

**AMPHITHEATER**

*P u b l i c S c h o o l s*

June 7, 2016

# REACH Program Review

Dr. Roseanne Lopez, Chief Academic Officer Elementary Education

# REACH Program Review: Purpose and Outcomes

- **Purpose:** To review the Amphitheater Public Schools REACH Program for gifted students, provide information to the administration on the results of the review and to make recommendations as needed regarding programming for gifted students in our schools.
- **Outcomes:** The evaluation/review team will compile all key points and data analysis regarding the REACH program evaluation and provide a report to the administration.



# Definitions of Giftedness

- Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports). (NAGC)
- "Gifted pupil" means a child who is of lawful school age, who due to superior intellect or advanced learning ability, or both, is not afforded an opportunity for otherwise attainable progress and development in regular classroom instruction and who needs appropriate gifted education services, to achieve at levels commensurate with the child's intellect and ability." (ARS 15-779)



# Why Are Gifted Programs Needed?

Gifted and talented students and those with high abilities need gifted education programs that will challenge them in regular classroom settings and enrichment and accelerated programs to enable them to make continuous progress in school. (NAGC)



# Recent Research

- National Surveys of Gifted Programs (2014). National Research Center on Gifted Education, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia.
- Who Rises to the Top? Early Indicators (2013). *Psychological Science*, 24, 648-659.



# REACH Review Design

- Student survey
- Parent survey
- Parent input via email and phone calls
- Teacher survey
- REACH Teacher focus group
- Documents submitted by REACH staff members (e.g., letters home, rubrics, descriptions of services, number of identified students by school and area of giftedness)
- NWEA MAP results for REACH students
- DIBELS Next Results for REACH students
- Feedback from principals



# Response

- Student Survey: 100% response rate (1890+)
- Parent Survey: 21% response rate (453)
- Classroom Teacher Survey: 39% response rate (263)
- REACH Teacher Response Rate: 100%
- Over 7000 written comments were received. About 240 representative comments are included in the written report.



