

Program Report 2014 for Peekskill High School

Introduction

Michael Arterberry, the Founder and Executive Director of the Youth Voices Center, Inc., a non-profit organization which has the sole purpose of improving the lives of young people, is also the creator of the Power of Peace program. The Power of Peace program was introduced to Westchester County, NY and surrounding areas in 2005. The results of the Power of Peace program for 2014 are presented in this report. The implementation of the program took place in four cycles during the course of the year.

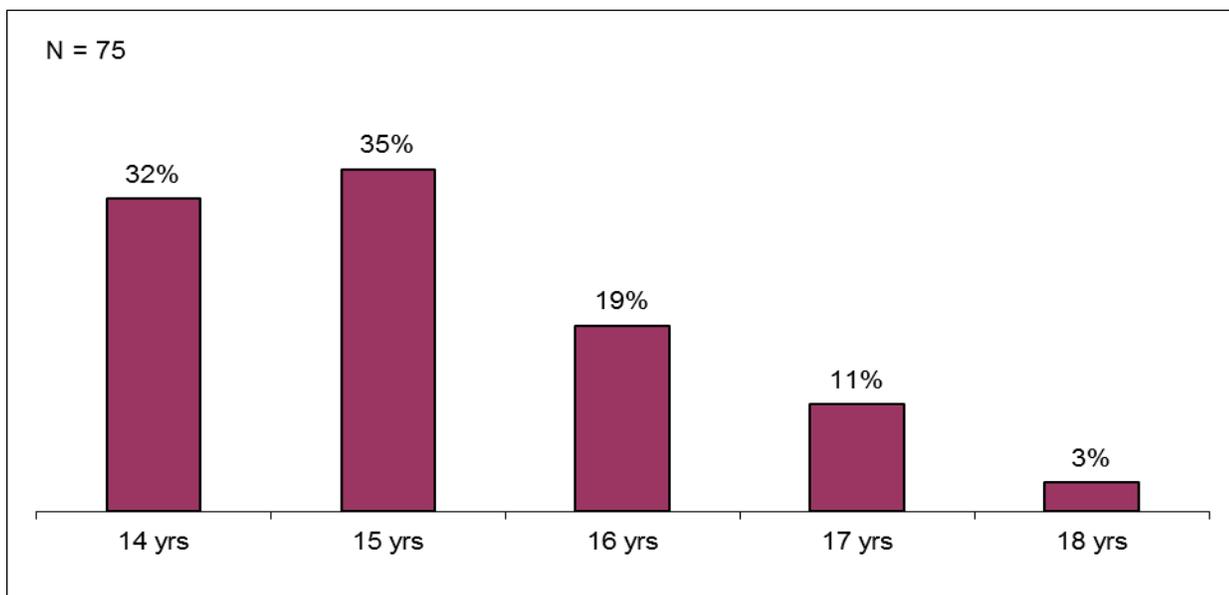
Program Description

Power of Peace is a succession of experiential workshops, with a focus on conflict resolution and anti-violence, designed to enable young people to use their voices to express their concerns, fears and dreams within a safe environment. The workshops address the issues that youth confront daily, the components of which include: positive youth development, leadership, conflict resolution, team work and collaboration, decision making, respect for others and self, and diversity.

