

# Should I Accelerate My Child?

**100+ Families and Students**

**Answer the Questions**

**Results of BVPAGE Acceleration Surveys**



# BVPAGE Acceleration Survey Data



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

The survey data and the presentation will be located at [WWW.BVPAGE.ORG](http://WWW.BVPAGE.ORG) under Items of Note

- Two presentation versions
- Presentation notes
- All raw data

A screenshot of the BVPAGE website homepage. The header includes the BVPAGE logo and the text 'Blue Valley Parent Advocates for Gifted Education'. Below the header are buttons for 'Subscribe' and 'Donate', and a privacy notice. A navigation menu contains links for 'Events &amp; Announcements', 'Calendar', 'Meeting Archive', 'Get Involved', 'Contact', and 'About'. The main content area is titled 'Upcoming Events &amp; Announcements' and includes a search bar. Two event cards are visible: one for 'Items of Note' with a list of links including 'Acceleration Survey Results' and 'Presentation Notes', and another for 'Meeting today: Advocating without Alienating.' The 'Items of Note' section is circled in orange.

## Why do surveys on acceleration?

- ∞ Families being offered acceleration need as much information as possible to make the best decision
- ∞ Information about others' experiences is not always easy to access
- ∞ Goal: Gather opinions and experiences – pros and cons – of a cross section of students and families, and share them
  - More informed families
  - + More informed schools

---

  - Best decision for student

# Types of Acceleration



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

- ☞ Early Admission to Kindergarten
- ☞ Early Admission to 1<sup>st</sup> grade
- ☞ Grade Skipping \*
- ☞ Continuous Progress
- ☞ Self Paced Instruction
- ☞ Subject Matter Acceleration \*
- ☞ Combined Classes
- ☞ Curriculum Compacting
- ☞ Telescoping Curriculum
- ☞ Mentoring
- ☞ Extracurricular Programs \*
- ☞ Correspondence Courses
- ☞ Early Graduation
- ☞ Concurrent/Dual Enrollment \*
- ☞ Advanced Placement \*
- ☞ Credit by Examination
- ☞ Acceleration in College
- ☞ Early Entrance to middle school, high school, or college

# Survey Information



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

- ☞ Two groups surveyed
  - Chose TO Accelerate
  - Chose NOT to Accelerate
  
- ☞ Questions
  - Demographics
  - Open ended responses (comments)
  
- ☞ Review of Data
  - Combined Demographics
  - Advantages and Disadvantages to consider
  - Comparison of Prior Concerns vs. Experience

## \* A comment about data

Data is only as good as the questions asked, the people answering, how much time was spent on survey, and the opinions and state of mind when respondents were answering the questions.

**Our goal is to present the data as it is and point out trends and observations – not to propose a right or wrong answer.**

“Ultimately, help choose a path for **your child** that will lead them into the kind of adult you want them to become.”

# Survey Respondents



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

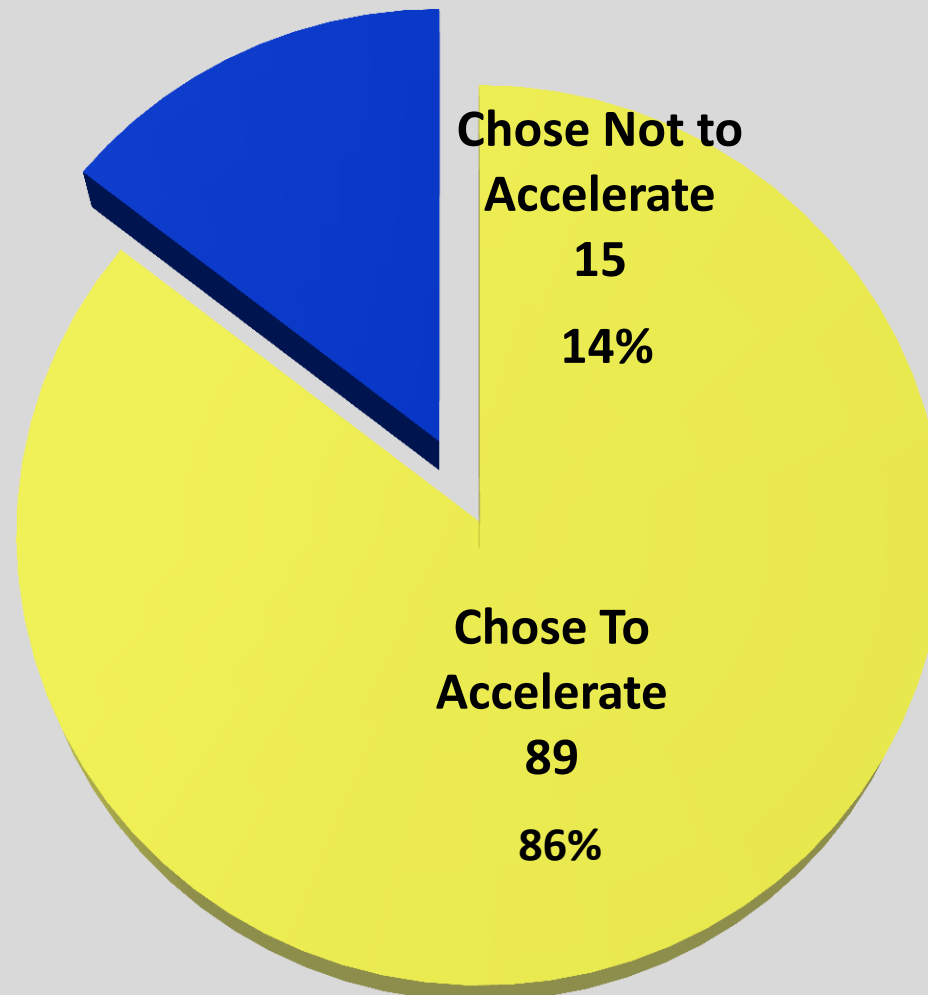
104 Respondents

## Survey Promotion

- BVPAGE email list
- Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Word of mouth

## Types of Respondents

- Students
- Parents/Guardians
- Few adults who were accelerated as kids



## Geographic Representation

- Nationwide responses
- Mostly Blue Valley, but not all
- Geography didn't matter the majority of the time – it's about the Acceleration Experience!

