents had little contact with the school, with college-educated professionals, or with fellow parents who had children at the school (Gándara, 1995; Lareau, 1989; Yonezawa, 1997)" (Auerbach 134). Parents prior to attending F&F meetings had limited access to their child's school, college-educated professionals, and other parents who are going

through similar experiences. F&F provides a setting for parents to interact with parents and professionals helping them. Not only that but the program also helped them better understand and be able to communicate with their children. At the end of her article, Auerbach provides recommendations for policy makers, schools, and educators who want to improve Latino parent engagement saying that they should speak parent's language. She explains that "F&F parents were more likely to participate in small discussions in their dominant language than in large, combined bilingual presentations (Auerbach, 140). She also suggests that helping parents move through the college planning process together as a group and acknowledging barriers to college access for Latinos can contribute to a greater sense of community (Auerbach, 141). Auerbach's study shows how Latino parents benefited by being a part of programs like F&F. Programs like F&F help diminish those barriers that are keeping Latino families and students from educational knowledge that can help them tremendously.

Another article that connects to the lack of information that Hispanic families have regarding college access because of language and cultural barriers is, *Nuestros Hijos van a la Universidad [Our Sons and Daughters Are Going to College]: Latina Parents' Perceptions and Experiences Related to Building College Readiness, College Knowledge, and College Access for Their Children—A Qualitative Analysis*, by Dominique Chlup et al. Their study, which was aimed to understand the perceptions and experiences of Latina mothers relating to getting information and resources to help their children pursue their post-secondary education, collected data from a focus group of 9 Latina parents. Through the data collected, Chlup et al. found that, similar to parents from Auerbach's (2004) study, parents lacked knowledge pertaining to the U.S school system and as a result "they described feeling uncomfortable interacting with the administrators and teachers at their student's school" (Chlup et al., 28). Again, as mentioned

before, lack of interaction between parents and teachers or administrators can impact student success. Parents also expressed how the absence of information between them and their child's school was due to language barriers. Chlup et al. say in regard to this, "There is a barrier between families that only speak Spanish and an education system that allows a lot of information to remain un-accessed" (Chlup et al. 30). The language barrier between parents and schools makes it difficult for parents to receive any information that may be beneficial to families. Another problem brought up by parents was that information given to students doesn't usually make it back to parents. Although schools and programs believe that information is making its way to parents, that is not always the case. Overall, in order to combat these issues, Chlup et al. explain that "To build true college awareness, college readiness, college knowledge, and college access, and thereby increase college enrollment, systems need to cultivate the kinds of social capital that not only gives families and students the keys to get them to the college door but the keys that allow students to be sustained and nurtured all the way through college (Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). Working with, not simply involving Latina/o families, is the key" (Chlup et al., 37). Building social capital can include providing parents with staff who are available to answer any questions or attend to family's needs and by providing information in parent's spoken languages so they better understand the information they and their child are receiving.

### **Hartford Youth Scholars**

Hartford Youth Scholars (HYS) is a nonprofit organization, located in Hartford, CT, that works with Hartford students starting in middle school and helps them get "to and through" college. HYS's mission is to give Hartford students the opportunity to change their lives through education and they do this by helping highly motivated Hartford students gain access to and graduate from best-fit high schools and colleges by providing students with academic

programming, college informational programming, and much more. One example of programming is HYS's Collegiate Academy (TCA) which students start the summer before their 7th grade until the student's summer before their 9th grade. The Collegiate Academy consists of 3 Summer Sessions which are five-week sessions during which classes meet five days a week from 8:00AM-4:00PM and Fall/Spring Academy in which students attend the academy on Saturdays from 9:00 AM -3:00 PM while attending their regular school. Saturday coursework is focused on SSAT test preparation and study skills that helps students with what they are currently learning at their regular schools. This programming is held at Trinity College's (Hartford, CT) campus which is a great way to get students exposed to a college campus setting and allows students to envision themselves at a college campus. The organization provides students, also called Scholars, and their families with academic and mentoring support for 10 or more years, beginning the summer before scholars enter 7th grade and continuing through scholars' college graduation. HYS envisions Scholars attaining their college degrees and then returning to work and live in Hartford to inspire and help to cultivate similar achievements in younger Hartford students. In order to apply to the program, students must reside in the city of Hartford and must be in 6th grade. Applicants have to fill out an application and have to fulfill requirements such as, attending an informational meeting, write a personal essay and answer short answer questions, provide teacher recommendations, provide transcripts which consist of students' 4th, 5th, & 6th grade report cards & standardized test scores, parent's tax documentation, and proof of residency. Students and parents also have to schedule an interview where they are both interviewed. The application typically opens up in the Month of October and admission decisions are distributed in May.

### **Methodology**



In order to understand how families navigated the Hartford Youth Scholars application, I took a qualitative approach in my study and conducted interviews with parents who applied to enroll their children into the Hartford Youth Scholars program. With a qualitative approach, I was able to get parents' beliefs and thoughts about their experience with navigating the HYS application process. Although I could have gathered this information with surveys or focus groups, I believe that doing interviews was appropriate for the research I was conducting because with interviews, I was able to get more details with parents about their experiences and I was able to get feedback from them as well (Creswell & Creswell, 188). I also interviewed a few parents who are currently not affiliated with the program either because their child did not get accepted into the program or because they withdrew from the program. Interviewing was a better approach overall because since it was a one-on-one interview, parents did not have to worry about any pressures that may come with not being affiliated with the program.

### **Participants**

In total, I interviewed 13 parents who applied to the Hartford Youth Scholars (HYS) program in the last 3 years. For my selection criteria, the only thing I required was for the parent to have applied in the last 3 years. I was initially going to focus on the last 5 years to give me a larger range of potential parents to work with but when I was discussing getting parent contacts from HYS, I was told that they only had data from the last three years, or admission cycles, because they switched data platforms which held parent and student information. In the end, recruiting parents was not as big of an issue as I originally anticipated. This was an appropriate selection criterion because it was the only information that HYS was able to provide me with and is also a more recent timeframe so parents were more likely to have a better recollection of their experience navigating the application.

Overall, I conducted 7 English interviews and 6 Spanish interviews. 2 of the 6 Spanish-speaking parents I interviewed identified as bilingual. 9 of the interviews I conducted were through Zoom, an online communication platform, and 4 were conducted in person at Trinity College's library. All of them except 2 had a child that was accepted into the program in the last three years and 1 of those 2 parents already had a daughter enrolled in the program prior to the last three years. 1 of the thirteen parents withdrew their child from the program due to lack of compliance with COVID-19 policies. In 2022, HYS implemented COVID-19 health and safety policies which required all scholars to be vaccinated due to virtual programming turning back into in-person programming. These policies were put into place for scholars and staff's safety and to be consistent with Trinity College COVID-19 policies, which is the home base for HYS programming. HYS did have medical and religious exemptions for these policies, but this parent did not meet them which led to their child being withdrawn from the program.