Demographics

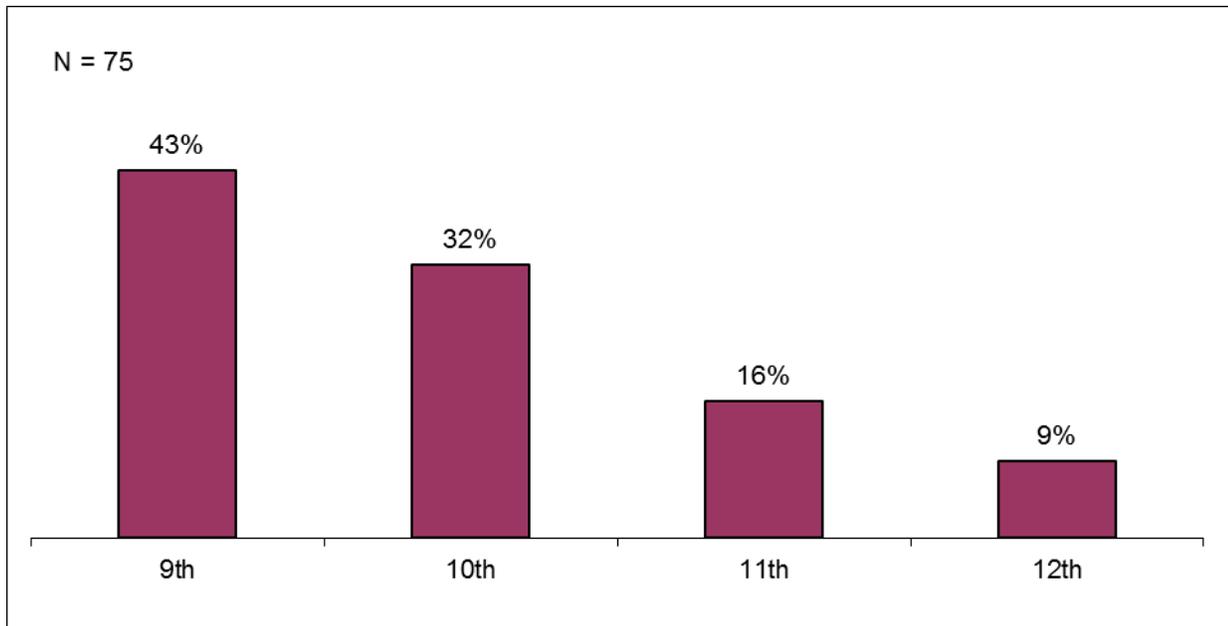
There were 75 students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 32 boys (43%) and 43 girls (57%) in grades 9 through 12 and ranging in age from 14 – 18. Distributions for age, grade and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

Age



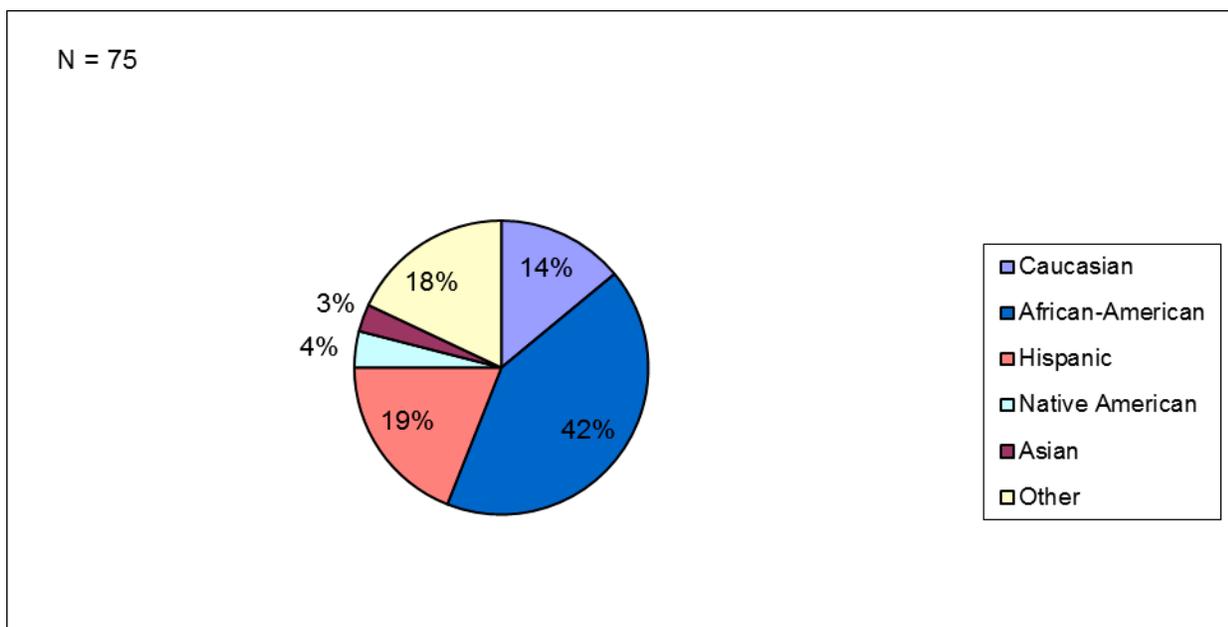
Just under one third (32%) of the participants were 14 years of age, followed by just over one third (35%) of participants 15 years of age.