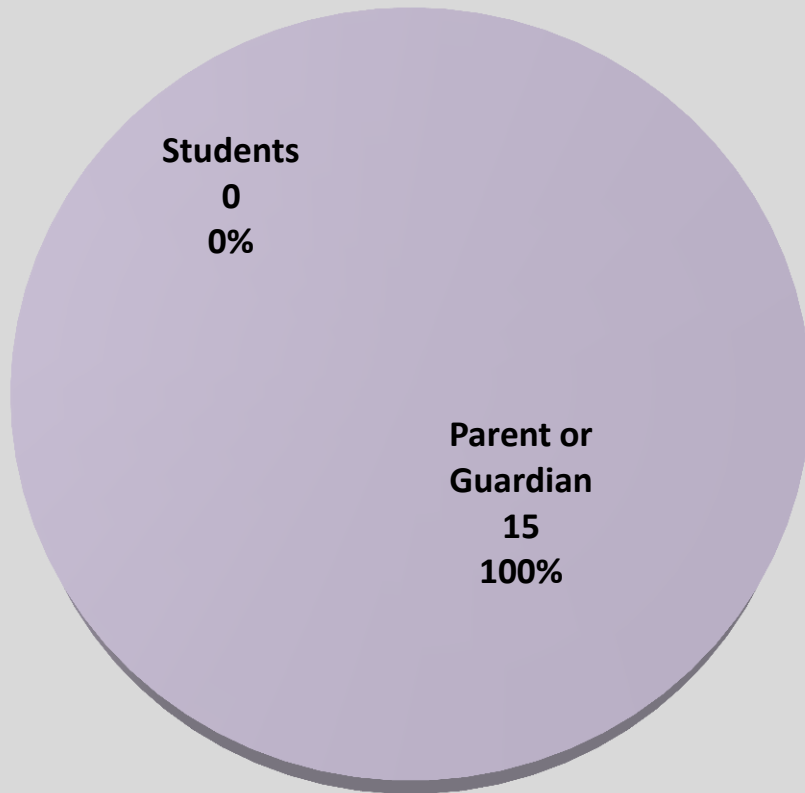


# Acceleration Choice

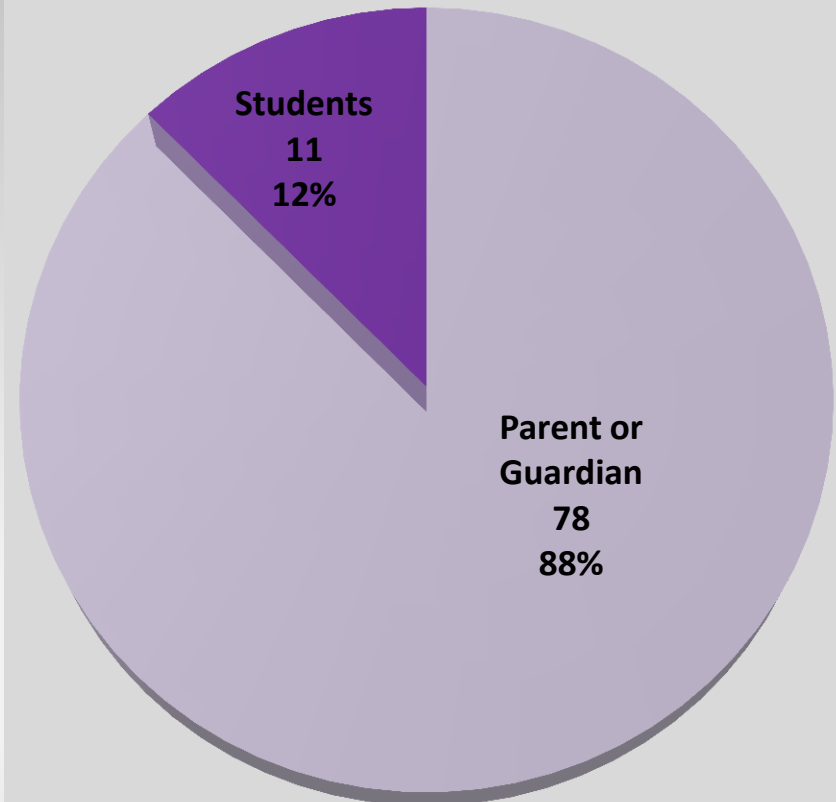


2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Chose Not to Accelerate



## Chose To Accelerate

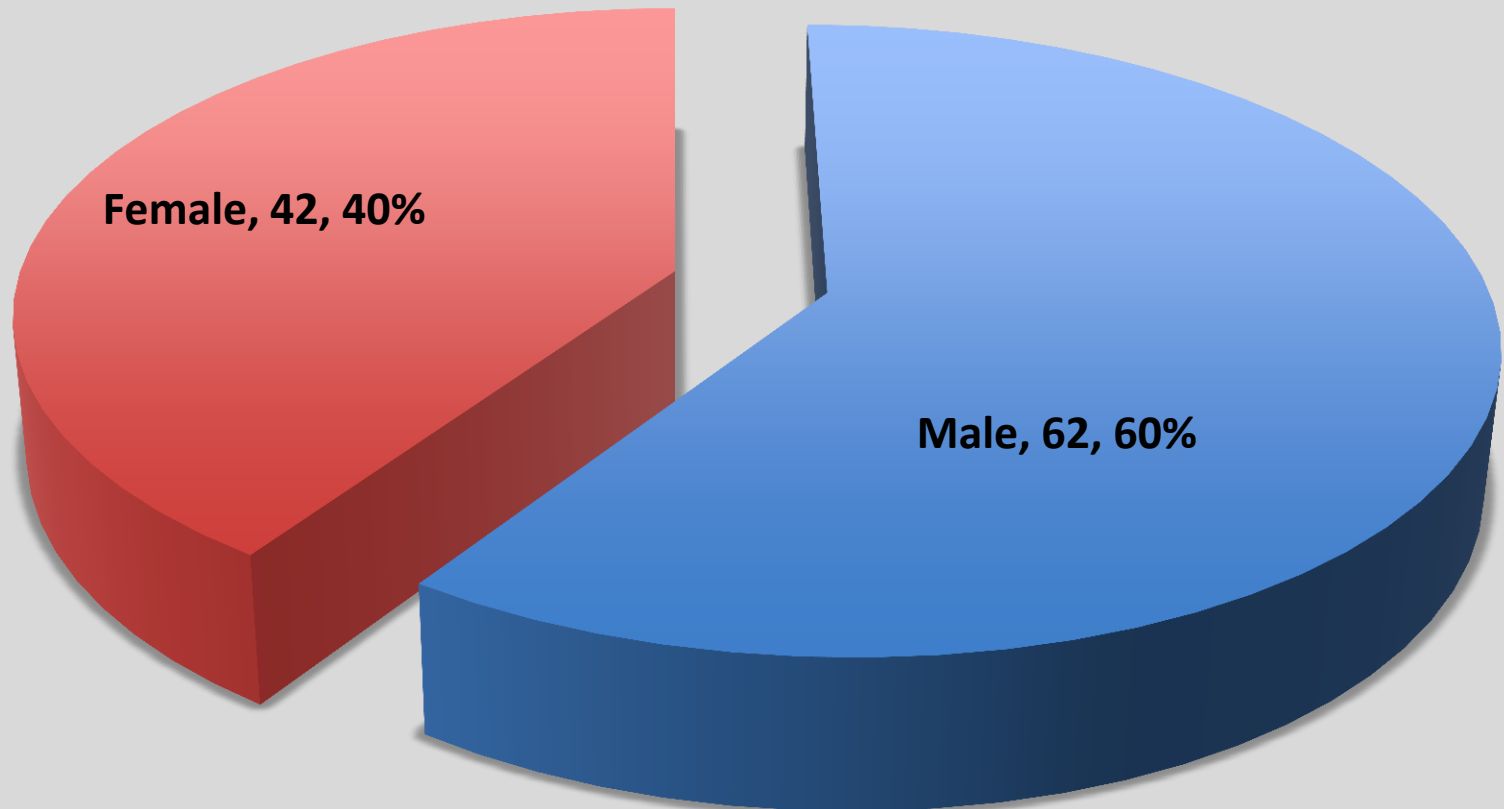


# Gender of Students Offered Acceleration



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Gender Breakdown of 104 Students Offered Acceleration

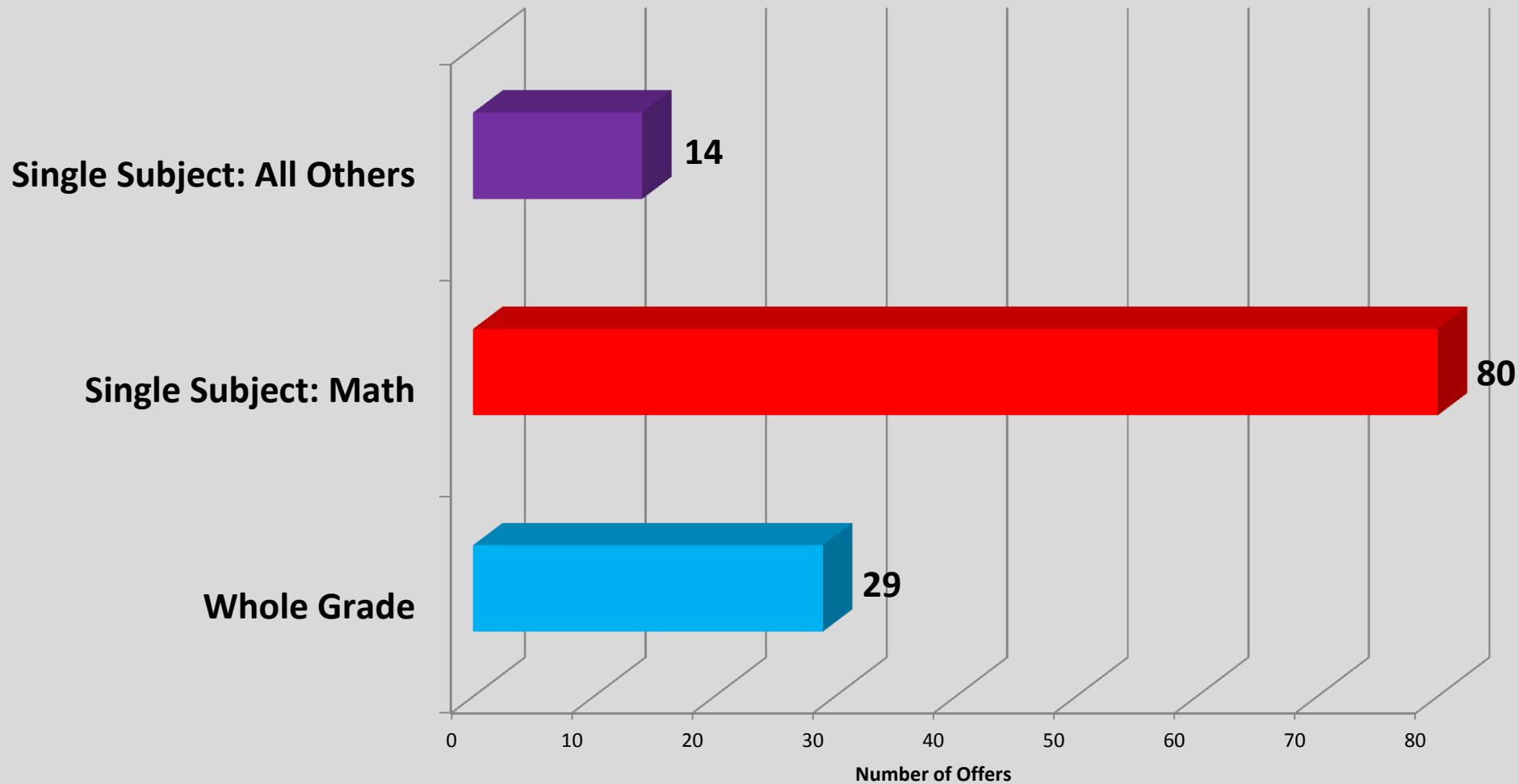


# Type of Acceleration Offered



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Whole or Single Subject Offer

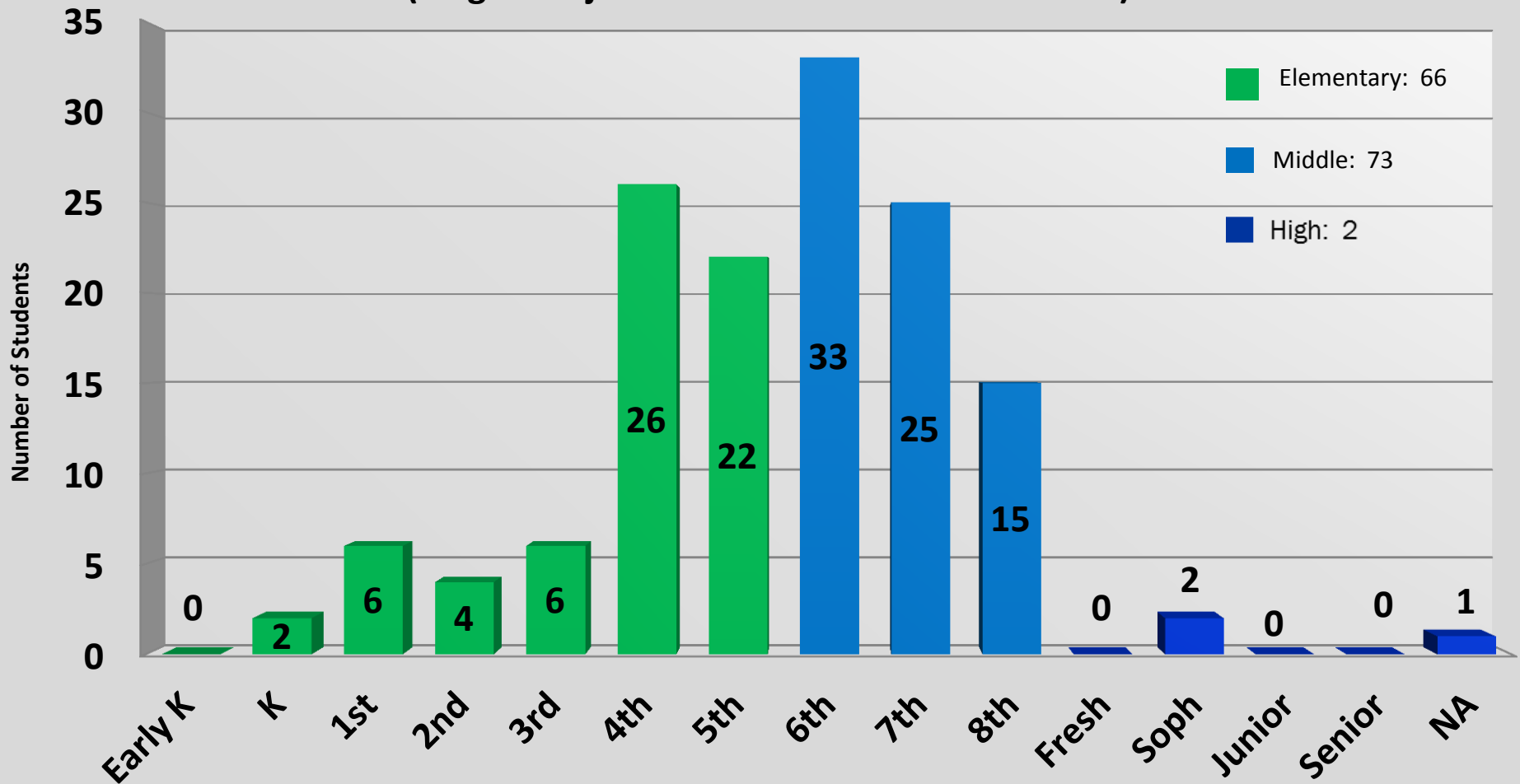


# Grade at Time of Acceleration Offer



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

### Student Grade at Time of Acceleration Offer (Single Subject and Whole Grade Combined)



## In-depth analysis completed on 1,448 respondent comments.

- ☞ Reviewed all data and determined themes
- ☞ Used theme words, synonyms, and antonyms to quantify each comment into the themes
- ☞ Considered positive, negative, and neutral responses

## Advantages & Disadvantages

Academic

Social

Emotional

Logistical

# Academic Considerations



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Academic Advantages

- ☞ Increased Academic Challenge
- ☞ Success
- ☞ Engagement
- ☞ Underachieving
- ☞ Scheduling Opportunities

## Academic Disadvantages

- ☞ Workload
- ☞ Grades
- ☞ New or Multiple Schedules
- ☞ Didn't solve the problem

## Increased Academic Challenge

“I loved having material that challenged me – it really brought out my love for learning”

“It isn't just a lot of harder or extra work. Most projects done are things that interest you personally.”