### **Data Collection**

In terms of data collection, I started by submitting a proposal for this study to the Trinity College Institutional Review Board (IRB). Since I was interviewing parents and there was a chance of individually identifiable data getting leaked, this step was absolutely necessary to do before beginning my data collection. Once I received approval from the IRB, I was able to begin my data collection. After I received approval, I asked HYS for parent contacts from the last 3 years. Once I received those contacts, which were over 300 of them with each admissions cycle having more than 100, I sent emails to parents which contained information about my study such as the location, incentive, my contact information) and a digital flyer asking for participation. I gave parents the option to meet in person on Trinity College's campus at the library or through Zoom and they were scheduled based on parent's availability and location preference. I also gave

parents the option to interview in English or Spanish again, depending on preference. To incentivize parents to participate in my study, I promoted a \$20 Walmart gift card. I provided parents who I interviewed on Zoom a \$20 Walmart gift card and those who I interviewed in person a \$25 Walmart gift card since meeting in Trinity College's campus in-person required a bit more effort from parents who were not too familiar with the campus and had to come on to campus with their own transportation. I sent out emails in both English and Spanish (see Appendix A & B) depending on the parent's language preference according to the contact sheet I received which contained not only the parent's name, language preference, and email but also included their child's name, their current status (Current, Denied, Did not Apply (finish application)) and their phone number. I sent out emails to all parents on the contact sheet, including those that did not finish the application. I was initially going to interview these parents as well because I wanted to get their insights as to why they didn't finish the application but none ended up reaching out so I was not able to interview any. I recruited parents based on who responded to my emails. I sent out a total of 3 emails to all parents with the second one being a follow up email and the third being a final reminder. Once parents selected a date, location, and language preference, I also sent parents an Informed Consent form which explained to parents what the aim of my research was, benefits of their participation in the study, any possible risks, and compensation they would receive (gift card) as well as contact information so they could contact me or my research supervisor if they had any questions. It also informed parents that because their responses may reveal their identities, they would be receiving a pseudonym to minimize any risk and keep their identities private. Parents signed these forms either in person or through a Google Form and I sent these in both English and Spanish depending on the language preference selected by the parent. Overall, 20 parents ended up reaching out about being

interested in participating but some either did not show up to the scheduled interviews or I ended up losing contact with those parents (they didn't respond to emails, texts, etc.). I ended up with 13 interviews total varying from 10-30 minutes each. My interview protocol (Appendix C) contained 11-13 open-ended questions regarding parent's application experience and the application and staff's accessibility. I created these questions with my research questions in mind. Parents who identified as English speakers were only asked the first 10 and last question/s since Questions 11 and 12 were aimed for Spanish-speaking and bilingual families since those questions were based on their unique experience being Spanish-speakers/Bilingual. These interviews were recorded on Zoom and through the Voice Memos app if they were in person. These recordings were deleted once I generated a transcript from them.

### **Data Analysis**

In order to analyze my data efficiently, I created transcripts using the audio of the interviews. When recording meetings/interviews through Zoom, the Zoom application also provided transcripts of those meetings/interviews. For the in-person interviews which were all in Spanish I used the application/website Sonix.ai which helped me transcribe these Spanish interviews and helped me translate the transcripts into English. After I got the transcripts, I cleaned them up and replaced all names with pseudonyms.

I then analyzed data collected from these interview transcripts using a codebook (Appendix D) that I have created which helped me recognize any recurring themes across all interviews. I used the application Atlas.ti to help me code and analyze my data. For my first round of deductive coding, while looking through these transcripts, I applied a general code to any quotes that stood out to me. For my second round of coding, I went in again and looked even

closer at the quotes I highlighted and applied a subcode, which are more descriptive codes. Applying these codes made it easy to identify any recurring themes across all interviews.

### **Positionality**

I do want to acknowledge my positionality while doing my research. I myself am a scholar that is at the time of my research, a part of the Hartford Youth Scholars program. I have been affiliated with this program for almost 9 years. My identity as a scholar and a scholar with exclusively Spanish-speaking parents led me to being interested in pursuing this research. My position as a bilingual (English & Spanish speaking), senior scholar about to graduate from college and the program helped me in regard to obtaining information from parents. While doing my research, I did note that before interviewing parents, when engaging in small talk and telling them I was a scholar myself, they did in a sense become more open and engaged in conversation. Not only that but also, were more comfortable in sharing their experiences, especially Spanish-speaking parents who I interviewed in person. I strongly believe that these parents especially were more open to conversation because of Spanish inclusion throughout my study (when recruiting parents, when communicating, when speaking to them, etc.). My aim during these interviews was to make parents as comfortable as possible so they would feel better and more open about sharing their experiences filling out the HYS application. While I do believe that my positionality benefited my study, I will say that there are possible limitations as well.

### **Limitations**

Again, like I mentioned I myself am currently affiliated with Hartford Youth Scholars. Most of these parents, except one, are also affiliated with the program. One possible limitation to this study is that because parents are affiliated with the program and are being interviewed by someone who is also not only affiliated with the program, but doing research to give HYS

feedback regarding the accessibility of the program's application , there is a possibility that parents might have given socially acceptable responses meaning that there is a possibility that parents didn't provide an accurate or honest reflection of what they experienced when filling out the application. I want to note that I am not disregarding what parents said throughout their interviews because everything they said was very insightful and many parents did provide critical feedback. Although this is the case, it is important to acknowledge this possible limitation. Another limitation that I did have while doing this research was the time. I only had a semester to do this research (September-December). I also did not receive IRB approval until October 3rd, 2023, which gave me even less time to do this research. Due to the lack of time, I was only able to interview and get perspectives from 13 parents. Again, while these interviews were insightful and valuable, in regard to the many other people who completed the application, it does not provide an accurate reflection of all families' experiences, since again, I only interviewed 13 parents. Also, during this research, I was not able to interview parents who didn't complete the application. While this would've been a very valuable insight, unfortunately, I did not receive any emails from parents who didn't finish the application. Parents who are not affiliated with the program were less likely to respond because they have no affiliation. One last limitation that I want to address is the lack of literature pertaining to parent experiences navigating college access program applications. While there is a lot of literature that has to do with student and parent experiences after being admitted to a college access program, I was not able to find any literature about pre-admittance experiences or insights. While this is the case, I believe this research could have significant contributions to this field since there is a lack thereof.

## **Findings**

### **Experiences Navigating the Hartford Youth Scholars Application**

Overall, my research shows that most parents had a positive experience with HYS's application process with only a few expressing feelings of difficulty and struggles throughout their experience. When asked about their overall experience, all but one said the process was easy and straightforward. When asking parents about their experience navigating and filling out the application, parents emphasized (for the most part) how easy and straightforward it was.

*Rebecca: "... I think [the process] was more relaxing because I already knew how it was going to be. They nominated him and, well, all the teachers sent his grades and all his things and he wrote an essay. I think it was more easier. I saw him calmer during the process and I remember that for the interview he was more relaxed".*

*Osian: "The application process. It is not that difficult; it is a very simple and very straightforward process. I like it actually".*

*Susana: "I thought the interview and the application and the filling out of the whole application was very, very good, I think [HYS]are doing very well".*

They described what they had to do when filling out the application and said things like having to go to meetings, doing interviews (both the parent and child), handing things in like teacher recommendations, physical forms, their child having to write essays, and transcripts. When prompted and asked if they faced any difficulties, a few parents expressed some kind of challenge or concern. Feelings of difficulty mentioned had to do with "outside factors" such as

the effects the COVID-19 pandemic had on families and the application and the lack of control from third-party application requirements. One parent, Lexi, said:

*“I would say because it was like, towards the end of Covid, our interview was over Zoom and because our son is a little more introverted, it's difficult to really get a sense of like who he is over Zoom and to engage at moments”.*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the usual in-person interviews turned into online interviews. Although other parents did mention their interviews taking place through Zoom, only Lexi expressed concern over how this might've impacted her son's interview. It is important to note that Lexi's son applied to the program but did not get accepted. Another challenge that was mentioned by parent Wanda was lack of control of third-party application requirements (teacher recommendations, immunization history from doctor, etc.). Wanda says:

*“... it just so happened that [her] teacher was out on medical leave so there was no one to fill out the form. They kept sending it again to the same teacher, saying, “We haven't gotten it, please turn it in”, but she wasn't there. So, then we had to like, do all this running around trying to get the principal to do it, trying to get another teacher to do it and that was really a hassle”.*

According to her, her daughter's teacher was on medical leave so because HYS staff were not aware, they kept sending her reminder emails but the teacher was not receiving them because she was gone. Under normal circumstances, teachers would receive emails asking for



student recommendations and teachers would write them and send them to HYS. A few parents also expressed feeling challenged by the application/process itself and difficulties and concerns mentioned were the application timeline and the intensity of the application. Regarding the application timeline, the application opens up in the month of October. From there families have until April to apply and don't get a decision about the child's acceptance until May. The application due dates change every year but the months that the items are due are pretty much the same throughout all years. Laney who brought up this difficulty says:

*“Well, I think for me the [most difficult part was] the timing of it (application process)...I got on it right away. So, we applied in the fall. We had met with [HYS Staff] and did like an orientation kind of meeting. But then, we didn't have an interview until March, so it was like 3 or 4 months later. That timeline made it harder for us to plan. Should I book her in a summer camp or make any other plans. Usually I have plans by then”.*

As we see, Laney and possibly other parents started filling out the application all the way in October and did not receive a date for an interview until March, which is a pretty big time gap. As mentioned earlier, parents also mentioned the intensity of the application being a concern. One parent who mentioned this when prompted or asked, *“Can you describe to me a specific example of any part of the process that you have found complicated or difficult?”*, was Melody who said:

*“Complicated I think, like I tell you, [was] making like different calls. Making sure I had the physical and if my son didn't have the medical physical, making an appointment with*

*the doctor, if you know what I mean. Then being able to call the school to be able to ask for all the records, like being able to get all this information took a little bit of time”.*

Another parent who mentioned the intensity as a concern was Mary who, when asked “How would you describe the application process?” replied:

*“The application process was really intensive. I was actually a little bit surprised that it was that intensive...sometimes there was a lot. It was a lot. The one thing that I thought about it as I was doing it, I said, well, this program is typically for families that are a little bit disadvantaged, and they may have like families that don't speak English and [speak a] second language and I wondered how they would navigate through it, and I wondered if families would actually give up because the application process it was so intense. I wondered [this] as I was completing [the application]. I'm like, this is pretty intense for families who need help, it's a lot, it's asking a lot from them. And what if they're not capable? Will they just quit and not finish it?”.*

When asked why she believed the application process was intense she said:

*“Well, there were a lot of essays which the kids had to write... [Students] had to buy in, because if they don't buy in, it won't work you know... So, I had to remind her (daughter) to write the essays and you know we had to get to the teacher, the teacher's input. And all of it, I think it's all good, don't get me wrong. I think what is required is all good, because I also don't want my kid to be in a program where the kids are not suited*

*for each other, meaning that they're not committed, they're not at the same commitment level. And so, when you get there, you're like, "Oh, this kid dropped out, that kid dropped out, that kid does not come in", you know, a bunch of disruptions instead of a steady state of kids that really wanna be there. So it's a twofold. It needs to be complicated enough to get people who just want to apply just to apply to not apply. But then you also want the people who really want to be there to not get frustrated and not stop the application. So I don't know how to explain it, but in a way I did it, and my daughter did it, but I had to support her...If there was someone who, if English is their second language, it might be difficult for them, to be honest. It was a lot, and I'm a college graduate, master's degree person...So let me preface this by saying it wasn't that we weren't capable, it just had me thinking about the other families who were not at our level... I was just like, well, if this is for families who had kids who, you know, are disadvantaged and have some struggles, how are they supposed to do this when it's taken this much out of me, who is quite capable?"*

Both Melody and Mary explained that the application had a lot of requirements/there was a lot to do. While both Melody and Mary explained this I found Mary's response to be very interesting. Mary seemed to take other families into consideration when sharing her response. While she says in the second quote that she was quite capable of filling out the application, she explained how while she was filling it out, she was thinking about other parents who might not be able to due to a possible language barrier. What was also interesting about her response was that while she described the application as "a lot" and "intense" because of all the steps involved, she also said that the application having multiple requirements and steps is a good thing because

it would insure that other families who apply are as dedicated and motivated as her and her child and describes it as a “two-fold”, or a “win-lose” situation.

### **Family Motivations and Perceptions of HYS**

When parents were asked about what HYS’s significance was to them and their motivations to apply to the program, 6 major themes/motivations appeared when I was analyzing transcripts. I do want to note that parents named various motivations throughout their interviews and that some quotes may have more than one motivator mentioned.

#### *Academic Help for Students*

When I asked parents about HYS’s significance and motivations for applying to the program, 9 out of 13 parents mentioned HYS’s academic support as a motivator in applying to the program. Susana who currently has a daughter in the program, explained during her interview that before applying to HYS, she wanted an extra reinforcement for her daughter in Math since she did not have a good teacher that year:

*Susana: “For me, for my family, [HYS] is like a support and reinforcement for my daughter's education... That's a phrase that she always says, “I'm learning”. Mostly in Mathematics... she feels more secure because right now she is in 8th grade but the math class she is in is all 9th graders... She is comfortable, why? Because she has a reinforcement here. Yes, that is an advantage...She (daughter) won't let me lie, there just wasn't a good math teacher (at her school). That's why we were more encouraged/attracted”.*

Just like Susana, Morgan also explains how she sees HYS as a supplementary program that would help her child in her regular area school:

Morgan: *“So for me, Hartford Youth Scholars is a supplementary program. You know that basically helps my student to be more versed in school. It's like a second tutor to me”*.

Laney also expresses similar motivations and perceptions to Susana and Morgan saying:

Laney: *“Hartford Youth Scholars is an enrichment opportunity for my middle schooler to get extra learning and extra support with middle school as well as navigating high school and college choices”*.

As we see from these three quotes, Susana, Morgan, and Laney expressed how HYS's academic support towards students in the program was a motivator for them. Not only that but these three parents also mentioned that the academic support that HYS provides students also helps them in their regularly attended area schools by describing HYS as a “second tutor” or “reinforcement”.

### ***Gateway to College***

Out of 13 parents, 7 mentioned HYS's support for Scholars wanting to attend college as a motivator in applying. When asked why she enrolled her child into HYS, Wanda explained:

Wanda: *“So I wanted something for him that would basically guide him to make sure that he was gonna be college bound. Because, you know, a lot of kids don't end up making it to college. So I wanted all the assistance I could get to make sure that wouldn't be his legacy, to make sure that he would make it to college. So the push for the program was there”.*

Wanda's message was very powerful and meaningful in the sense that she acknowledges that it can be difficult for students to make it to college. She expresses how she didn't want that to be the legacy of her child and for that reason, she made the effort of applying in order to possibly get an opportunity that would help and support her child toward that end goal of attending and graduating from a college/university. Delia explains how her oldest child who has been affiliated with HYS for a while has always wanted to go to college and says,

Delia: *“My daughter always said that she wanted to study, wanted to go to college and since the program is, they said it is for support and guidance, well, that attracted me. It was an after-school program as well, a program to help the kids academically”.*

Delia explained throughout her interview that the academic support that HYS provided her oldest daughter has led to her being able to attend college. Because of this she enrolled her other two children including her son who she enrolled three years ago. Aura also mentions something similar in terms of their children wanting to attend a college in the future and HYS being able to help their child achieve that goal:

*Aura: Well, [I applied] so my children could fulfill their dream. Their dream of getting to attend a university...[HYS] guides them (students) by motivating them in different ways, providing them with information. They advise them... [HYS] helps them get their scholarships so they can study, so they can study at a university or college”.*

As we see from these three quotes, parents' motivations to enrolling their child into HYS included getting an opportunity that would help their child by providing a gateway to college. HYS does this by providing academic support and by providing programming and resources that a Hartford youth may not typically receive.