Grade



The majority, nearly one half (43%) of participants were in the 9th grade, followed by just under one third (32%) of participants in the 10th grade.

Ethnicity



Nearly half (42%) of participants identified their ethnicity as African-American.

Program Evaluation

A six statement pre-survey and a seven statement post-survey, designed by Creative Solutions Consultation Services, LLC, were administered to assess the effectiveness of the program. Students were asked to complete the pre-survey prior to the start of the first workshop and asked to complete the post-survey at the end of the second workshop. Of the 75 participants, 100% completed the pre-survey and 97% completed the post-survey.

Quantitative: Responses to statements were on a five point likert scale ranging from 5 = “Yes, definitely,” 4 = “Mostly,” 3 = “Sometimes,” 2 = “Not Really,” to 1 = “No, Never.”

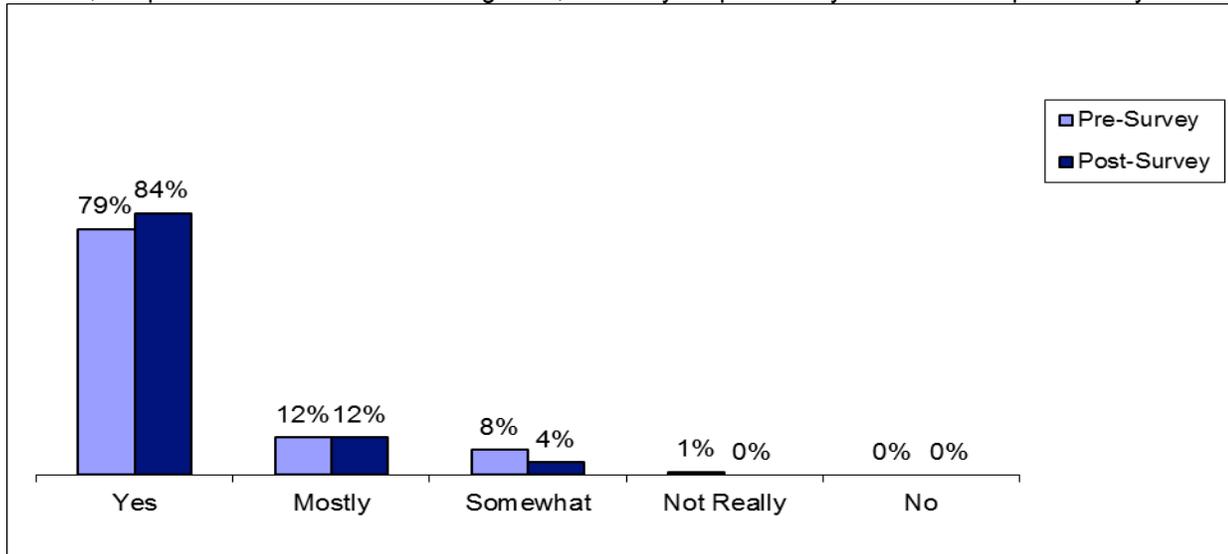
Qualitative: Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

Results

From pre-survey to post-survey, significant ($p < .0001$) positive changes in attitudes were seen on three of the six items. Data were analyzed using t-tests to compare pre-survey responses with post-survey responses.

Item 1: I respect myself.