“She was placed with peers that were learning at her level”

“She actually feels like she's learning a little something and loves the challenge and the pace.”



# Academic Advantages



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Academic Success

“(Surprised by) Her academic and personal success in the accelerated program”

“She advanced above her age level to her ability”

“It gave him more than just busy work, even though he still maintained A's”

“I can take harder classes and I still get all A's.”

## Engagement & Underachievement

“She has maintained her interest in the subject instead of giving up with frustration. It gave our gifted child a break in her day from the frustration of the classroom pace because she was able to self-pace.”

“Caused me to struggle more with getting the good grades I received in middle school, but overall challenged me where I needed it.”

“I loved having material that challenged me – it really brought out my love for learning”

She is finally excited about school where as before we just heard it was boring.“

## Scheduling Opportunities

“He was able to take other more advanced classes”

“Accelerating got me into marching band one year earlier. I fit in this class much better than I would’ve with my former class”

“I can take more math classes and harder ones that I would not have had the chance to take otherwise”

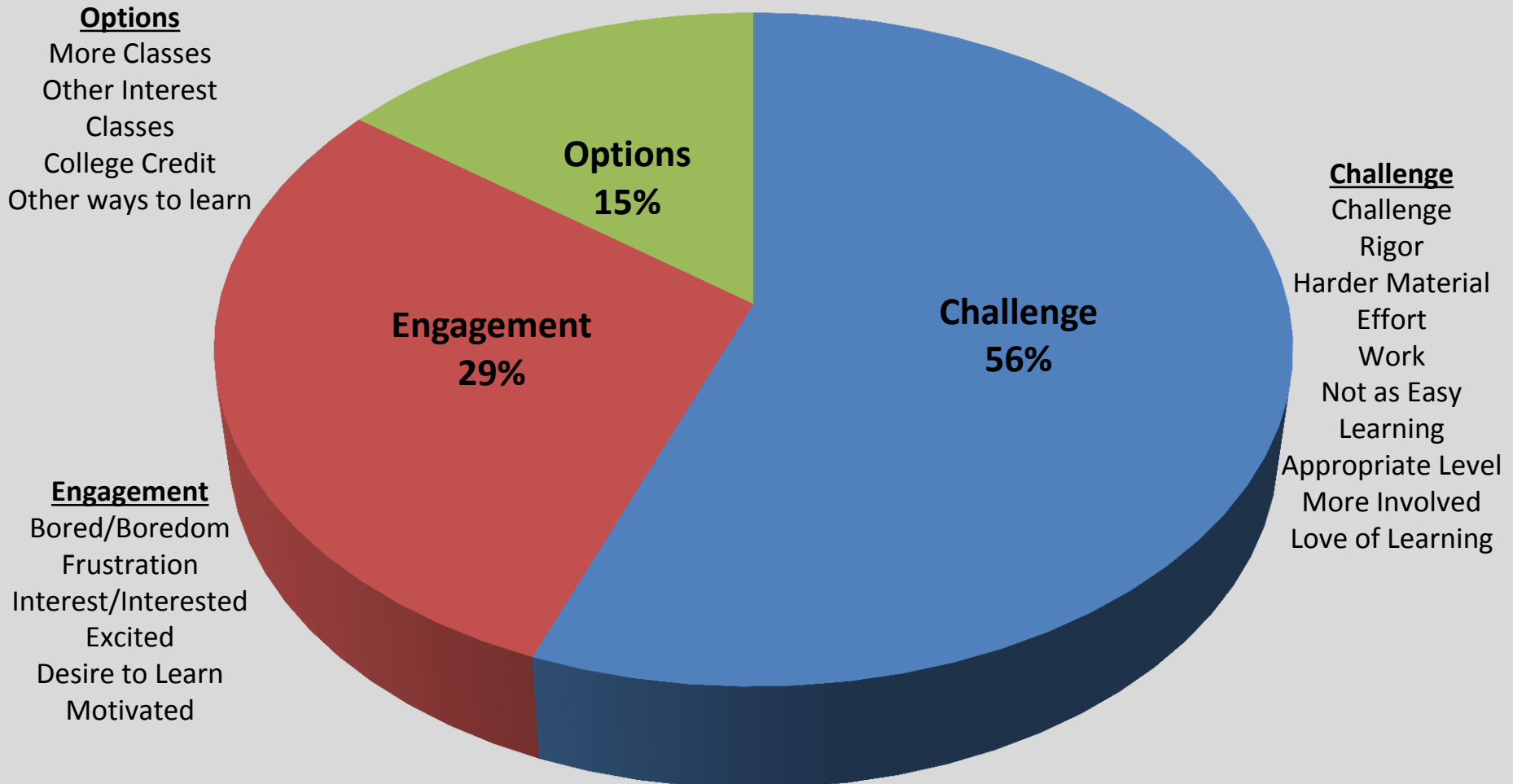
“Had room in high school schedule for college credit classes and electives”

# Academic Advantages



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Academic Advantage Categories



# Academic Disadvantages



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Workload & Grades

“Staying with her class, GPA, and class rank”

“Increased amounts of homework”

“Concerns about skipping content and how that would affect future learning”

“I did have more homework than my friends which was difficult to finish in a timely manner sometimes.”

“Grades were not perfect.”

# Academic Disadvantages



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Didn't solve the problem

“Accelerating did not solve the problem because the problem is PACING!”

“How easy it still is for him”

“The fact that he is still at the top of the advanced class”

“Acceleration a whole grade didn't meet my child's academic needs”

“After accelerated once, school not helpful in providing additional challenge”

# Academic Disadvantages



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Academic Disadvantage Categories

### Curriculum Concerns

Skipped or Missing  
Content

**Curriculum  
Concerns, 22%**

**GPA/Class Rank  
Suffer, 22%**

### GPA/Class Rank Suffer

Class Rank Suffer  
Lower GPA

**Too Much  
Challenge, 22%**

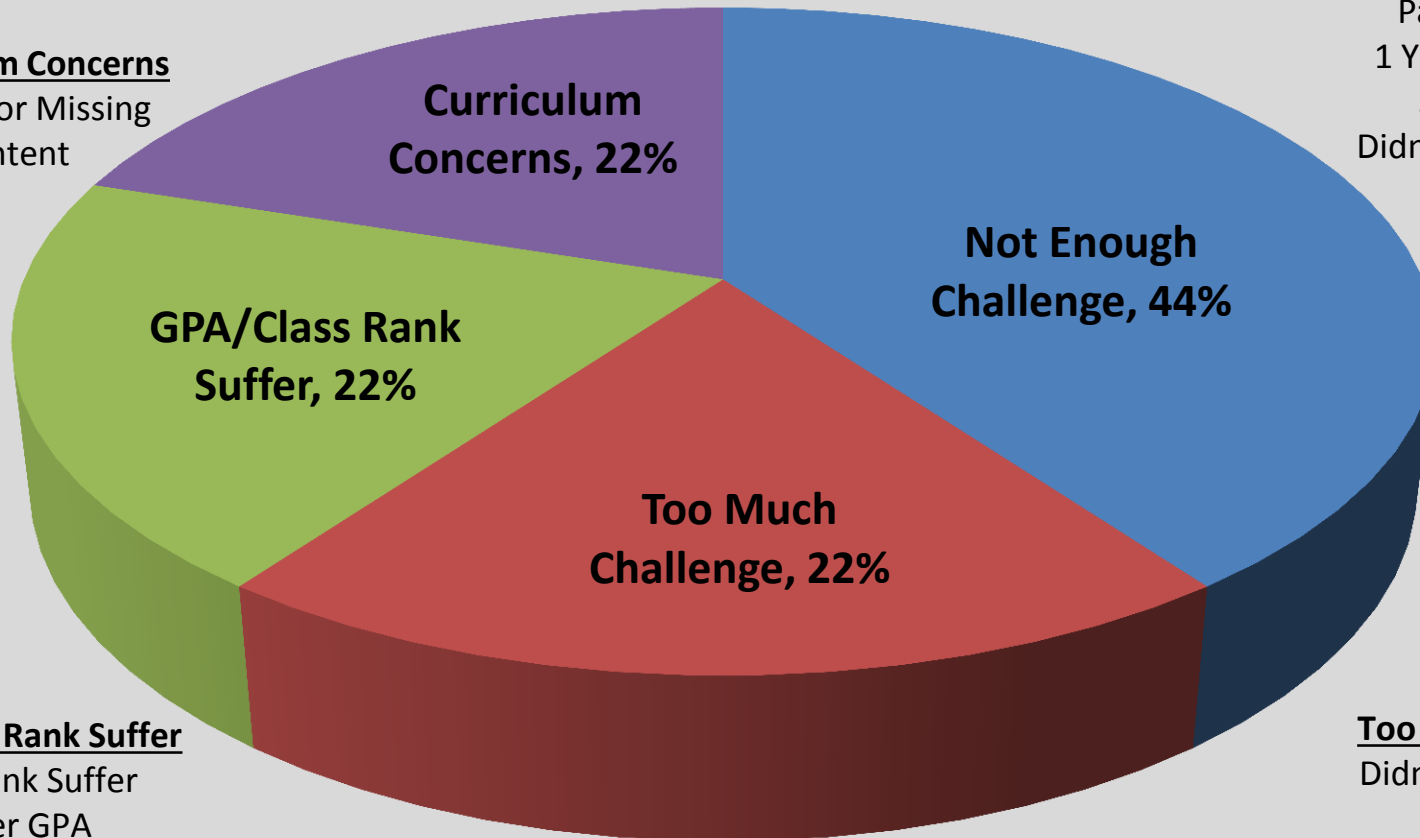
### Not Enough Challenge

Pacing Problem  
1 Year Not Enough  
Still too easy  
Didn't solve problem  
Top of Class

**Not Enough  
Challenge, 44%**

### Too Much Challenge

Didn't Think Needed



# Social Considerations



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Social Advantages

- ☞ Peers – Interactions with older students
- ☞ Struggling
- ☞ Self Advocacy
- ☞ Less Isolation
- ☞ Sense of Belonging

## Social Disadvantages

- ☞ Student Age
- ☞ Peers – Loss of current
- ☞ Peers – Older students



## Peers – Interactions with Older Students

“In the right place, on par with my peers”

“Two weeks into the school year, no one will remember that you are younger. After that, they won’t know unless you point it out.”