### ***High School Success***

7 out of 13 parents identified high school preparation for their child as a motivator in applying to HYS. When asked why she enrolled her child into the program, Mary says:

*Mary: “Well, to me it's an opportunity for my child to gain additional knowledge and for her to be prepared for private secondary school”.*

As I mentioned earlier, before students attend high school, one main aspect of HYS's programming is The Collegiate Academy which occurs in the summer and on Saturdays while scholars attend their everyday area middle schools. On Saturdays, students are given coursework focused on SSAT test preparation and coursework that helps them in their regular schools. The SSAT test is a test that students are required to take if they plan on attending a private or boarding school. While some schools do not require SSAT scores in order to apply, some do. While not all scholars in HYS decide to apply to one of these schools, these private schools can

provide their children with the education and opportunity of a lifetime. Because of this, many Scholars do give applying to one a shot even though getting into one is not guaranteed. Even if students do not get accepted into one of these schools, what they learn in the program will still help them regardless, whether they attend a private school or not. Lucia mentions how the possible opportunity of her child being able to attend one of these schools was a motivator for her:

*Lucia: "It came to my attention that there was the possibility for my son to maybe go to a high school, a private school. And especially all the hustle and bustle of college applications, it's supposed to help in that (HYS)".*

As we see, a motivator in parents enrolling their child into the program was for their child to receive help that would help them in their high school careers. That component of High School Success is important because just like HYS provides a gateway to college, HYS also provides students with the possible opportunity to apply and get into a private/boarding school. Again, even if students do not get in, what they learn throughout their time at the Collegiate Academy still helps them during their high school careers.

### ***Support System and Resources***

Out of 13 parents, 6 of them identified the support and resources HYS provides scholars with as a motivator in applying to the program. Rebecca explains that she enrolled her child because of the support and resources that HYS provides students with:



*Rebecca: "Hartford Youth Scholars has helped Ben to focus more on what he wants. Thinking about his future and [HYS] is helping me a lot because he goes to a school in Hartford that does not... I think he lacks a lot of preparation and they are helping them in a lot in the things that normal schools fail to teach...and you know that program helps you. It is always behind you. They never leave you. They are always on top of everything academic... It's kind of a great support. I saw it as a great support that he wanted for himself and to know that HYS was going to be behind him".*

I do want to note that Rebecca has an older daughter that is enrolled and has been affiliated with the program for quite some time. She mentions throughout her interview that because she was already affiliated with the program, she knew of the support that HYS provides scholars with and because of that, she enrolled her child into the program. Delia

*Delia: "I thought, well, my daughter always said that she wanted to study, wanted to go to college and since that program is, they said it is for support and guidance, well, that attracted me. It was an after-school program as well, a program to help the kids academically. That appealed to me because it was an aid to their education and I have always thought that the education of my children is something very important for me".*

In this quote, Delia is talking about her oldest daughter who has been affiliated with the program for a while now. Even though this is the case, this motivation is still very relevant to the other motivations of other parents. It is safe to assume that she enrolled her younger son for this exact same reason three years ago.

### ***Making Connections Within HYS***

When asking parents what motivated them to apply to the program, 3 out of the 13 parents I interviewed mentioned their child having the opportunity to connect with other motivated youth and staff as a motivator in applying. When asked why she enrolled her child into the program, Laney said:

Laney: *“She would be connected to a network of other high achieving kids in the city.”*

When asked how she found out about this network, Laney said that she looked at the website and talked to her daughter's teachers. Through researching, Laney was able to find out about the network that her child would be connecting with if her child got accepted into the program. Similar to Laney, Susana also said that a motivator in her enrolling her child into the program was that her child would have the opportunity to socialize with other youth her age:

Susana: *“So we wanted her to expand/open up and be able to socialize more, to see other children of the same age and share, ask questions, talk a little bit, because we saw her as not wanting to have much interaction. Even with us I can say. And here, she has had that opportunity”.*

Susana explains that prior to applying to HYS, her child was having a hard time socializing with others. In this quote, Susana explains how she wanted her daughter to talk and share ideas with other students her age and that after applying into the program and being accepted, her child has had the opportunity to do so. Mary explains how a motivator for her was

for her child to have the opportunity to connect with professionals, or HYS staff, who are working to help them succeed:

*Mary: "I also like the fact that the program follows them for 10 years and they can work on internships and just staying connected with professionals who are all working for their benefit. I think all of that combined was what made us attracted to the program".*

As we see in these quotes, parents were motivated to apply and enroll their child into the Hartford Youth Scholars program because they wanted their child to expand and connect with other motivated youth and to connect with staff who are working to support them in their endeavors.

### ***Care in Minority***

Out of 13 parents, 2 of them mentioned HYS's support of minority students as a motivator in applying. When asked what attracted her to enroll her child into the program Morgan explained how the possibility of her child having Black and Hispanic classmates and teachers teach her child in the program attracted her to apply to the program:

*Morgan: "...we realized that HYS puts care in minority...There was a lot of blacks and Hispanics, and even the teachers and everything. So that was one thing that we were really happy about...Knowing that we're going have black tutors for our kids, someone that really understands our background. So that was really what made us more interested".*

According to HYS's website, in the 2019-2020 school year, scholars in the program self-identified as 65% Black, 22% Hispanic, 7% Multi-Racial, 4% Asian, and 2% White. Morgan explains in the quote above how the help that HYS provides the majority Black and Hispanic students in the program as well as having teachers that understand their child's background because they are also Black enticed her to apply to the program. Similar to Morgan, Osian explained how HYS helps minority youth in Hartford and explains that HYS helps them by giving students the resources needed to have a shot at attending a college or university:

*Osian: "They're helping the minority people in Hartford to get into college. They help if we have any financial difficulties, they help us to get our children into college and get that necessary fund (financial aid) to get into the college. They want all minorities who come from various countries to get a college degree".*

As we see in these two quotes, both parents emphasized how HYS puts care in minority. While Morgan explains by saying that HYS provides students with a setting where they'll be able to interact with other students and teachers who might better understand each other's background, Osian explains how HYS helps give minority youth the resources needed to succeed academically.

These 6 main themes that came up across various interviews, show that parents enrolled their child into the HYS program to help them academically and to place them in a diverse setting where they are able to make connections and receive resources that will ultimately lead them to the path of success in both their high school and college careers. All of these motivations connect to the literature mentioned (Reese (2008), Dyce, Albold & Long (2012)) because these

families were motivated to apply to HYS, a college access program, in order to provide their child with resources and information they may not have been exposed to.

### **Accessible and Bilingual Staff**

According to parent interviews, applying was easy for English, bilingual, and Spanish speaking parents because of accessible, supportive, and bilingual staff. All parents (13) were content and satisfied with staff accessibility and help.