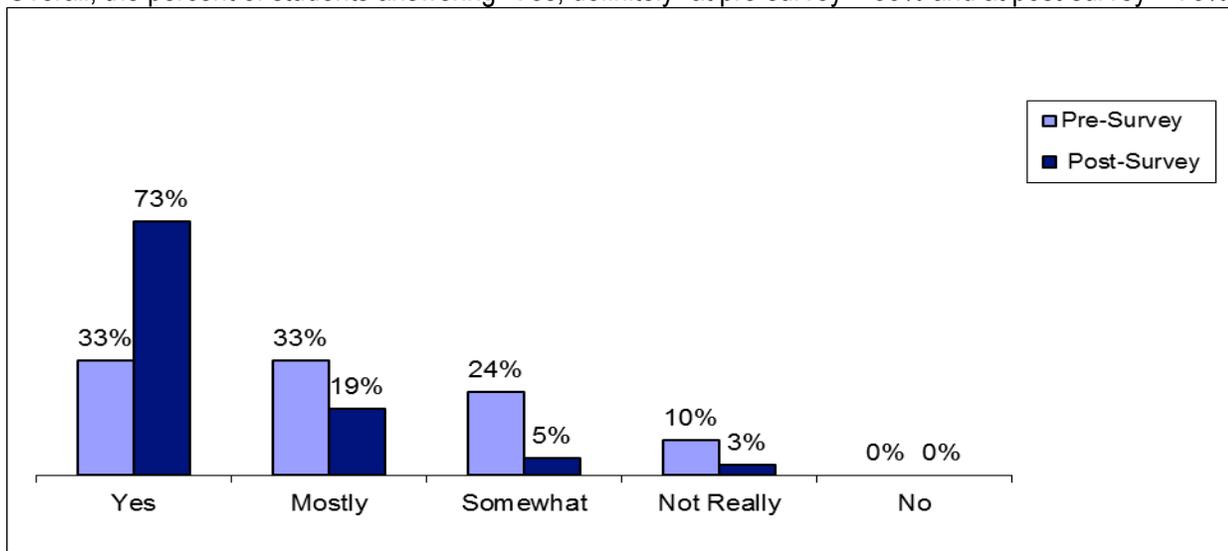
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 79% and at post-survey = 84%.



$t = 1.17, df = 146, not\ statistically\ significant$

Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me.

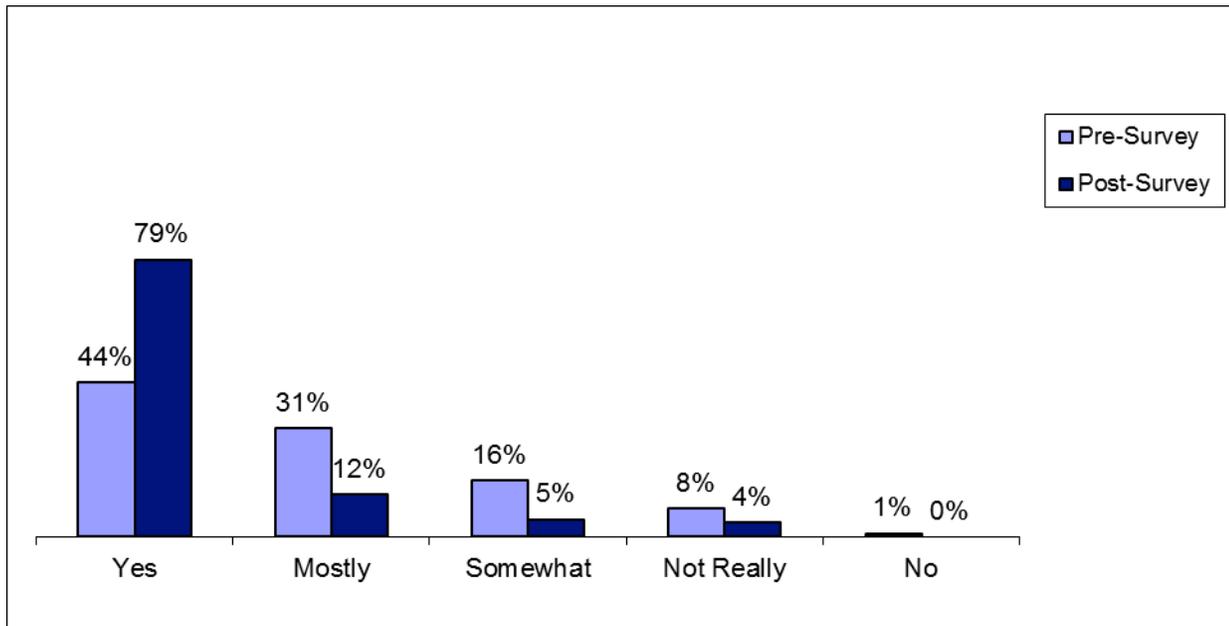
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 33% and at post-survey = 73%.



$t = 5.03, df = 146, p < .0001 = extremely\ statistically\ significant$

Item 3: I respect students different from me.

