RESULTS FROM A NATIONAL TEACHER SURVEY

Steve Farkas and Ann Duffett
Farkas Duffett Research Group
June 25, 2008
INTRODUCTION

- FDR: nonpartisan public opinion research firm, NYC

- Methodology: 5 Focus groups, survey of 900 3-12 public school teachers

- Goal: Capture what teachers on the front-lines experience and believe
TEACHERS SAY ADVANCED STUDENTS NOT A TOP PRIORITY

Would you say that the needs of the academically advanced students at your school are a:

- 60%: the needs of academically struggling students are top priority
- 73%: the brightest students are bored and under-challenged
WHERE THE RESOURCES ARE LIKELY TO GO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Struggling Students</th>
<th>Average Students</th>
<th>Advanced Students</th>
<th>It’s Equal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who gets the most overall attention at your school?</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who should get the most attention at your school?</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is your school most likely to focus on when it comes to tracking achievement data and trying to raise standardized test scores?</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is most likely to get one-on-one attention from teachers?</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And who is most likely to be taught with a curriculum and instruction specially designed for their abilities?</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the public schools to help the U.S. live up to its ideals of justice and equality, do you think it’s more important that they:

- Focus equally on all students, regardless of their backgrounds or achievement levels (86%)
- Focus on raising the achievement of disadvantaged students who are struggling academically (11%)
- Not sure (3%)
WHY THE SCHOOLS NEGLECT HIGH ACHIEVERS: PRESSURES OF TESTING

Getting underachieving students to reach “proficiency” has become so important that the needs of advanced students take a back seat.
WHY THE SCHOOLS NEGLECT HIGH ACHIEVERS: LACK OF TRAINING

Thinking back to the school of education or teacher preparation program you went through, how much focus did it put on how to best teach academically advanced students?

- 58%: no professional development in past few years on academically advanced students
ABILITY, FEWER CHANCES TO THRIVE

- 72%: advanced students are more likely to reach academic potential in homogeneous classrooms
- 44%: high school teachers say few or none

About how many of the core subject classes at your school are homogenously grouped by academic ability?
GROUP BY ABILITY, ESPECIALLY IN MATH

Do you agree or disagree? Math is the one subject where students could really benefit from homogenous grouping.
In your judgment, how easy or difficult a mission is it to implement differentiated instruction on a daily basis in the classroom?

- Somewhat easy: 12%
- Very easy: 4%
- Not sure: 1%
- Somewhat difficult: 48%
- Very difficult: 35%
Does your school allow students to skip a grade—also known as grade acceleration, or not?

- **Not sure**: 27%
- **Yes**: 27%
- **No**: 46%
PROPOSALS GARNERING MOST SUPPORT

Percent favoring:

- more homogeneous classes: 76%
- more subject acceleration: 85%
- more professional development for teachers: 90%
- more student enrichment outside the school: 96%

• Only 33%: more grade acceleration
AMENDING NCLB

Percent favoring:

Require schools to move proportion of students to “advanced” level
- 33%

Require schools to break out test scores of advanced students
- 55%

- 10%: NCLB has had a positive impact on advanced students in their own school
- 30%: NCLB has had a positive impact on struggling students
THE COSTS OF OVERLOOKED TALENT

- 59%: academically talented youngsters from low socio economic backgrounds are often overlooked—they fall through the cracks because no one advocates for them

- 81%: our advanced students need special attention—they are the future leaders of this country