### ***Supportive and Accessible Staff***

When all parents were asked about staff accessibility and communication, all parents I interviewed explained that staff were both supportive and accessible. When asked, Lexi said:

*Lexi: "I thought it (staff accessibility) was great... the person who was involved in the process, she was very accessible, answered any questions that I had. There was a part where we weren't able to get a transcript and she was doing her due diligence to make sure that we were able to attain those things. The communication was very good".*

As we see in this quote, although Lexi explained having a bit of a bump throughout the application process, in which she struggled to obtain a transcript, she explains how HYS staff were able to help her overcome this challenge and how HYS were good at communicating and answering any questions she had. Many parents also mentioned HYS helping them with any questions they might've had, including Rebecca:

*Rebecca: "Whatever doubts you may have, they are there. They are very attentive and attentive to all the doubts you may have...[HYS staff] helped us a lot if we had any*

*questions. They would send us an email and they would ask us if we had any doubts. And me, well, I'm a mom who likes to be there asking questions and I don't do anything if I'm not sure so I don't make mistakes. Yes, and they are very kind in that regard. They aren't bothered. They are always there. "If you have any questions, please contact me". In other words, in that sense, no, I have no complaints."*

Rebecca explains in this quote that staff were attentive to parents and any concerns that they may have. She explains how she liked asking a lot of questions to ensure that she filled out the application correctly. Even though this is the case, she says that staff were not bothered by her asking "too many" questions and even encouraged her to raise any questions or concerns she may have. Another parent who mentioned HYS's ability to help parents with any questions they might've had was Wanda, who said:

*Wanda: "Oh, [HYS staff were] really, really good, very informative, very helpful. [They were] amazing. Honestly, [they were] really amazing...Usually with the questions, we were able to get what we needed through [HYS staff]. [They were] pretty on top of it and very responsive. We were able to get what we needed within the time frame we had".*

Wanda, similar to other parents, explained how HYS staff were informative and were helpful throughout the process. She says that staff were able to answer her questions and that staff were responsive. She also mentioned that staff were able to get back to her in time with any questions she had and because of that, she was able to get what she needed before any deadlines

closed up. Again, just like Rebecca and Wanda, Mary also explained how staff answered her questions and even how they got back to her if they were not able to help her out at that moment:

*Mary: "Talking to the program director...Oh, my God. she's like the nicest, anything I ask her, as soon as I asked, if she didn't know the answer, she would find an answer for me, or connect me with someone who knows the answer. So families may not know that cause they may be afraid to call, like if they're afraid to call and have conversation, then they wouldn't know that this help is there. But there wasn't anything I called or email or asked her for that she didn't get back to me right away immediately. I had to stop her and go "Oh, my God, you're too good". She's so nice and so accessible".*

In this quote, Mary seems very satisfied with the staff at HYS that she says she had to stop the staff to tell them how amazing they were at parent communication and support. Many parents spoke highly of HYS and staff and were very thankful of the support and help that they provided throughout their experience applying to the program. Mary explains that although there were times where staff were not able to help her immediately, they always got back to her in a timely manner which was appreciated. Susana expressed her gratitude towards staff throughout her interview because of how helpful they were throughout her experience applying to the program. She mentions that staff were supportive and encouraged her throughout the process as well:

*Susana: "Well, if I could also mention [HYS staff], who also gave us examples and encouraged us by saying, "Yes, cheer up/stay motivated! She has this opportunity, try to*

*support her” (daughter). He talked to us a lot about the program and he has been supporting us as well, but I think that would be another thing. There was a lot of availability and a lot of encouragement as if to say, “Hey, make an effort for [your daughter].” He invited us [to apply] quite a lot, he was very kind”.*

Susana explains how staff weren’t only accessible, but also encouraged her to apply and throughout the process because they knew it would be a great opportunity for her child. She says that the staff who encouraged her were kind and kept her motivated. As we see from these quotes, parents spoke highly and positively about HYS and the support that staff provided them while applying to the program. No parents had any problems throughout their experience applying in regard to staff accessibility and communication.

### ***Bilingual Staff***

When talking to Spanish-speaking (4) and bilingual parents (2), they were all satisfied with staff accessibility in regard to their own experiences when applying. The 4 Spanish-speaking parents who I interviewed were all satisfied with staff’s help and accessibility when filling out the application, specifically, they were content with the help they received from bilingual staff. When asking Susana about communication between her and staff when completing the application, she said:

*Susana: “... thank you (HYS) for including Spanish. Because in Hartford, we are starting to see a big Spanish-speaking population and it seems to me like an extra help. We are able to express ourselves more during the interviews and when filling out the application in Spanish. We appreciate it as well”.*



In this quote, not only does Susana recognize that Hartford as a city is getting more and more diverse with a growing Spanish population, but she also is grateful for staff including Spanish in the application. When I asked her if she thought the application was suitable for Spanish-speakers she said:

*Susana: “Yes, yes. I think that it was very optimal. I believe it was more than 50% in Spanish and the rest, obviously, because they know that the student is bilingual, they had the questions in English, but they did consider the parents with the Spanish”.*

Susana explains that over half of the application was in Spanish and the rest was English. She says that because youth who apply are typically bilingual, they are able to understand those aspects of the applications, or the ones that students are required to fill out and turn in, for example, the essays/prompts. She acknowledges that HYS was considerate of Spanish-speaking families when making the application. Another parent who mentioned the application being bilingual was Aura. When asked if she could provide an example of a part of the process that she found simple she said:

*Aura: “Well, mainly as I said, the bilingual application, well, in my language. It was easy for me because they gave it to me in my language. Also, the representative who helped me... He is bilingual, he speaks Spanish and he helped me with all my doubts and he advised me well, yes he advised me, he was the one who helped me”.*

In this quote, Aura says the application was easy to fill out because it was in Spanish. Not only that, but she also says that the HYS staff who helped her throughout the process was bilingual which advised and helped her throughout her time filling out the application. Another parent who mentioned bilingual staff was Delia. When asked if she thought the application was suitable for Spanish-speakers and if she faced any language barriers, she said:

*Delia: "...they sent me information about the program in Spanish because when I said that I speak Spanish, they sent me the information in Spanish... No, I didn't feel that there were barriers because they have people who speak Spanish. The last time I applied with my son, the staff also spoke Spanish and I felt comfortable, they always treat me very well, with respect. I feel that there were no language barriers".*

Delia, who is a Spanish-speaker, explains how HYS made information accessible to her by providing it in Spanish. She also explains in this quote and throughout her interview that she was able to receive help from bilingual staff when filling out the application and that it made her experience easy and comfortable. Prior to asking her the questions I just mentioned, when I asked Delia what the main language she spoke at home was, she said:

*Delia: "Spanish. I speak Spanish, my husband speaks Spanish as well and that's why this program has been very helpful to me, because I don't speak much English, so this program has always spoken for us, for my children's schools. They help me with interpretation, with everything school related".*

Although this quote does not necessarily have to do with the application itself, it shows how considerate HYS is with Spanish-speaking families and shows how inclusive and helpful they are with Spanish-speaking families. It very well shows that HYS have always taken these families into consideration not only in programming but during the application process as well.

### **What Can Hartford Youth Scholars Improve?**

While most parents had a good experience filling out the application, some parents expressed challenges that they had throughout the way and provided feedback in regard to these challenges. While some of these difficulties mentioned did not have to do with their own experience, they are still valuable feedback and can help HYS make the application and process more accessible than parents already say it is.