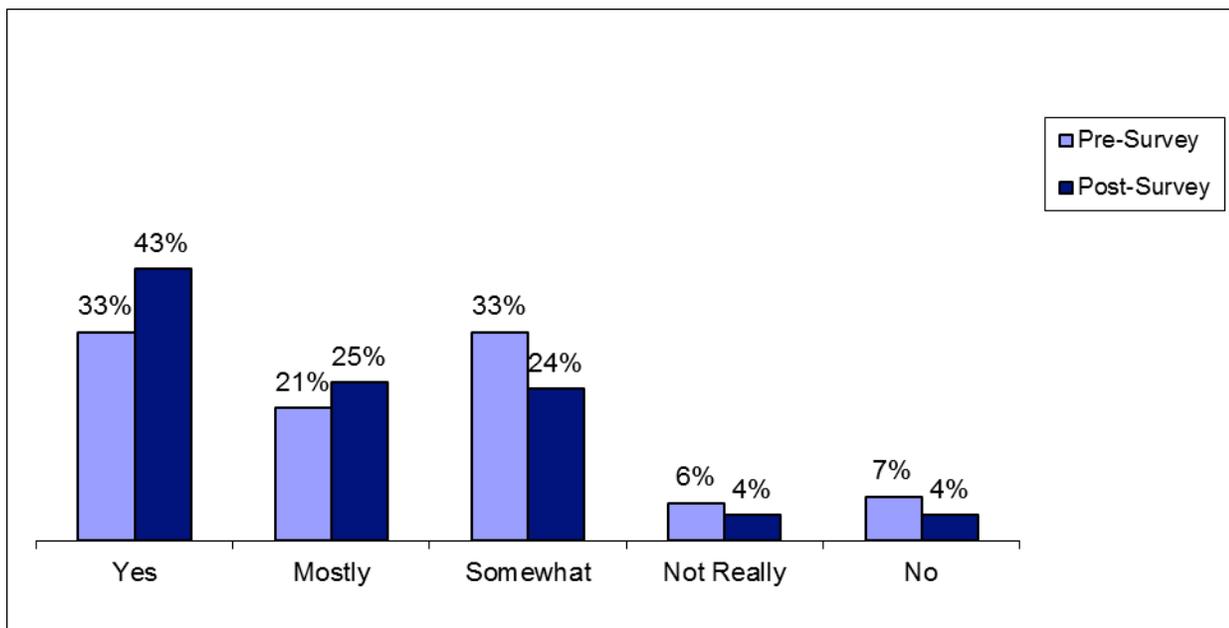
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 44% and at post-survey = 79%.



$t = 4.68, df = 146, p < .0001 = \text{extremely statistically significant}$

Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.

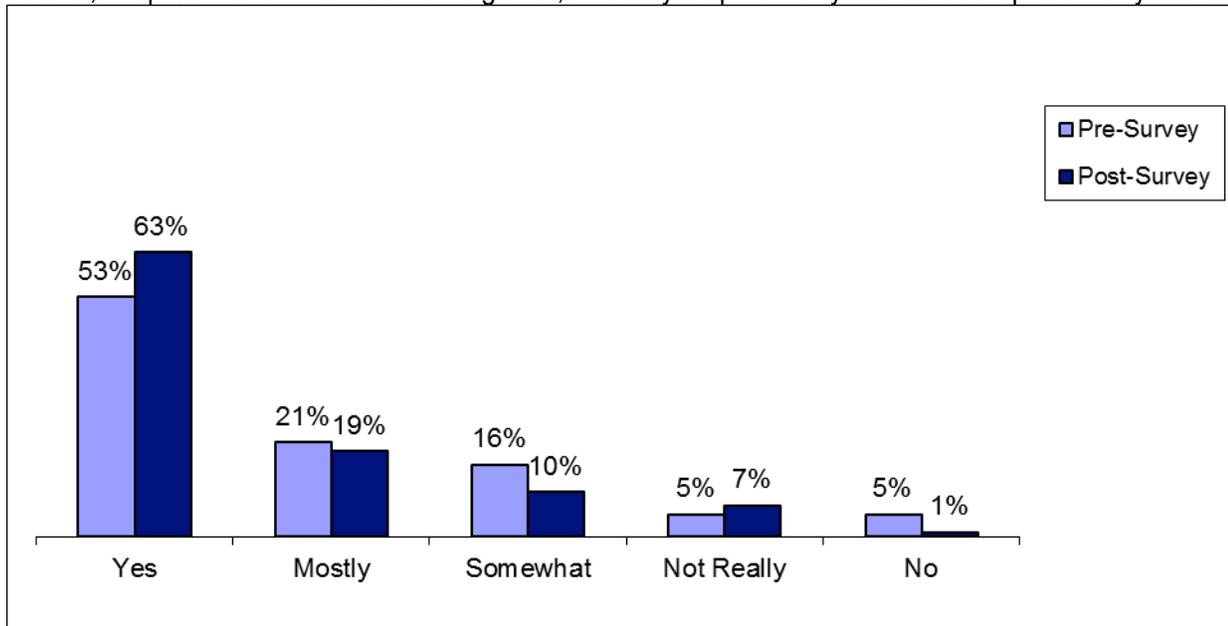
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 33% and at post-survey = 43%.