“Felt like I was in the right place, felt supported from people around me, found a new group of people to be with”

“I felt more on par with my peers rather than as far ahead and isolated. The timing also worked well because I got a fresh start in high school, just like every other student. “

## Self Advocacy and Struggling

“Got a break from feeling like the teacher or waiting for others to catch up”

“Caused me to struggle more with getting the good grades I received in middle school, but overall challenged me where I needed it”

“Confidence, better time management. He is being asked to be more responsible”

“I had to teach my daughter how to better ask clarifying questions and communicate with the teacher directly by herself”

## Less Isolation and Belonging

“Enjoyed being able to be with kids that thought like she did regardless of age”

“This was probably the best thing that happened to me socially. I got a chance to start over with a new class at the beginning of high school, which was a blessing for sure.”

“My child was with other kids who were interested in higher level math. It gave him a place to shine”

“Be yourself. It’s OK that you are younger than your classmates. They may be bigger or faster on the playground, but just do your best”

# Social Advantages



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Social Advantages Categories

### Social Interactions

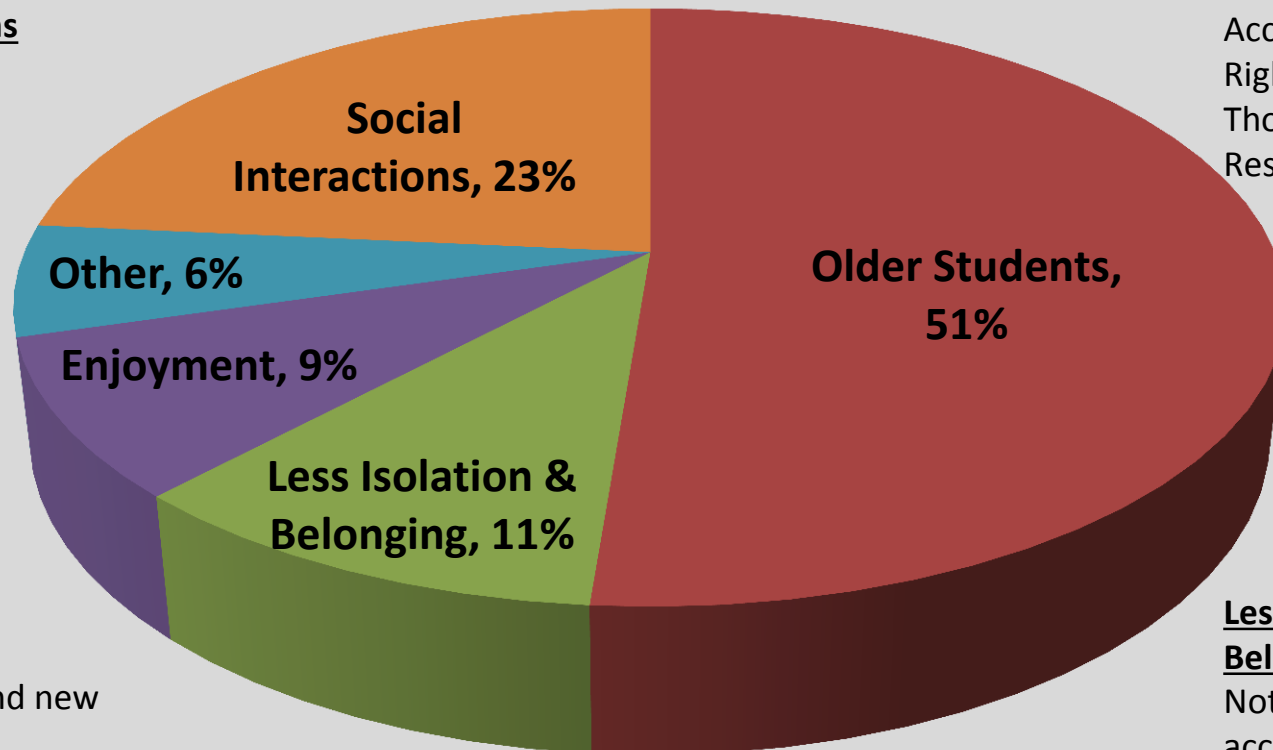
More Sociable  
Met New People  
New Start

### Other

Helped transition  
between schools

### Enjoyment

Confidence  
Likes new class and new  
students



### Older Students

New peers  
New friends  
Accepted  
Right Place  
Thought like them  
Respect

### Less Isolation & Belonging

Not the only  
accelerated student  
Not alone anymore

# Social Disadvantages



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Age

### Age at start of High School and College

“Is currently socially lacking and I did not want him that young in high school. I do not believe that the social obstacles would be better than the academic obstacles”

“In high school the age difference is more of a challenge--not being able to date, drive, etc.”

“She will start (college) before she is 18 and legally an adult.”

## Peers – Loss of Current & Contact with Older Students

“Definitely lost touch with old friends and had to make new ones”

“Socializing with older students is NOT ideal”

“The loss of friends her own age, because they didn't understand her needs and jealousy led to bullying.”

“Being younger than everyone else and not knowing everyone as well”

# Social Disadvantages



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

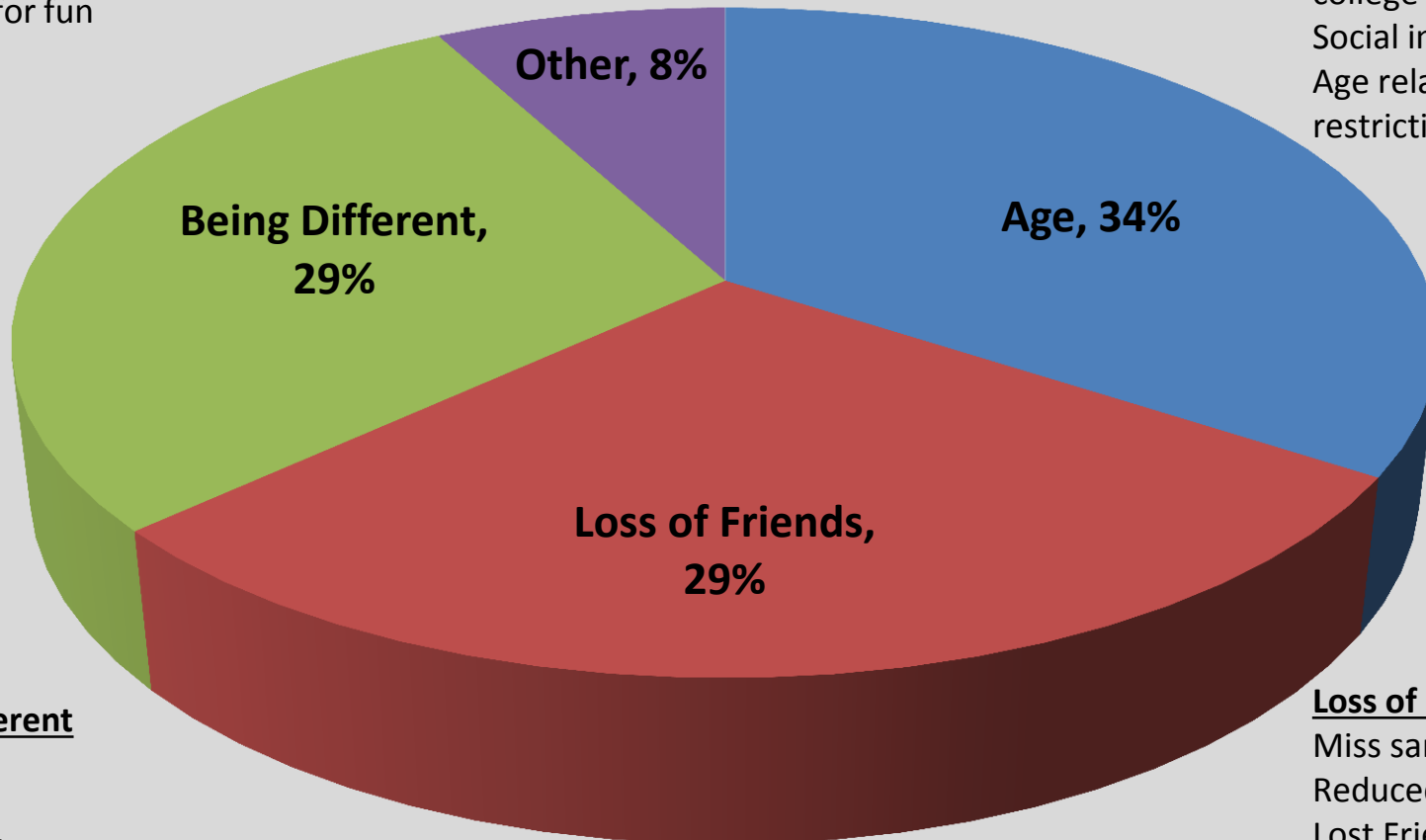
### Social Disadvantages Categories

#### Other

Less time for fun  
Pressure

#### Age

Age at high school or college  
Social immaturity  
Age related restrictions (driving)



#### Being different

Isolated  
Outsider  
'Smart kid'

#### Loss of Friends

Miss same age friends  
Reduced Connections  
Lost Friends

“Acceleration does not make your student successful, the student has to want to be successful.”



# Emotional Considerations



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Emotional Advantages

- ☞ Success
- ☞ Pride
- ☞ Independence
- ☞ Self-Esteem

## Emotional Disadvantages

- ☞ Emotional Amplification
- ☞ Fear
- ☞ Pressure

# Emotional Advantages



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Success and Pride

“Overwhelmed at first, anxious and unsure, then as time went on proud and confident and I felt like I belonged”

“I think it gave her confidence in being smart and not feel she has to hide it”

“My child felt a sense of honor and satisfaction for what she saw as an earned privilege”

“She loved it, it made her feel empowered and was proud to be doing something very few could.”