#### ***Having more Bilingual Staff***

In terms of bilingual staff, although Melody had had no problems filling out the application in regard to language since she is bilingual, she did mention an experience that her father, a Spanish-speaker, had when filling out the application for her sister:

*Melody: "In my case I had no problem, I understood perfectly, and I speak English, but I think that they do need more staff that speaks Spanish. I believe there is only one person...who speaks Spanish... My sister is also in the program. My dad doesn't speak English, so it (the application process) was a little difficult for him. Also, the hours/slots for the interviews in Spanish were limited because there was only one person that spoke Spanish".*

Melody mentions that although there is one Spanish-speaking staff, it was still difficult for her father to have a good experience filling out the application, specifically because of the lack of Spanish-speaking staff. She specifically expresses this when she says that hours/slots for Spanish interviews were limited. Although the Spanish-speaking parents I interviewed did not mention anything regarding limited slots for interviews or lack of accessibility to bilingual staff when they talked about their experience, it certainly does not mean that parents did not come across this challenge/barrier. Having more Spanish speaking staff could prevent limited times for Spanish-speaking parents to interview. Having more bilingual staff can also be beneficial to families and can lead to an even more inclusive setting, application process, and program.

### ***Less Intense Application***

Like mentioned earlier, both Melody and Mary mentioned the application requiring a lot of things which made their experience a bit challenging. Again, Melody said:

*Melody: "...making like different calls. Making sure I had the physical and if my son didn't have the medical physical, making an appointment with the doctor, if you know what I mean. Then being able to call the school to be able to ask for all the records, like being able to get all this information took a little bit of time".*

Similar to her, Mary says,

*Mary: "The application process was really intensive. I was actually a little bit surprised that it was that intensive...sometimes there was a lot. It was a lot. The one thing that I thought about as I was doing it, I said, well, this program is typically for families that are*

*a little bit disadvantaged... I wondered if families would actually give up because the application process, it was so intense...there were a lot of essays which the kids had to write... [Students] had to buy in, because if they don't buy in, it won't work you know."*

Both Melody and Mary explained how the application required a lot from families who wanted to apply. While some parents didn't explicitly mention it, as mentioned earlier, parents also had trouble with obtaining teacher recommendations, medical forms, and other requirements that they had to turn in. While these things required a third-party to fill out and turn in, it is still something that HYS themselves require and expect from families. While some of these things are necessary for HYS to obtain, a recommendation would be for HYS to see if there is any way to make the application "less intense" by maybe lessening what is required from parents and students. Like Mary explained earlier, this situation is very much a "two-fold". While it can be hard for parents to obtain these things, it is also a good way to ensure that motivated parents and students are enrolling.

### ***Resources for Denied Students***

While this next recommendation doesn't necessarily have to do with after application, I think it is still important to include. As I mentioned earlier, one parent who I interviewed had a son who was denied. Although she had a good experience filling out the application, one thing that she wanted to share regarding feedback was for HYS to provide resources or some kind of support for students who were denied from the program. Lexi says:

*Lexi: "I would say that there are similar programs like Hartford Youth Scholars and there's still an application process but it's not like a singling out of kids. It's like the*

*program gives similar things and so I think it would be great like if a student is not accepted into the program, that there are referrals to other similar programs, so that that person, especially if it's supposed to be supporting, and again, from my understanding supporting young people in the inner city, that there is like resources if they're not able to be a part of this particular program so saying, here are some other great programs that could do the same thing.”*

As mentioned earlier, a lot of students apply to the Hartford Youth Scholars program every year. Unfortunately to limited funding and space, HYS is only able to accept 30 students a year. While this is the case, it is important, as Lexi says, to not single out students who are looking for opportunities that can benefit them. Although HYS isn't able to accept all students who apply into the program, it can be comforting to parents and students if HYS provides information regarding other programs or initiatives in or around Hartford that are able to help their child. Again, while this isn't technically something regarding the application or process, student acceptance or rejection is the last step of the whole process.

### **Other Findings**

The findings I am about to share are under this “other findings” section because, although they did not specifically pertain to the application process itself, which was the focus of my research, I think that these findings contribute to the need for college access programs and tie in with existing literature.

#### ***“Push for the Program”***

Throughout these interviews many parents recognized the significance of Hartford Youth Scholars program and the need for programming like it. When mentioning that HYS is a gateway to college Wanda explains that:

*Wanda: "... I wanted something for him that would basically guide him to make sure that he was gonna be college bound. Because, you know, a lot of kids don't end up making it to college. So I wanted all the assistance I can get to make sure that wouldn't be his legacy, to make sure that he would make it to college. So the push for the program was there".*

As we see in literature (Reese (2008), Dyce, Albold & Long (2012)) parents and students enroll into college access programming like Hartford Youth Scholars in order to ensure that their child has an opportunity to obtain a post-secondary education. Prior to this, Wanda told me about her daughter wanting to enroll into the program because of her brother's experiences:

*Wanda: "So my son is in his eleventh grade, and my daughter is in seventh grade. My son, basically kind of guided the way for my daughter, cause I really wasn't gonna put my daughter into it because we had actually moved out of the area, but because she was so familiar with what her brother did, and she went to the matriculation ceremony. She was just loving the feedback from him, and with the reviews that he was given about the program....So when she went to the ceremony program with my son, she asked them, can she do it? And they said, "Sure, fill out the application", and she had to go up there and advocate for herself to say why she wanted to do it and everything. And then they said,*

*“Go ahead, fill out the application”. She did the application, and she did her interview, and she was in”.*

As Wanda states, her daughter had to push and advocate for herself to be considered as an applicant into the program because she wasn't a Hartford resident. When her older brother applied to the program, he qualified because he was a Hartford resident. From this quote, we see that Wanda's son's feedback on the program motivated her to want to pursue it, even though she wasn't eligible. This experience shows just how valuable programming like HYS is to students who are looking to pursue opportunities that can help improve their chances of academic success whether it be in high school or college. Delia also expresses how beneficial the program is when asked if there was anything she wished was different pertaining to the application process:

*Delia: “... I don't know if this (feedback) [answers your question], but I would like them to accept more children. Have more spots for more children in the program, because for me this program is very good, but I feel that the quota is very limited. So I would like them to open more spots for more children...I would like to see it (HYS) advertised more, like this opportunity to be expanded to more children so they can have the opportunity, because sometimes parents want opportunities like this, but we don't know that they exist or that they do exist. So I would like there to be more information about the program, I would like the schools to give more information or all the public schools to give information about the program...”*



Delia recognizes that HYS only accepts a limited number of students each year (30). As mentioned before, although programs like HYS aim to help disadvantaged youth, due to the demand of these programs and due to the lack of resources, like funding, programs such as HYS are not able to accept all who apply. Delia's quote shows that there is a need for programming like HYS. Delia has three children enrolled in HYS, with one of her children being in college and the other two currently attending a boarding school. Delia has seen how helpful the program has been to her children's academic and educational careers. She emphasizes that HYS should be expanded to other children because of how good of an opportunity it is. Literature (Schneider, Martinez & Owens (2006), Reese (2008), Dyce, Albold & Long (2012)) shows that these programs provide great resources to youth who typically do not receive it and that these programs have good outcomes for those who have the opportunity to participate in them.

