



## Power of Peace Aggregate Program Report 2013

### 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 2013 are presented in this report. The implementation of the program took place in six school districts (Peekskill, Ossining, New Rochelle, Port Chester, Hudson and Schenectady) during seven months throughout the year: February, March, April, September, October, November, and December. A total of 18 Power of Peace workshop cycles were completed in 2013.

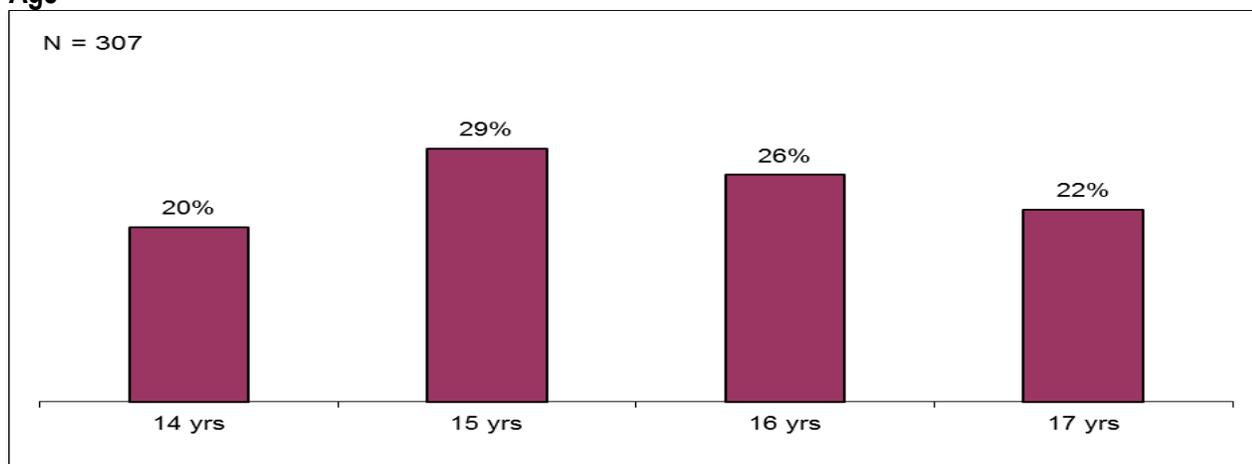
### Program Description

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

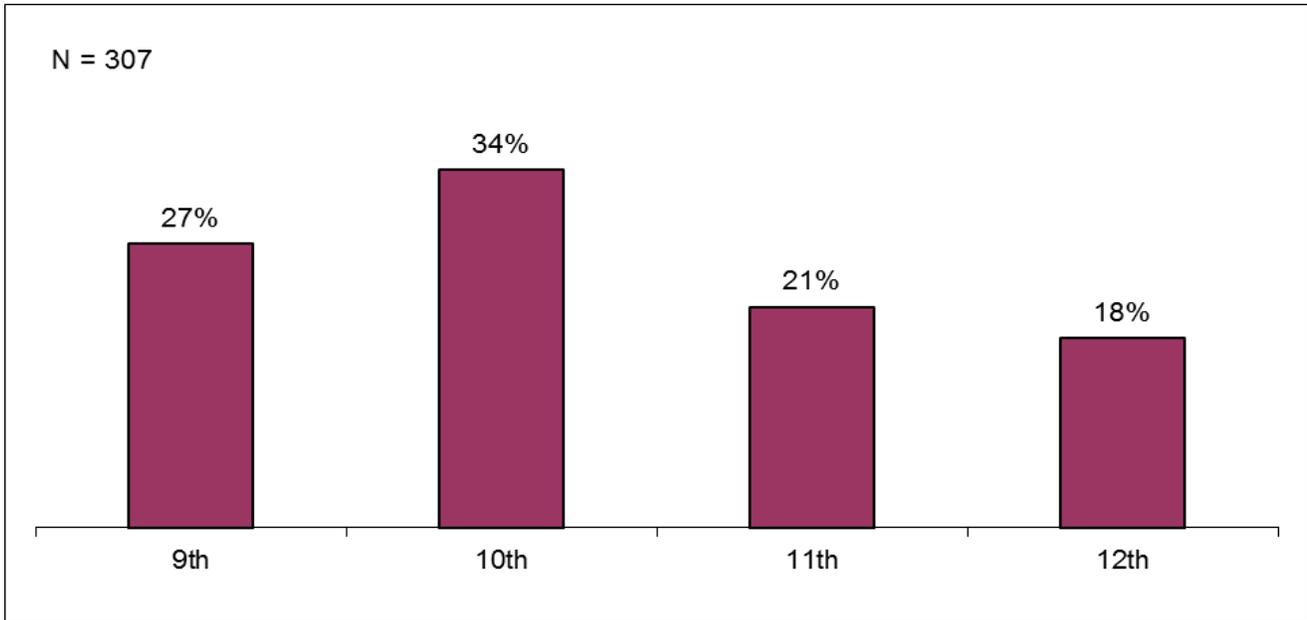
There were 307 students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 129 boys (42%) and 178 girls (58%) in grades 9 through 12 and ranging in age from 14 – 18. Distributions for age, grade and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