## Independence and Enjoyment

“Relieved a lot of pressure to be perfect, ironically. My student now cuts herself a lot of slack and feels better about making mistakes”

“Taught him that school is a place to learn, not just endure while others learn”

“I felt a lot happier with challenging and interesting material and I participated a lot more in class”

“Child feels challenged, enjoys harder material”

# Emotional Disadvantages



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Emotional Amplification

“Didn’t want her to lose confidence in her abilities”

“It was more important to raise a happy, well-adjusted, and involved child”

“Process is very intimidating”

“Pressure”

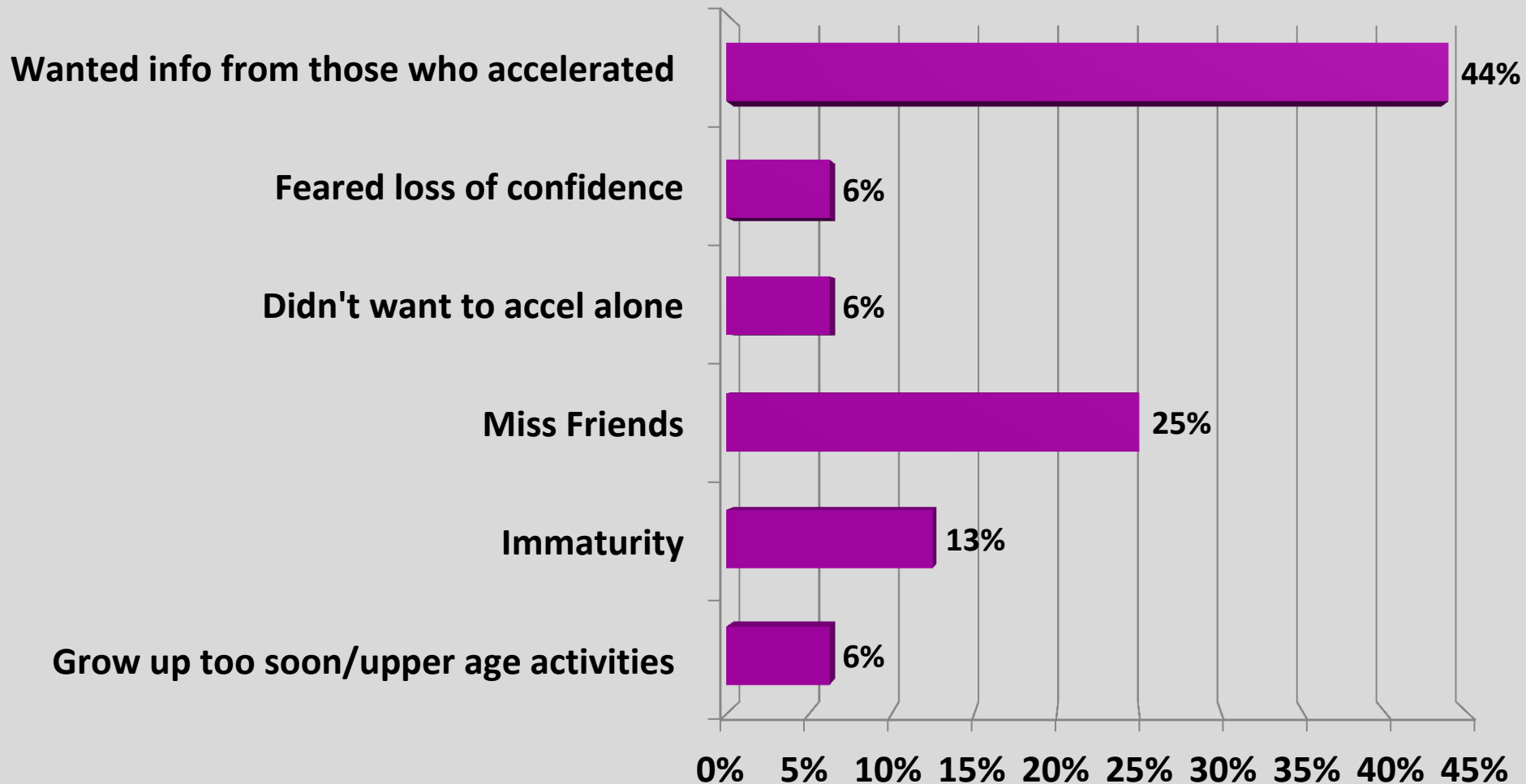
“Still very difficult. I don’t think acceleration impacted her negatively, it just stayed the same”

# Emotional Considerations



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Emotional Concerns



# Logistical Considerations



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

Logistical Advantages	Logistical Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>☞ Familiarity with next school</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>☞ Communication*</li><li>☞ Testing Procedures</li><li>☞ Multiple buildings</li><li>☞ Schedules</li><li>☞ Support*</li></ul>

\*All districts do acceleration differently, we will discuss these two universal topics.

# Logistical Disadvantages



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Communication

Gather as much information about process as you can so student, parents, and school all know what happens when

“Make this process more available to parents & students, don't hide/discourage it or make it seem like a punishment to you personally.”

“How receiving teachers felt about acceleration - make sure they are supportive.”

# Logistical Disadvantages



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Support

“Everyone involved must be willing to support the decision: child, family, especially new teachers, building administration.”

“Receiving teachers need to know student is accelerated and communicate more with parents and not punish student if they don’t support acceleration.”

“We didn’t really have much guidance in social/emotional need of gifted and the school did not either.”

“Sometimes, however, it was hard to get help with my homework since most of the people in my class were not in my grade.”



# Other Considerations



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Not about one success or ability

“Don't focus solely on their biggest strength, look at the big picture.”

“The child needs to be confident in reading, writing, and taking notes independently. He/she needs to be able to self-advocate to get help or speak up. Accelerating does not make the student successful, the student has to want to be successful.”

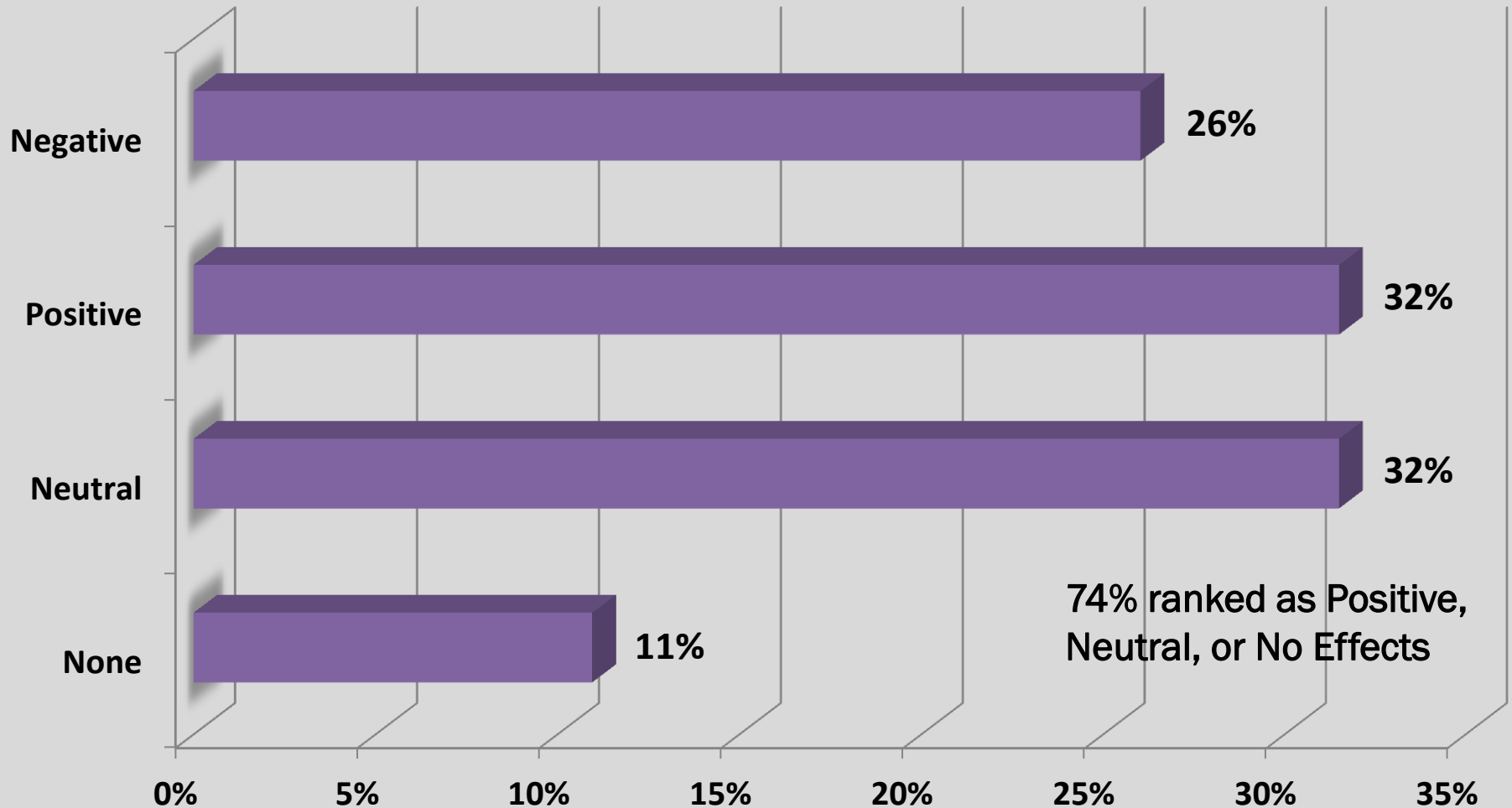
“Make sure it's a well rounded acceleration and not just an academic progression.”

# Effects Outside of Classroom



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Outside of Classroom



# Effects Outside of Classroom



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Hobbies, Recreation, Sports

“Subject acceleration in math did not interfere with her eligibility in math competition”

“Effects like sports teams and Sunday school - no one really told us to think those through.

“She was a swimmer, and that is done by age, not grade, so it wasn't an issue.”

“Acceleration helped me find the extracurriculars I loved”

“Little to no effect, did sports and theater and Scouts”

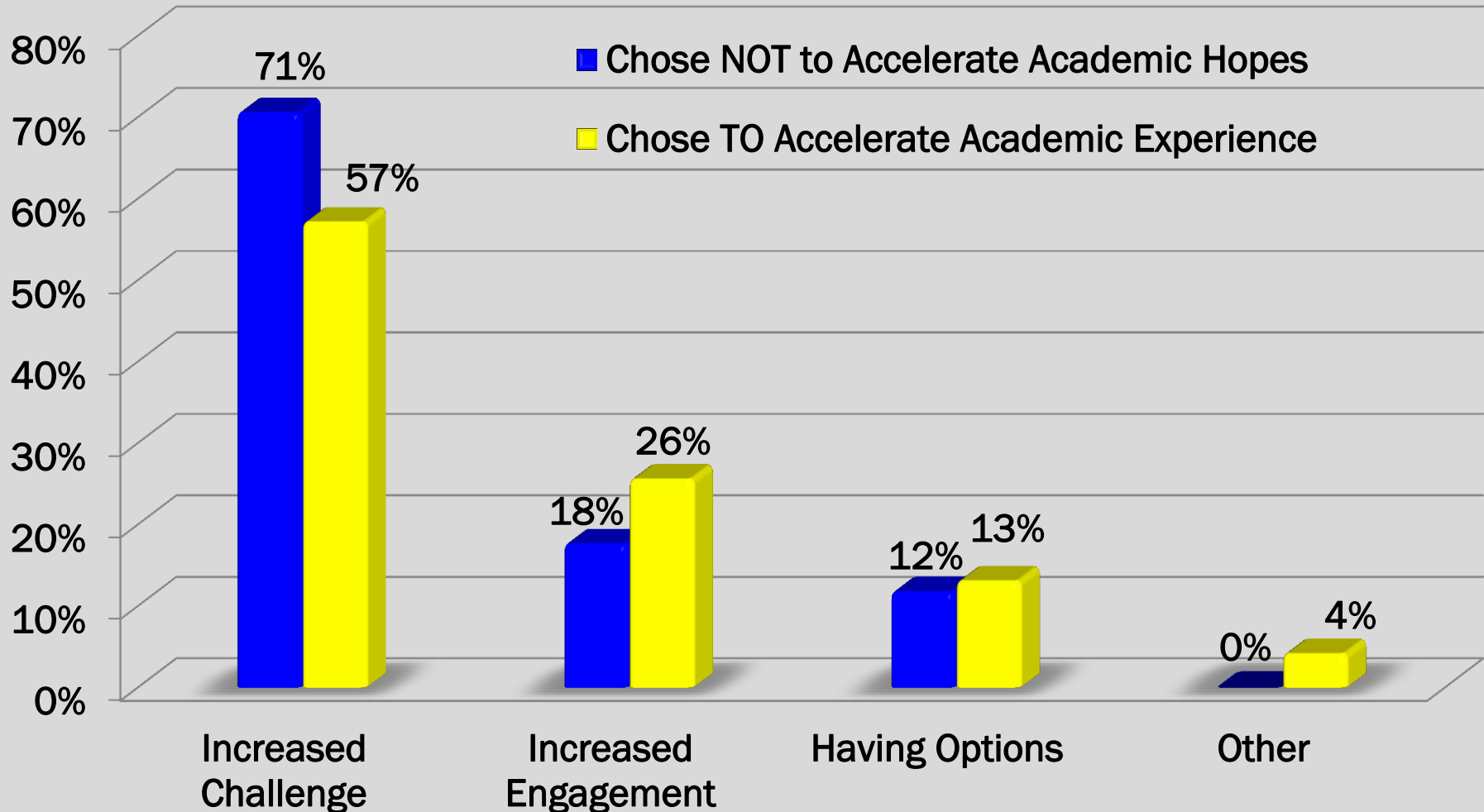
“My motto has become *‘Just because you can do it doesn’t mean you have to’*”