### ***A Different System***

Literature (Auerbach (2004), Chlup et al. (2018)) shows that parents, specifically immigrant families, may have less access to academic and educational resources due to their lack of knowledge pertaining to the U.S. educational system. While interviewing parents, both Susana and Delia expressed how HYS was a big help in providing them with resources that have helped their children obtain a post-secondary and private school education. Susana says in regard to this:

*Susana: "Since ten years ago, [HYS] has been a great support. As a mom, I want my children to be better. And well, I come from another country and here the [education] system is different. [HYS] helped me with [my daughter] and now with my son... it is helping me a lot because he goes to a school in Hartford that does not... I think he lacks*

*a lot of preparation and they are helping them in a lot in the things that normal schools fail to teach”.*

Susana acknowledges that HYS has been helpful to her because she comes from another country where the educational system differs from the educational system here in the United States. Although she doesn't explicitly say, from what she says in this quote and throughout her interview, HYS has been able to provide her and her children with resources and opportunities they may not be familiar with, especially Susana since she comes from another country. Just like the literature (Auerbach (2004), Chlup et al. (2018)) mentions, college access programming provides immigrant families with resources that they may not be aware of because they are not familiar with the education system. Delia currently has two children enrolled in the program with her oldest daughter being a senior in college and her son being in middle school, who is starting the process of applying to high schools, both public and private/boarding. It's also interesting to note that Susana mentions her son receiving help from HYS that “normal schools” fail to teach. Similar to Susana, Delia also explained that she comes from a different country where the education system and college process is different. Delia says:

*Delia: “For me, HYS is a good program that assists children in their education...I have three children in this program and my daughter, the oldest, is already in her 4th year in college and for me it has been a fundamental help because it has been a guide for the whole process of her education. I personally think that without all the support of the Hartford Youth Scholars program, I think that for me, it would have been very difficult or maybe, I think impossible, because I am a person that only went to school till 9th grade.*

*In my country and here in the United States, the process of everything about education and the process of applying, the process to get involved in colleges/universities is different. And as I tell you, I have three children and all three are in the program and my oldest daughter went to boarding school and my two younger children are also in boarding schools and this was all thanks to the Hartford Youth Scholars program, which helped them, guided them, supported them in the whole process and it's helping me a lot. I feel it is a great, great help for me, for my family, for my children, for my children's education".*

This powerful quote from Delia not only shows the meaningful impact that programs like Hartford Youth Scholars has on families but more specifically, shows the impact they may have on immigrant, Spanish-speaking families who might have not had these resources for themselves growing up. Delia says that without HYS's support and help, it would have been difficult or, as she says, even impossible for her children to have the educational experiences they have today. Literature (Auerbach (2004), Chlup et al. (2018)) shows how much of an impact college access programs have on first-generation students and immigrant families. As we see from these quotes from Susana and Delia, HYS was able to help them, as immigrants, navigate the U.S. education system and the college process with their older daughters.

### **Discussion**

Overall, according to most parents, the Hartford Youth Scholars application process was straightforward and accessible. Only a few parents expressed feeling challenged by the application due to outside and application factors. If we recall Maps #1 and #2, Hartford, a city with a majority Hispanic/Latino and Black population, has a low educational attainment when it

comes to a bachelor's degree or higher. We see on Maps #1 and #2 how cities surrounding Hartford, which have a higher White population, have higher levels of educational attainment. There is an obvious gap between the White population living in these surrounding affluent towns vs. the majority Hispanic/Latino community living in Hartford. To give students in Hartford a better chance against these odds, parents and students choose to enroll their children into college access programs, such as HYS, in order for their children to succeed academically despite this educational gap. Parent responses regarding their motivations and their views of the HYS program indicate that parents choose to enroll their children for this exact reason. Parents were satisfied with the accessibility of the HYS application and staff. I also heard from Spanish-speaking parents that the overall process was easy and straightforward due to the language inclusion and bilingual staff. It is interesting to note that one English-speaking parent and one Bilingual parent did express concern about accessibility for Spanish-speaking parents. Nonetheless, Spanish-speaking parents interviewed did not mention any language associated barriers when applying. It is also interesting to see how parent views of HYS correlate to literature that exists on college access programs. Although, as I mentioned before, there is little to no literature about parent experiences on application processes before being admitted into a college access program, this research is an important contribution to this field and is definitely an area for future research.

### **Conclusion**

Taking everything into account, both literature and parent experiences, college access programs are vital in helping families of color. While families of color have a harder time getting access to educational resources that may help their child academically, in the present and the future, it is important to recognize barriers that may prevent families from obtaining these

resources and knowledge. While barriers have to do with one's race and socioeconomic status, it is important to remember that linguistic barriers exist as well. This research shows just how important programs like Hartford Youth Scholars are to parents and students looking to further improve their child's/their education and academic success. This research also shows just how vital it is for programs to have accessible and bilingual staff. Having staff that are ready to help parents when needed and having staff that is able to communicate with other families who may not speak English can help lessen the gap between these programs and families looking for opportunities for their child.

### **Next Steps**

As mentioned in the "*What Can Hartford Youth Scholars Work On?*" section in my findings, in order to make programs more inclusive and accessible, HYS and other programs can implement bilingual staff in programs and programming to reach parents who might not speak English. Depending on the location and community of the program, knowing the community and their needs can help when hiring potential staff. Also, as mentioned, some parents described the application as having a lot of steps which could make it "intense". While there are benefits and consequences to having an application that requires a lot, it is important for programs to take this into consideration and find ways to support parents or to make the application less difficult by requiring less. Like I mentioned before, while the decision part of applying to a program is the very last "step" in the process, those who do not make it in should not be disregarded. It is important to acknowledge families that did not get into the program. Many parents who got denied from the program, just like the ones who got in, have aspirations for their children. While it is acknowledged that not all of them are able to get in because of limited funding or space, providing resources to students such as a referral or information about other programs in the area

that can help students academically or college access can make a big difference to those who did not get accepted. It shows and informs these students that there could still be opportunities that will help them in their education.

Regarding future research, I believe that the area of parent experiences navigating program applications or solicitations should be further researched. Again, there is a lack of literature when it comes to this area. Another topic that should be further investigated is how families who got denied from college access programs dealt with possible implications that may come with being denied. Knowing these possible implications and experiences of parents who got denied can be important in seeing how needed these college access programs are. Again, I was only able to interview 13 parents total. If I were able to expand on my research I would not only interview more parents about their experiences filling and completing the HYS application but I would also expand my research to those that did not finish the application. I believe that their insights are vital to seeing what barriers may exist and why they didn't complete the application.

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[disparities#:~:text=More%20than%20one%20in%20four,and%2013%25%20for%20Black%20residents.](https://www.ctdata.org/acs-racial-and-ethnicity-disparities#:~:text=More%20than%20one%20in%20four,and%2013%25%20for%20Black%20residents.)



## Appendix A

### Email and Flyer to Parents (English):

Good Evening!

My name is Maria Vicuña, and I am a student researcher at Trinity College. I am also a Cohort 9 Scholar over at Hartford Youth Scholars. I am doing a study on families' Hartford Youth Scholars application process experience and would love your input! My goal for this study is to help Hartford Youth Scholars see what they are doing well and what they can work on to make the application process a smooth one for future scholars applying. It does not matter if you finished the application or not, I would love to hear your thoughts!

Please consider taking part in this study by participating in a 15-30-minute interview. Interviews will be conducted in person over at Trinity College's library or through Zoom. To thank you for your time, you will be given a \$20 Walmart gift card after the interview. If interested or if you have any questions, please feel free to email me at xxxxxx@xxxxx or text me at (xxx)xxx-xxxx.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear back from you!