#### Age



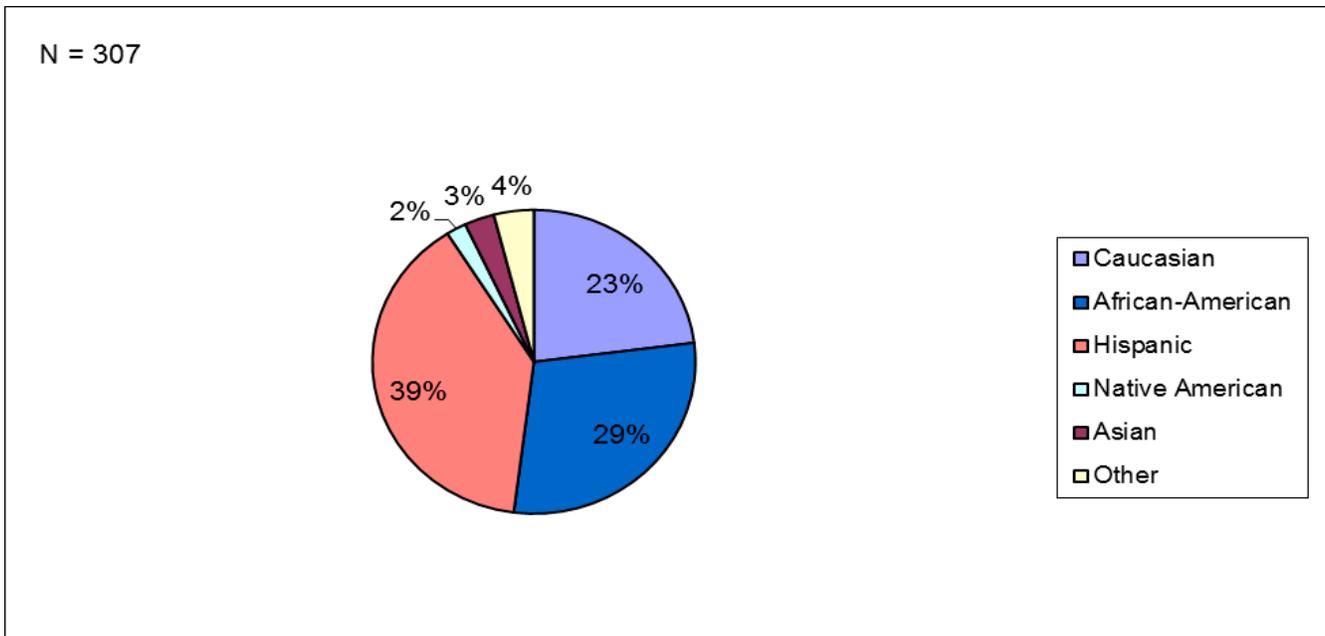
Just under one third (29%) of the participants were 15 years of age, followed by just over a quarter (26%) of participants 16 years of age.