## Prior Expectations vs. Experience

# Academic Advantages: Prior Expectations vs. Experience



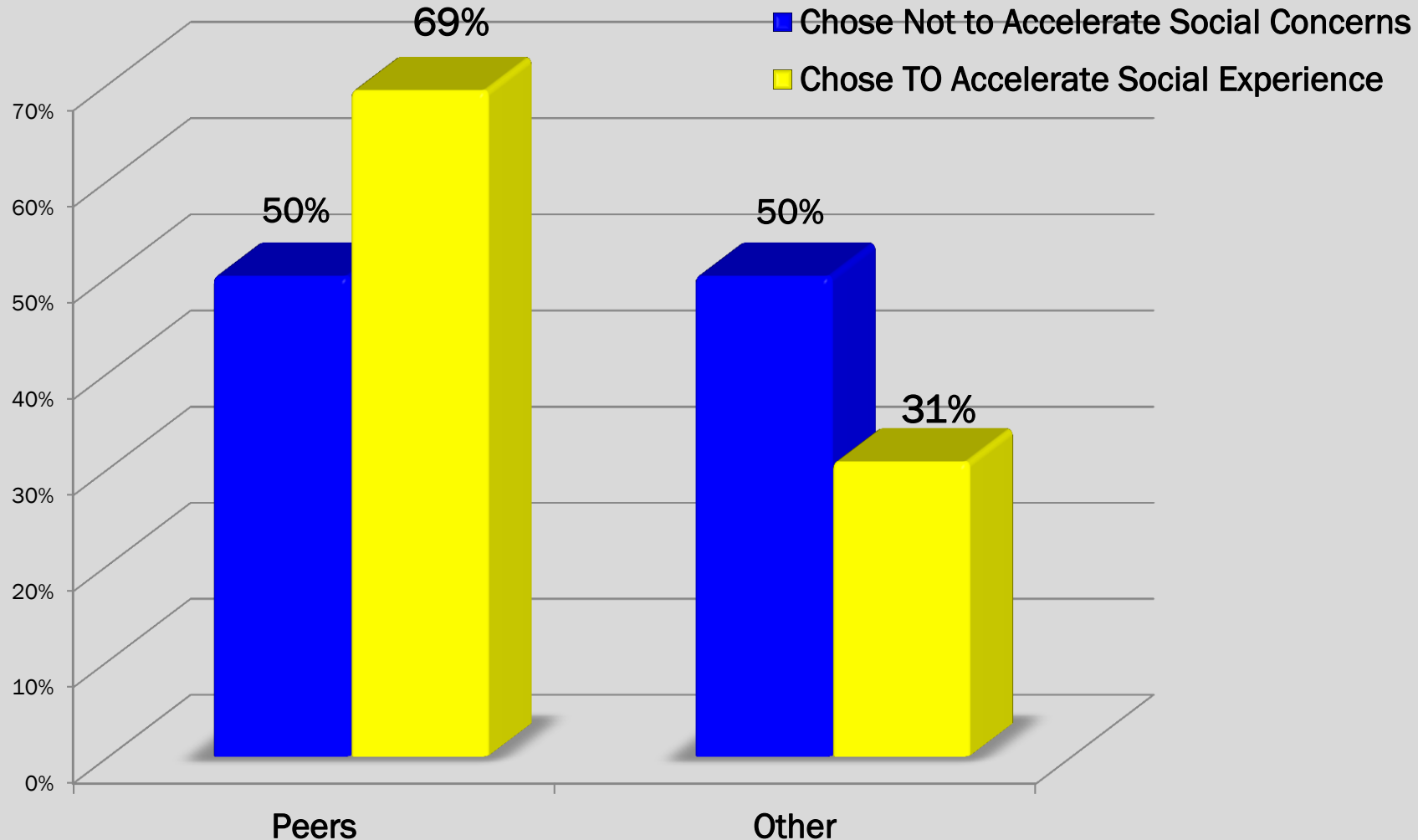
2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results



# Social Considerations: Prior Concerns vs. Experience



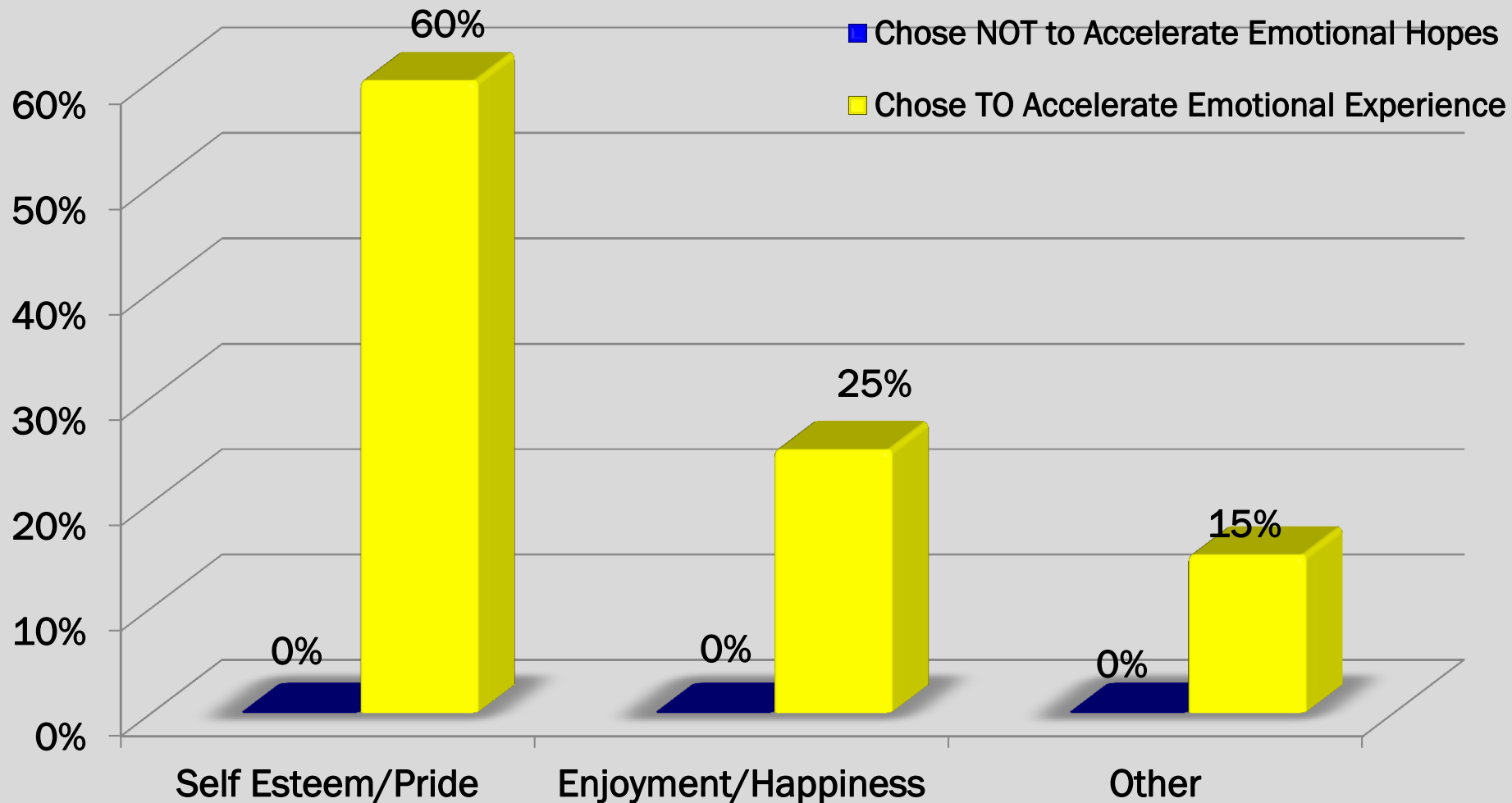
2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results