Best,

Maria Vicuña  
Trinity College '24 | Educational Studies  
HYS Cohort 9

**ARE YOU A PARENT OR  
GUARDIAN WHO HAS  
PARTICIPATED IN  
HARTFORD YOUTH  
SCHOLARS'  
APPLICATION  
PROCESS?**

**Consider  
participating in a  
15 . 30 minute  
interview to help  
make the  
application  
process more  
accessible for  
future applicants**

You will be asked questions about your application process experience and questions regarding how HYS can better the process and make it more accessible for families.

**RECEIVE A \$20  
WALMART GIFT  
CARD FOR  
PARTICIPATING!**

**Interviews will take place in Trinity College's Library or through Zoom.**

**Email  or text  if interested in participating or for more information!**

## Appendix B

### Email to and Flyer to Parents (Spanish):

¡Buenas Tardes!

Mi nombre es María Vicuña y soy estudiante del Trinity College. También soy parte del Cohorte 9 en Hartford Youth Scholars. Estoy haciendo un estudio sobre las experiencias de las familias en el proceso de solicitud de Hartford Youth Scholars y me encantaría recibir su opinión. Mi objetivo para este estudio es ayudar a Hartford Youth Scholars a ver qué están haciendo bien y en qué pueden trabajar para que el proceso de solicitud sea sencillo para familias que quieran presentar una solicitud en el futuro. No importa si terminaste la solicitud o no, me encantaría escuchar su opinión!

Considere participar en este estudio participando en una entrevista de 15 a 30 minutos. Las entrevistas se realizarán en persona en la biblioteca del Trinity College o mediante Zoom. Para agradecerle por su tiempo, se le entregará una tarjeta de regalo de Walmart de \$20 después de la entrevista. Si está interesado, no dude en enviarme un correo electrónico a xxxxxxxx@xxxxxx o enviarme un mensaje de texto al (xxx)xxx-xxxx. ¡Gracias por su consideración!

Atentamente,

María Vicuña  
Trinity College '24 | Educational Studies  
HYS Cohort 9

**¿ES USTED UN PADRE O  
GUARDIÁN QUE HA  
PARTICIPADO EN EL  
PROCESO DE  
SOLICITUD DE  
HARTFORD  
YOUTH  
SCHOLARS?**

**Considere  
participar en una  
entrevista de 15 a  
30 minutos para  
ayudar a que el  
proceso de  
solicitud sea más  
accesible para  
futuros  
solicitantes.**

Se le harán preguntas sobre su experiencia en el proceso de solicitud y sobre cómo HYS puede mejorar el proceso y hacerlo más accesible para las familias.

**¡RECIBIRÁS UNA  
TARJETA DE  
REGALO  
WALMART DE  
\$20 POR  
PARTICIPAR!**

**Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en la biblioteca del  
Trinity College o por Zoom.**

**Envíe un correo electrónico a  o  
envíe un mensaje de texto a  si está  
interesado en participar o para obtener más información.**

## Appendix C

### Interview Protocol:

#### English:

- What is Hartford Youth Scholars (HYS) to you?
- When did you first learn about HYS?
- When you and your family first heard about HYS, what attracted you to apply to the program?
- How would you describe the application process? What were the steps involved?
- Can you describe a specific example of any part of the process that you found particularly simple?
- Can you describe a specific example of any part of the process that you found particularly complicated?
- Is there anything you wish was different when you and your child applied to HYS?
  - Application-wise, information-wise, etc.?
- Did you complete the application process?
  - If not, why so?
- How would you describe the communication between your family and HYS when applying?
- How helpful was HYS when working on the application process? Were staff accessible?
- Are you bilingual or Spanish-speaking?
  - If so...
    - Do you believe the application process was bilingual-friendly/Spanish speaker-friendly?
    - Were there any issues concerning language barriers when applying?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share about this topic that you haven't yet?

Spanish:

- ¿Qué es para usted Hartford Youth Scholars (HYS)?
- ¿Cuándo supo por primera vez sobre HYS?
- Cuando usted y su familia se enteraron de HYS por primera vez, ¿qué los atrajo a postularse para el programa?
- ¿Cómo describiría el proceso de solicitud? ¿Cuáles fueron los pasos involucrados?
- ¿Puede describir un ejemplo específico de alguna parte del proceso que le haya resultado particularmente sencilla?
- ¿Puede describir un ejemplo específico de alguna parte del proceso que le haya parecido particularmente complicada?
- ¿Hay algo que desearía que fuera diferente cuando usted y su hijo solicitaron ingreso a HYS?
  - Sobre la aplicación, información recibida, etc.?
- ¿Has completado el proceso de solicitud?
  - Si no, ¿por qué?
- ¿Cómo describiría la comunicación entre su familia y HYS al presentar la solicitud?
- ¿Qué tan útil fue HYS al trabajar en el proceso de solicitud? ¿Era accesible el personal?
- ¿Cuál es el idioma principal que se habla en casa?
- ¿Eres bilingüe?
  - En ese caso...
    - ¿Cree que el proceso de solicitud fue apto para personas bilingües e hispanohablantes?
    - ¿Hubo algún problema relacionado con las barreras del idioma al presentar la solicitud?
- ¿Hay algo más que te gustaría compartir sobre este tema que aún no hayas hecho?

## Appendix D

### Code Book:

*HYS= Hartford Youth Scholars*

Code	Sub Codes
Info [I] - Where did parents first hear about HYS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School [SCH]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heard about HYS through child's school</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Family [FAM]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heard about HYS through family</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Other parent [PRNT]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heard about HYS through another parent</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Staff [STF]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heard about HYS through staff working at HYS</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Nominated [NMD]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heard about HYS through their child being nominated at school</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Motivation [M] - Why did parents enroll their children in HYS? - Any motivation as to why they applied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Academic Support [ASM]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Families applied to HYS for the Academic Support</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Diversity [DM]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Families applied to HYS for the diversity</li> </ul> </li> <li>- High School Success [HSSM]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Families applied to HYS for High School Success</li> </ul> </li> <li>- College Success [CSM]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Families applied to HYS for College Success</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Connections [CM]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Families applied to HYS for connections youth might make while enrolled</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Support System [SSM]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Families applied to HYS for the support system HYS provides</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Reviews [RM]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Families applied to HYS because of what they have heard from other parents/students</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Familiarity [FM]               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Families applied to HYS because they already have a child in the program or are familiar with it</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>Application Process [APP]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents describing the application process</li> <li>- Any steps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Application was difficult [APPD] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any mention of the application process being difficult</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Application was easy [APPE] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any mention of the application process being difficult</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Accessibility [A]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessible [AS] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents talking about HYS being accessible to their needs while filling out the application</li> <li>- Communication was good</li> <li>- Positive view on communication from HYS</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Not Accessible [NAS] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents talking about HYS not being accessible to their needs while filling out the application</li> <li>- Communication was not the best</li> <li>- Negative view on communication from HYS</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Accessibility to Spanish Speaking/ Bilingual Families [ASSB]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessible [ASB] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents talking about HYS being accessible to their needs while filling out the application</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Not Accessible [NASB] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents talking about HYS not being accessible to their needs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Views on the Application Process Regarding Language [VL]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents Content [PC] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents are content with the application process regarding accessibility to Spanish Speaking/ Bilingual Families</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Concerns Regarding Language Barriers [CLB] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any concerns any parents had regarding Language Barriers in the process</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Feedback [FDBK]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive Feedback [PFB] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any positive feedback HYS receives regarding the application process</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Constructive Feedback [CFB] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any type of constructive feedback HYS receives regarding the application process</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