## Grade



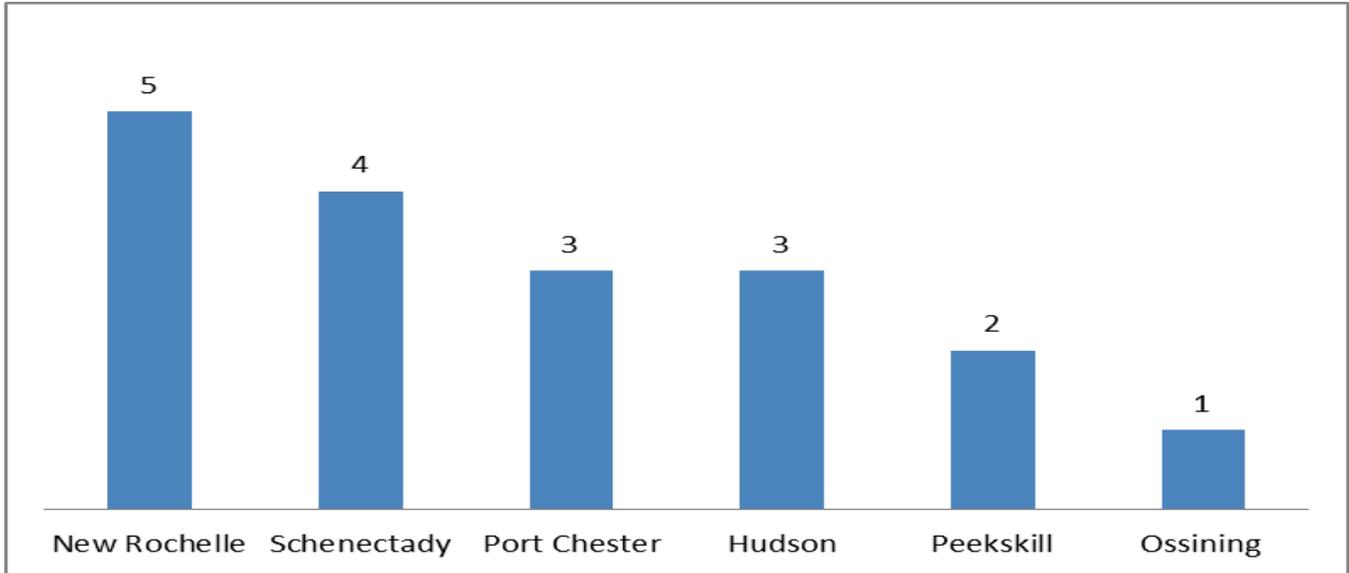
Just over one third (34%) of participants were in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, followed by just over one quarter (27%) in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Ethnicity



Over one third (39%) of participants identified their ethnicity as Hispanic, followed by African-American (29%) and then Caucasian (23%).

## Number of Power of Peace Cycles by School District



In 2013, New Rochelle High School led the way holding five cycles of Power of Peace, followed by Schenectady High School holding four cycles. Both Port Chester High School and Hudson High School each held three cycles of Power of Peace, while Peekskill High School held two cycles and Ossining High School held one. Hudson High School is new to the Power of Peace community.

### Program Evaluation

A six statement pre-survey and a seven statement post-survey, designed by Marie-Elena Grosett, Ph.D. of 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 307 participants, 97% completed the pre-survey and 93% 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."

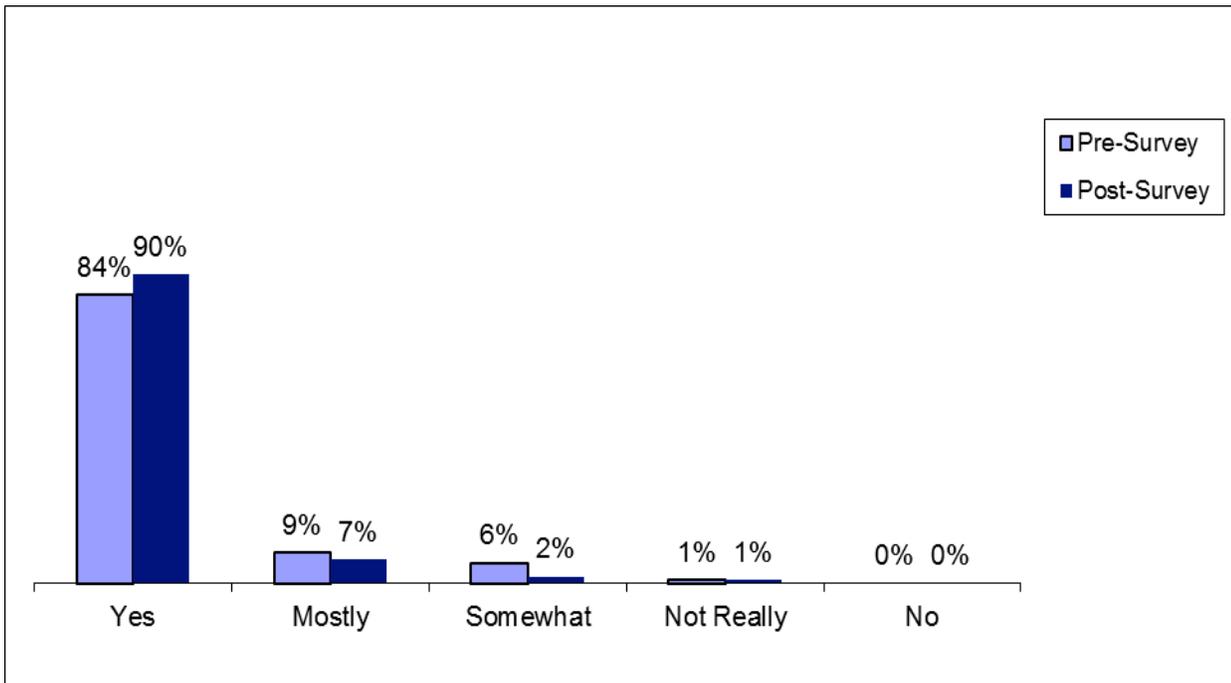
**Qualitative:** Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