# Emotional Effects: Prior Expectations vs. Experience



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

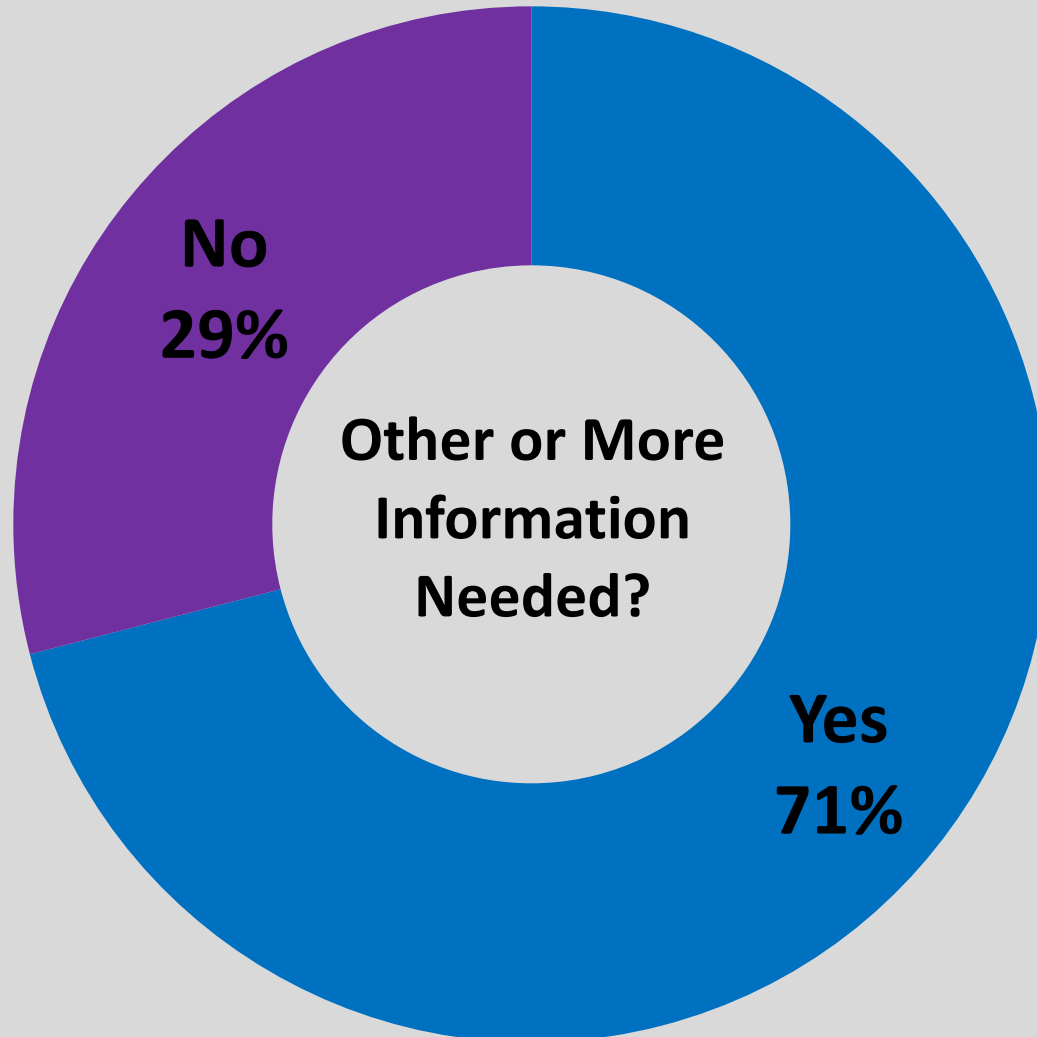




# Other Information You Wish You Knew



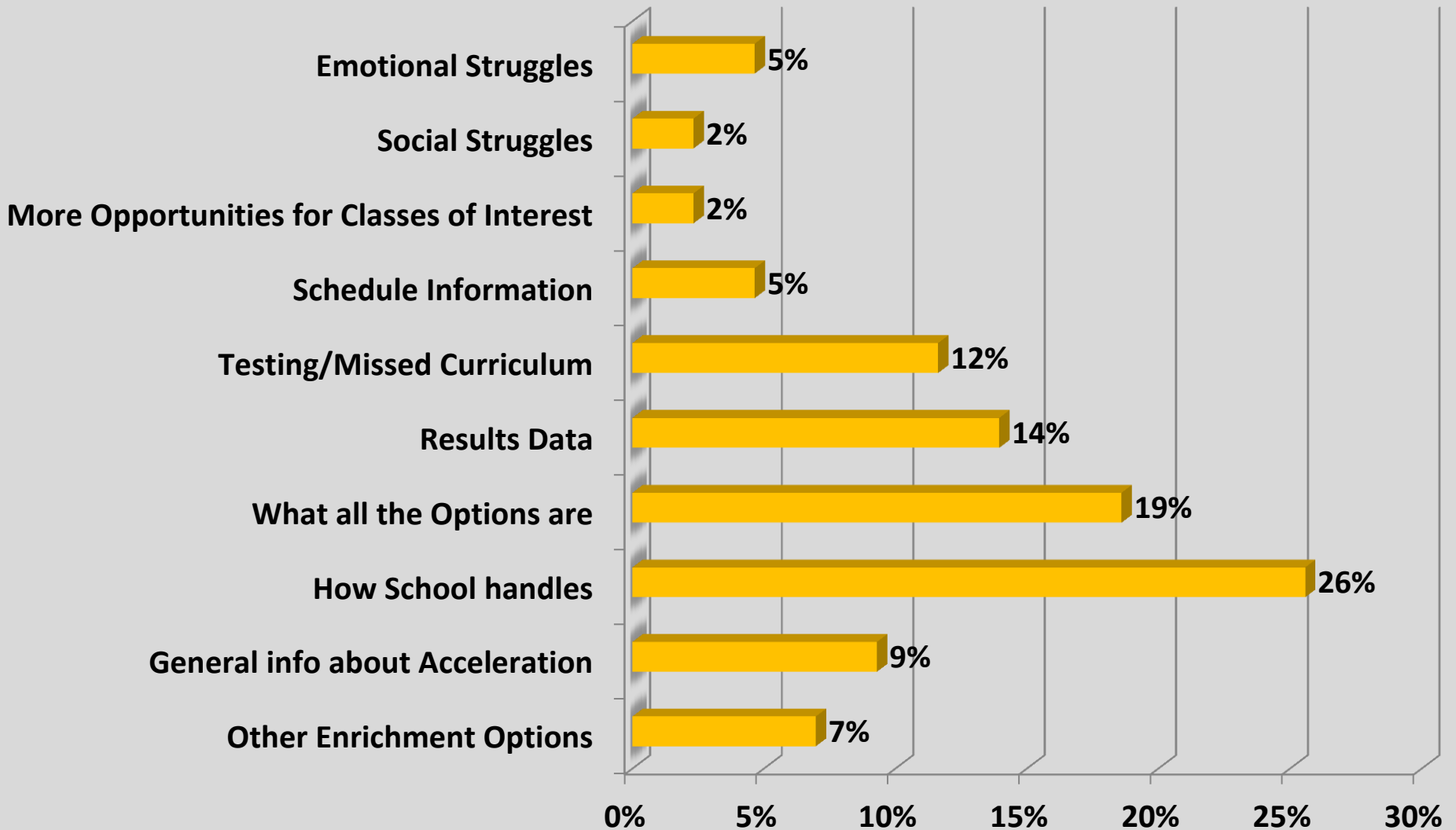
2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results



# Other Information You Wish You Knew



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results



## What happens when child needs “something”

“There is a tendency for them to get ignored because they don't need extra help to do their work.”

“More a question of what if we hadn't bumped him . . . ???”

“The kids eventually become average since they are not given the opportunity to move up or the classroom teaching simply turns them off.”

“I think if our son had been accelerated in K or 1st, we might have had a positive outcome. Acceleration came at a point in his education when we were desperate for help at school (really too late). Our son was underachieving in the classroom, miserable at school, complained he never learned anything at school.....we ending up homeschooling”

# Report to Teachers/Administrators



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Things to consider

“Don’t be so afraid of this. I have honestly never seen it go bad, but I have seen kids become underachievers who chose not to accelerate.”

“Thank you for offering this. Couldn’t imagine my son not being challenged”

“For us, the process was driven by the school and went very smoothly”

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to accelerate; it overall had an extremely positive impact on my K-12 school career”

# Report to Teachers/Administrators



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Things to consider

**“My teachers and principal demonstrated concern I would not ‘adjust socially and normally.’ Although every student is different, I would like to report that it actually helped me become more social and extroverted”**

**“Please be supportive of kids that need the acceleration and do not put up excuses or barriers. Administrators, empower your teachers”**

**“Receiving teachers need to know student is accelerated and communicate more with parents and not punish student if they don’t support acceleration”**

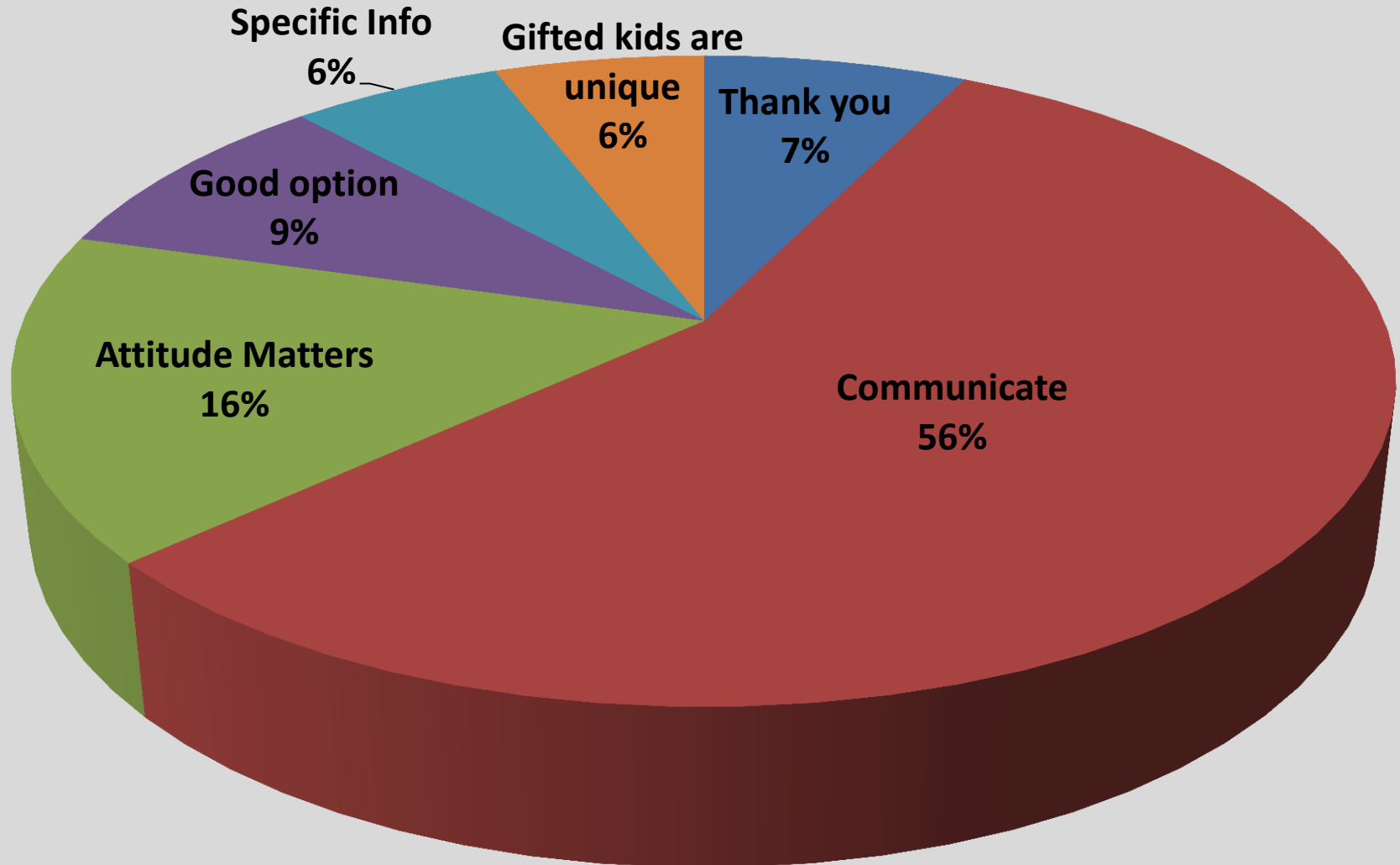
**“Boredom is dangerous”**

Communication

# Report to Teachers/Administrators



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results



# Tell a Student Considering Acceleration



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

“It’s a great thing if you are not being challenged, plan for more work and some disruption to your schedule”

“Be positive, things change, and nothing is forever”

“Express yourself and trust your inner self on what you need, not what others think you need.”