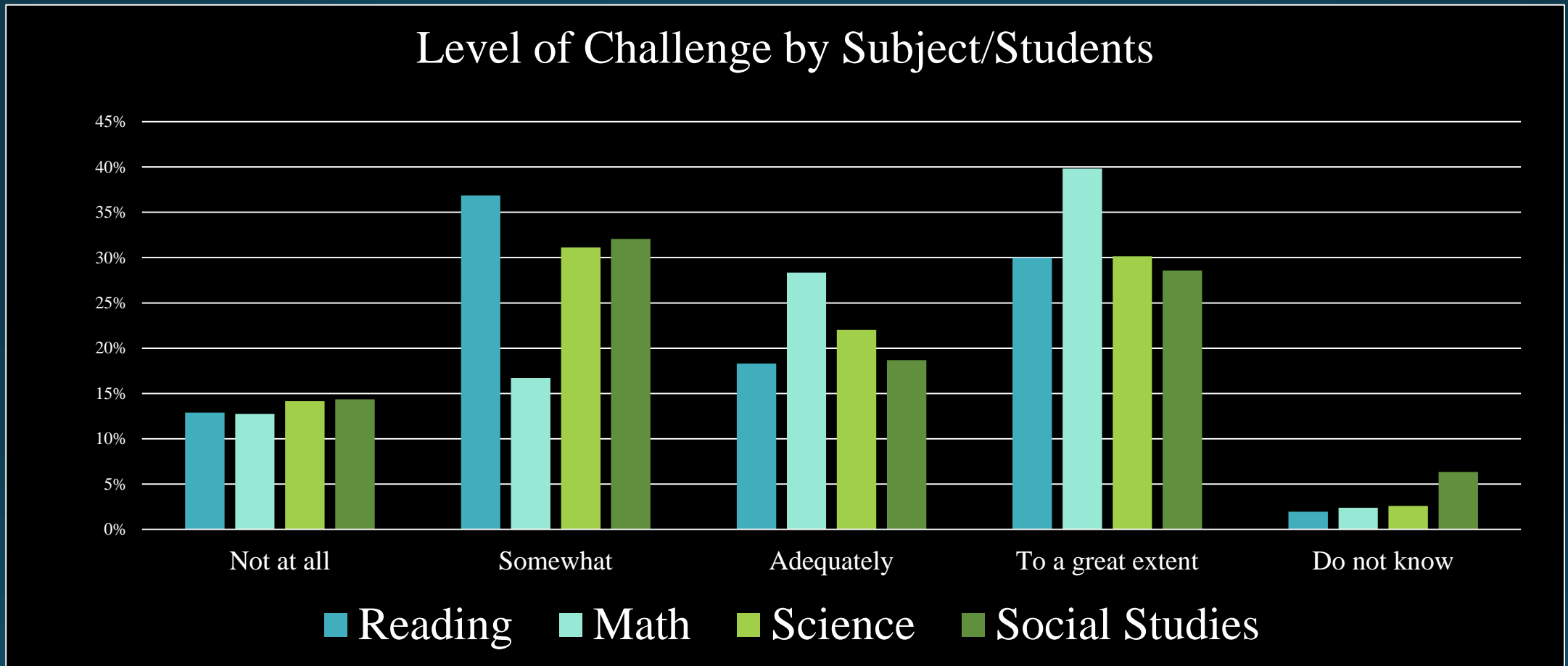
# Student Input Themes

- Social and emotional needs, need to meet with other REACH students
- Development of critical and creative thinking skills
- College and career guidance
- Desire for more time in REACH (elementary)
- Middle school needs
- High school issues
- Perception of level of challenge in regular courses





# Student Input



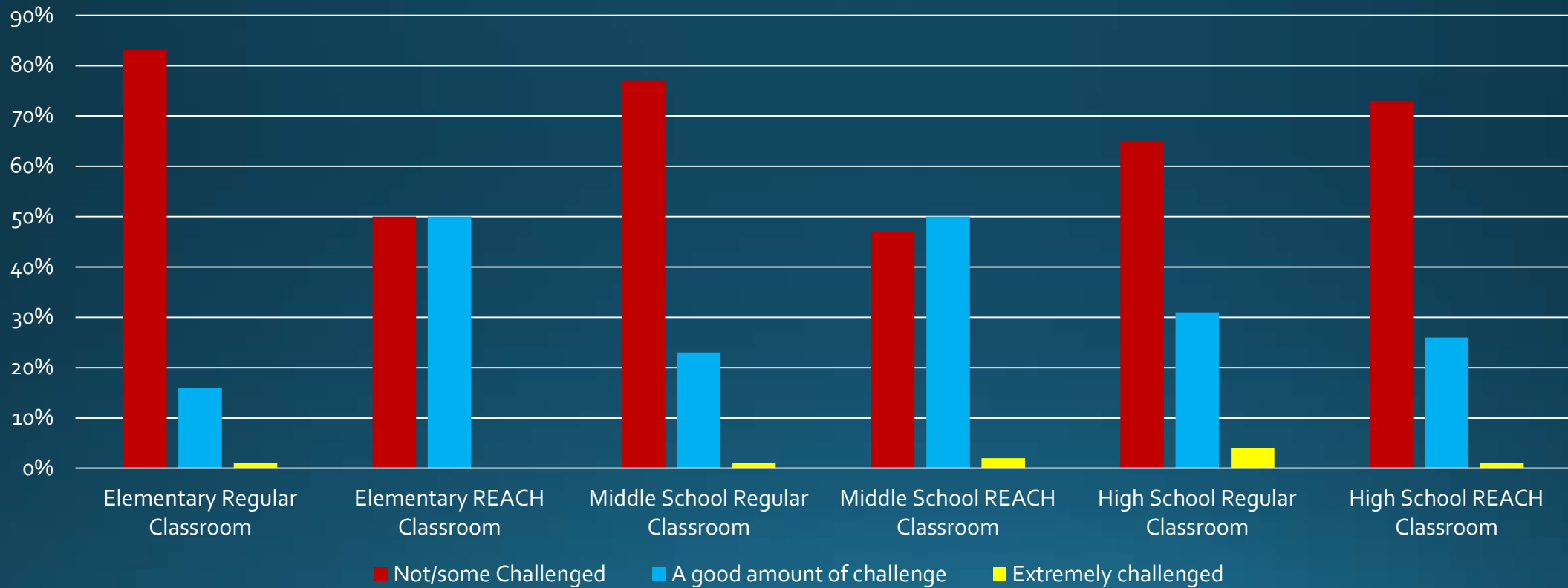
# Parent Input

- Need for program/social emotional needs
- Communication
- Expansion of options in middle school
- High school issues
- More time in the program (elementary)
- Perceptions of levels of challenge in regular classroom and REACH classroom



# Parent Perception of Challenge

Parent Perception of Level of Challenge



# Classroom Teacher Input

- Regular classroom teachers need training on needs of gifted students and how to meet those needs in the regular classroom
- More time for REACH services is needed (elementary)
- Need for more staff
- Communication