$t = 1.55, df = 145, \text{not statistically significant}$

Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.

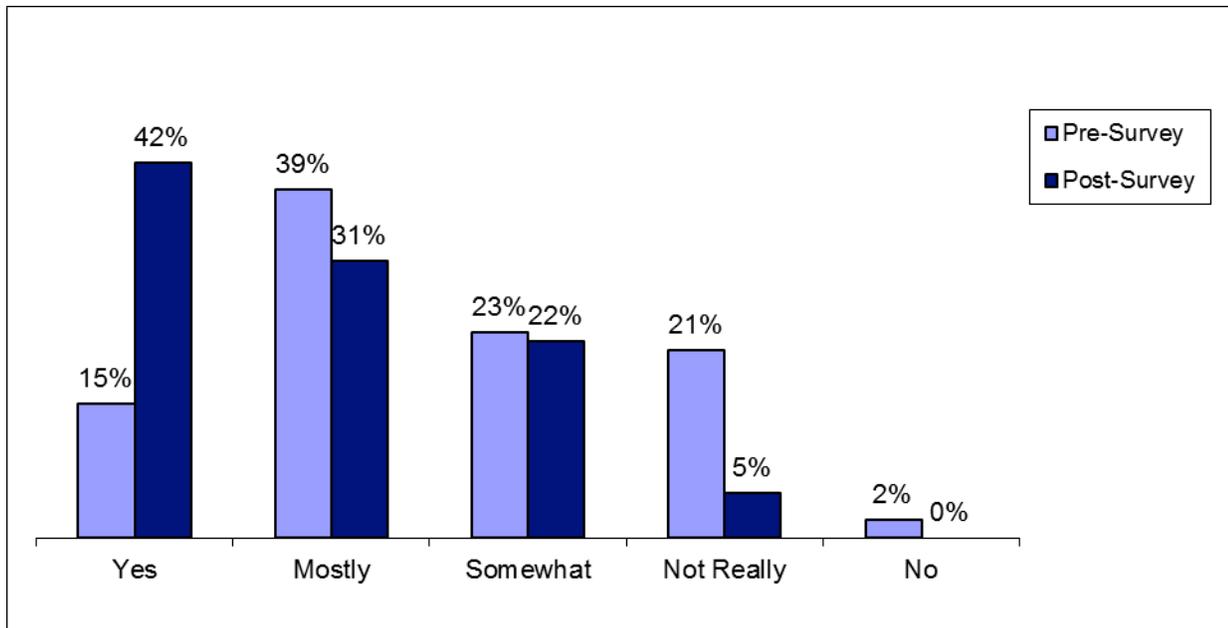
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 53% and at post-survey = 63%.



t = 1.19, df = 145, not statistically significant

Item 6: I think I know how other people see me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 15% and at post-survey = 42%.