“Stay strong, apply yourself and enjoy!”

“If it’s right for you, then you should do it. But, there are also a lot of opportunities for advanced learning that go beyond whole grade acceleration. Be sure to explore all of your opportunities and decide what is best. It can be stressful to accelerate a grade.”

# Tell a Parent Considering Acceleration for Their Child



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

“Only accelerate if your child can perform academically and socially at a higher/more mature level. There is no "status" benefit from accelerating.”

“Don't force it on your child so he/she can "get ahead in life". That's not what this is about. It has to be a necessity not a wish of the parent or student.”

“Let the student make the final decision.”

“Have a positive attitude, be patient”

“Get help from counsellors or people who have experience like other parents of gifted students.”



**“Whether you chose to accelerate or not, as long as your child is your priority, you won't make the wrong decision. If you're undecided, I'd encourage you to explore ALL the options”**

# Did Not Accelerate: Was this the best decision? Any Regrets?



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

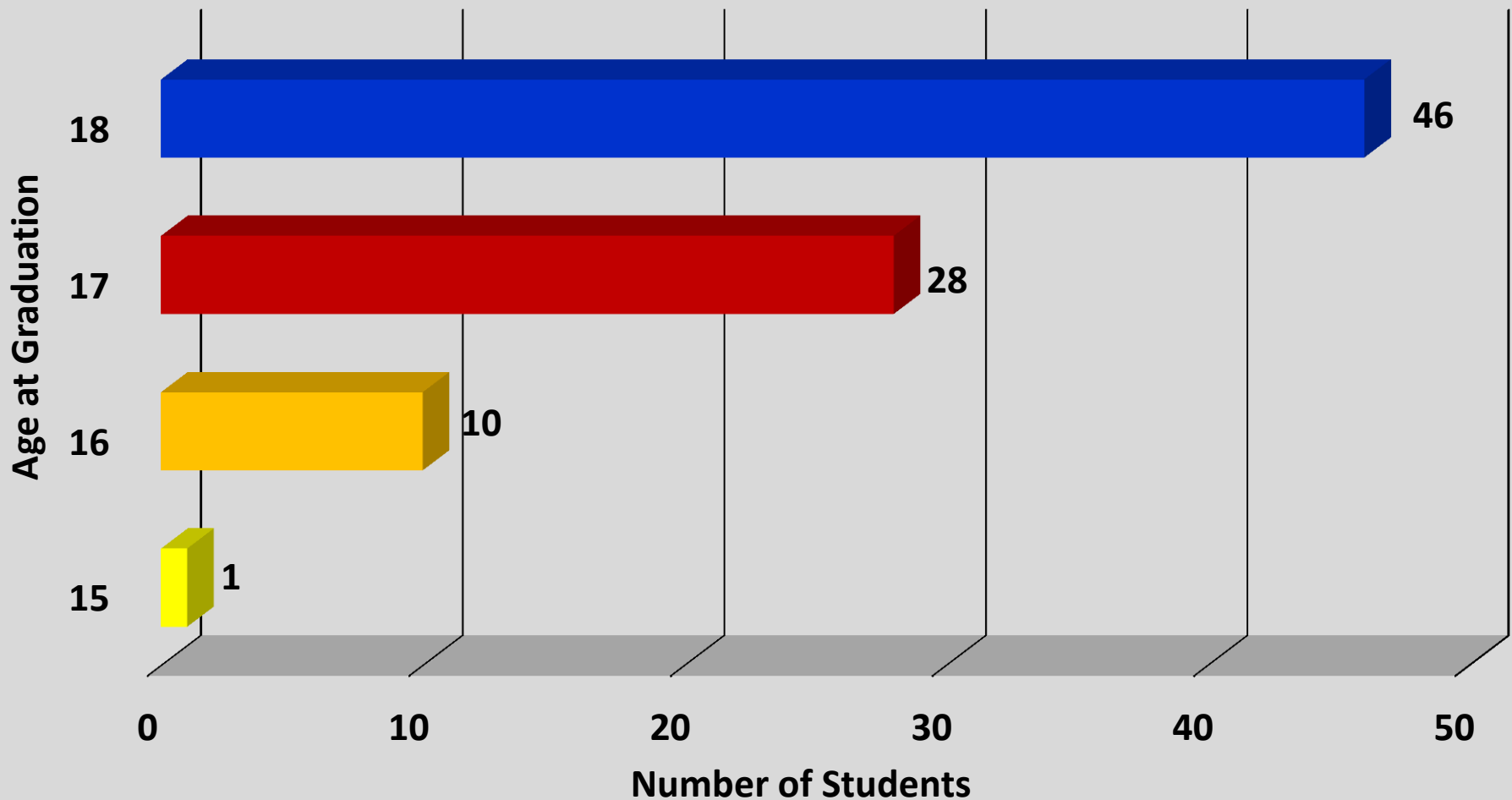
“Yes!! Absolutely no regrets!!”

“In the long term yes, I still think it’s best due to how young he would be in comparison to his classmates”

“If our son could have been accelerated in K or 1st, we might have had a positive outcome”

“Acceleration came at a point in his education when we were desperate for help at school (really too late). Our son was underachieving in the classroom, miserable at school, complained he never learned anything at school.”

## Student Age at HS Graduation



# College Considerations



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

“One less year of saving for college \$ and one less year of our son at home”

“She will start before she is 18 and legally an adult”

“One less year of maturity to handle the pressure of it.”

“She will be 15 when she starts college. That is a much bigger issue for me as the mom than for her as the student.”

# College Considerations



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

“No problems, our daughter was in the honors college and loved it”

“It definitely helped me prepare and survive academically at Harvard, especially the first year”

“Due to all the AP credits he came to college with (47 total) he can get 2 degrees in 4 years!”

“More prepared for college level work”

“He started with Honors Calc 3 and Differential Equations first semester and has done well! Already done with math for engineering degree”

# Post College Considerations



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

“So burned out from school, not going to graduate program. Does not have any great leads coming out of college. Not real motivated to continue to push above and beyond.”

“Allowed him to spend a year after college graduation in volunteer service before going to medical school. when acceleration was offered, we said **"it's a gift of a year you might want some day"** and it turned out it was. He reminded us of the "gift of a year" when he wanted to gap/volunteer year!”

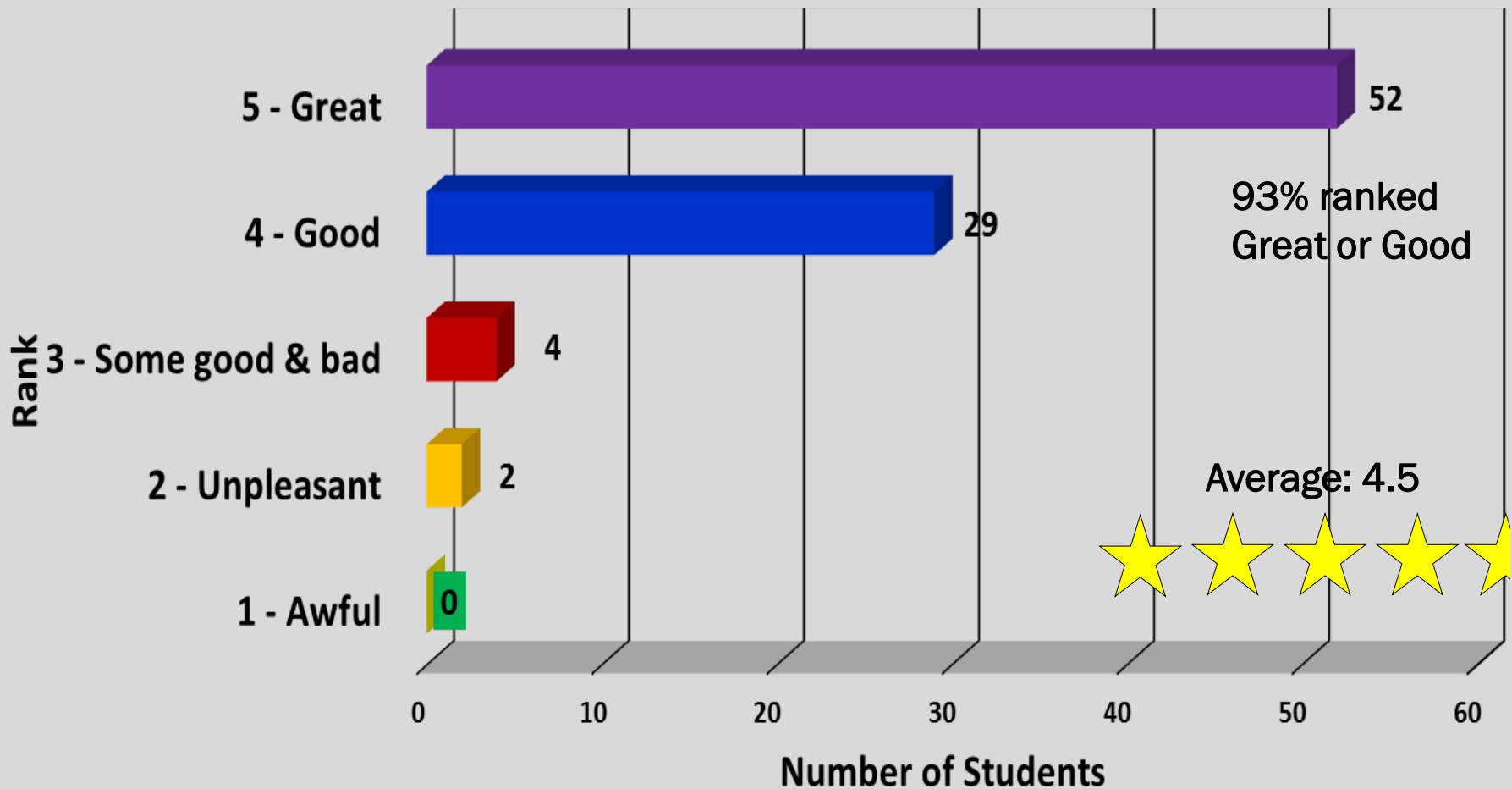
“Acceleration starting in middle school taught me to be unafraid of trying new things, to take on new challenges. I truly believe [it] contributed to my confidence in college, and will most likely continue to positively impact me beyond college.”

# Acceleration Experience Ranking



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

## Acceleration Experience



# Acceleration Experience Ranking



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

“It’s not a solution for every child, I have 2 gifted kids & knew my older daughter could be accelerated but my younger daughter would not be able to handle it”

“Your child needs to be mature as well as gifted”

“It was really a great experience but a great personal sacrifice on her part. It was the best solution for her because she was so far beyond her peers “

“I would recommend it to any student considering acceleration. If you don’t like it or it’s too stressful, you can always go back.”



## Final Thought

“It’s hard to be a parent! Know that you aren’t pushing your child you are just letting go so that you aren’t holding them back.”

# BVPAGE Acceleration Surveys



2016-2017  
Acceleration  
Survey Results

Website: [WWW.BVPAGE.ORG](http://WWW.BVPAGE.ORG)

Facebook: BVPAGE

Twitter: @BVPAGEORG