# REACH Teacher Input

- Additional time is needed at the elementary level and more time to access students is needed at the high school level
- Curriculum consistency
- Social/emotional needs of students at middle and high school
- Materials needed
- Professional development for regular classroom teachers



# Program Strengths

- All REACH teachers hold Arizona Gifted Endorsements
- REACH teachers are predominantly seen as highly effective teachers
- Identification procedures for students
- Elementary students and their parents believe the elementary program offers activities engage students in critical and creative thinking
- Internship program at the high school level seen as valuable



# Addressing the Issues

- Phase 1

- Actions that we can take with minimal or no additional financial resources beginning this summer.

- Phase 2

- Actions that can only be taken with additional financial resources.



# Recommendations

- The committee recommends that the district develop a set of core beliefs regarding instruction of gifted students guided by the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) standards. **Phase 1**





# Recommendations

- The committee recommends that REACH students be provided engaging instruction, materials, and support in accessing advanced level content, processes and products, in all core content areas of their regular education programming. REACH students should be provided opportunities to follow a topic/project of relevance when they have mastered the core content. Generally, the committee recommends that if a student demonstrates proficiency within a content area, they be given the opportunity to engage in further self-directed study, enrichment or acceleration. **Phase 1**



# Recommendations: Elementary

- Parents, students and teachers want our gifted children to succeed and to have access to appropriately challenging curriculum and instruction. Elementary students should be grouped together in some manner and instructed at their level for the areas of their giftedness/high ability (e.g., math, reading). **Phase 1**
- We need to extend learning opportunities for students by allowing access to additional materials and materials at higher reading levels. **Phase 1**



# Recommendations: Elementary

- The committee recommends that the REACH department develop consistent curriculum for the elementary REACH pull out classes.

## Phase 1

- The committee recommends that the time in REACH classes be increased at the elementary level. **Phase 2**
- Elementary teachers need easy access to reading materials/units that are challenging for gifted learners. A collection of such materials should be available for loaning out to teachers. **Phase 2**



# Recommendations: Middle School

- The committee recommends that the middle school humanities program at each middle school be examined including curriculum, instruction, assessment, assignments, and inclusion of students in these classes in order to ensure consistency. **Phase 1**
- The committee recommends that the REACH program at the middle level expand beyond the humanities option to better serve the needs of the students who have other areas of giftedness. **Phase 2**



# Recommendations: High School

- The committee recommends that the high school REACH program be examined and revised to allow for more student contact, counseling specifically geared toward the social and emotional needs of gifted individuals, guidance for career and college readiness, and the special academic needs of this population.

Phase 1 and 2



# Recommendations: Professional Development

- The committee recommends that professional development on needs of gifted learners be offered to teachers who are designated as “cluster” teachers and to teachers who have courses where gifted students enroll to ensure that the students are properly challenged and supported in their learning. **Phase 1**
- The committee recommends that REACH staff be allotted time for collaborative planning and curriculum alignment with one another, and with regular classroom teachers. **Phase 2**



# Recommendations: Communication

- The committee recommends that the program develop a communication plan which includes a plan for regular contact with parents, students, classroom teachers, and administrators regarding the program activities, needs of gifted students, and professional development opportunities. Further it is recommended that the department materials be consistent and “branded” with both the district logo and the REACH logo to ensure a professional presentation of information. **Phase 1**



# Recommendations: Communication

- The documents from the gifted program do not appear to be cohesive. It is recommended that the department work with our Community Relations department to be sure that all documents, especially those explaining the program or providing testing information and results, be branded and presented in a very business-like professional manner. **Phase 1**
- The REACH Program should have a comprehensive and continuously updated web page expanding on what is currently available. **Phase 1**





# Recommendations

- The committee recommends that the funding for the REACH program be increased in the areas of staffing, supplies and materials, and professional development. **Phase 1 and 2**
- The Department Chair should have at least .50 FTE assigned to working on program consistency, communication, planning, curriculum, etc. **Phase 1 and 2**



# Recommendations: Identification

- The identification of students is a strength of the program; however, it pulls teachers away from the very little time they spend with students. We need to work on ways to decrease the down time of instruction for testing. Perhaps one small way to assist this problem is to have the tests scored electronically. **Phase 2**
- There is a very high percentage of identified students who qualified based on their non-verbal/spatial score. The program and services need to be reviewed for alignment toward this area of giftedness. **Phase 2**



# Questions?