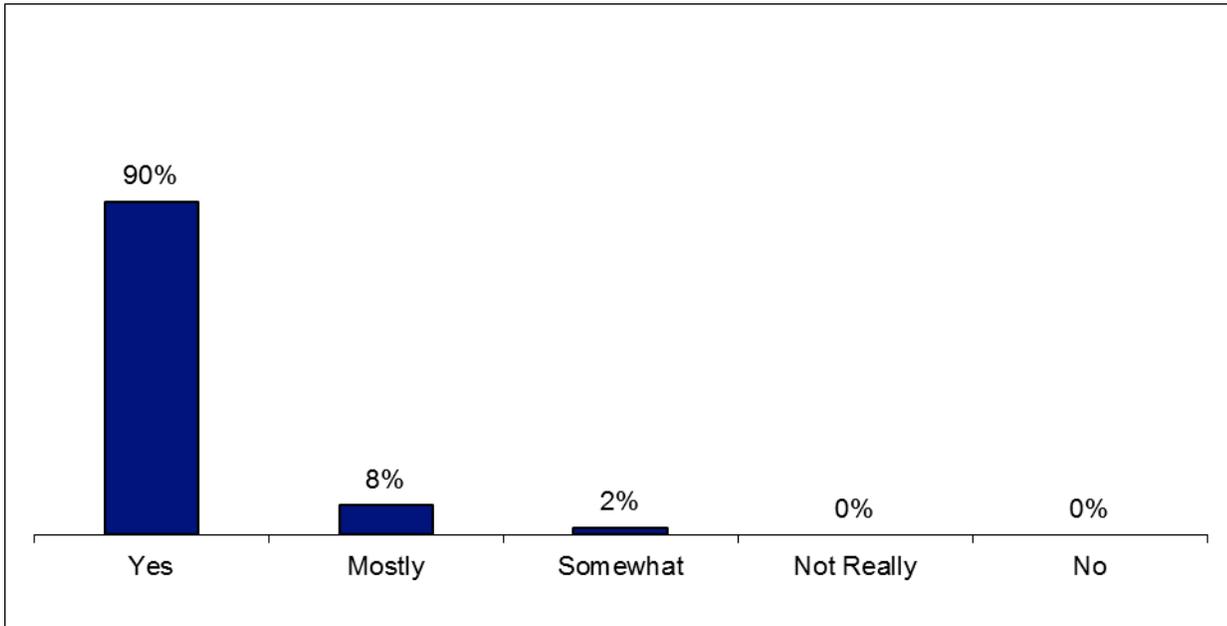


t = 4.05, df = 145, p < .0001 = extremely statistically significant

In addition to the six previous items listed, the three items listed below were included in the post-survey.

Item 7: I think it's a good idea for other students in my school to attend the Power of Peace workshops.

The vast majority (90%) of the participants answered “Yes, definitely.”



Item 8: Please tell us how you feel about Power of Peace

Of the 73 students who completed the post-survey, 96% of them took the time to comment on how that felt about the Power of Peace experience. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive. Adjectives used to describe the Power of Peace program in response to this survey item include: perfect, excellent, great, fantastic, wonderful, life-changing, awesome, and inspirational.

Quotes from participants include:

It is a great way to put different people together to find qualities they have in common and form friendships.

Power of Peace helps kinds to think outside of themselves.

It allowed me to express my feelings without being judged.

Power of Peace made me fell willing to learn about other people different from myself.

It changed my life and helped me become a better student.

It helped me to see that I am not the only person who goes through stuff in life.

Because of POP you can make friends with people that you thought you would never be friends with.

This program opened my eye about life and my education.

I feel happier after taking the workshops – like a weight has been lifted off of me.

I learned that I was not the only person who felt alone at school

Item 9: Please tell us what we could do to improve Power of Peace

Of the 73 students who completed the post-survey, 94% of them took the time to comment on improving the Power of Peace experience. The majority, 91% of the respondents indicated that they could think of nothing that would improve the Power of Peace program. Among the comments suggesting ways to improve the program the following were listed:

- Have smaller circles so people can hear better
- Share the program with more people
- Make it more than two days
- Add even more games and activities
- Make it a year round club at school

Discussion

The one statement indicating the highest change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 3: I respect students different from me (an increase of 40%). The statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 1: I respect myself (an increase of 5%).

Conclusion

The results presented in this report indicate that the Power of Peace program did have a positive effect in changing student attitudes in from pre-survey to post-survey. The following three of which achieved statistical significance:

- I am willing to talk to a student different from me.
- I respect students different from me.
- I think I know how other people see me.

These results are primarily limited by the fact that this was not an empirical study. Without follow up measures, it is impossible to know the extent to which any attitudinal changes will be sustained.