### Results

From pre-survey to post-survey, significant ( $p < .0001$  to  $p < .05$ ) positive changes in attitudes were seen on all of the six items. Data were analyzed using t-tests comparing pre-survey responses with post survey responses.

**Item 1: I respect myself.**

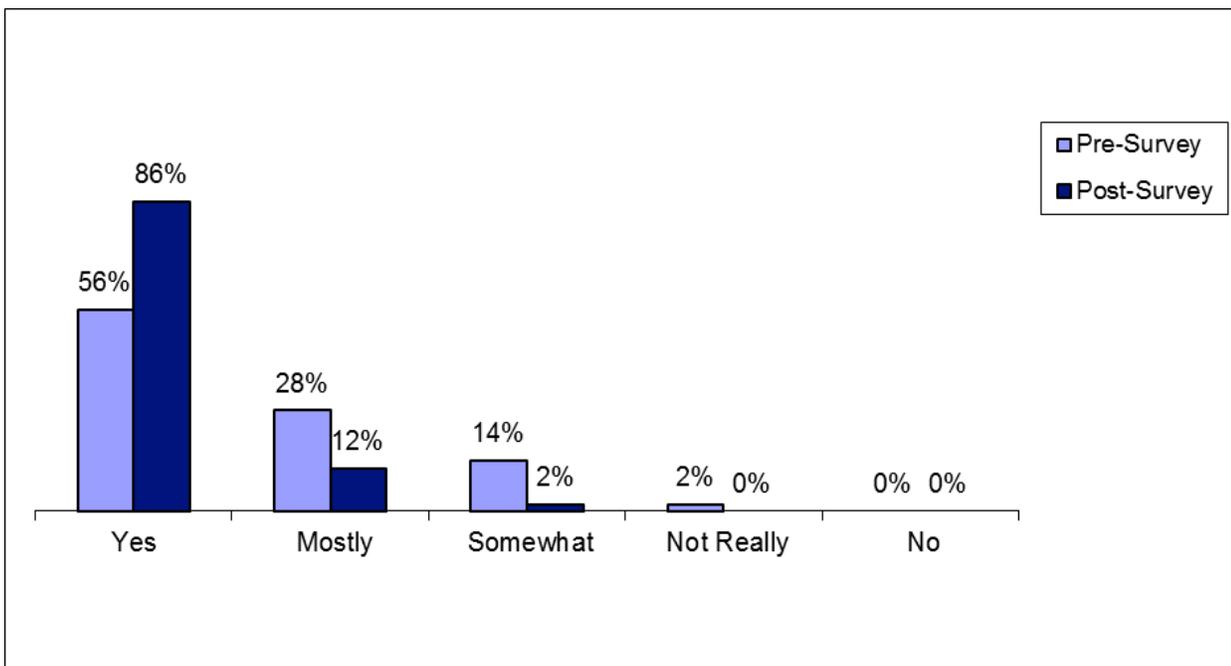
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 84% and at post-survey = 90%.



$t = 2.37, df = 612, p < .02 = \text{statistically significant}$

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

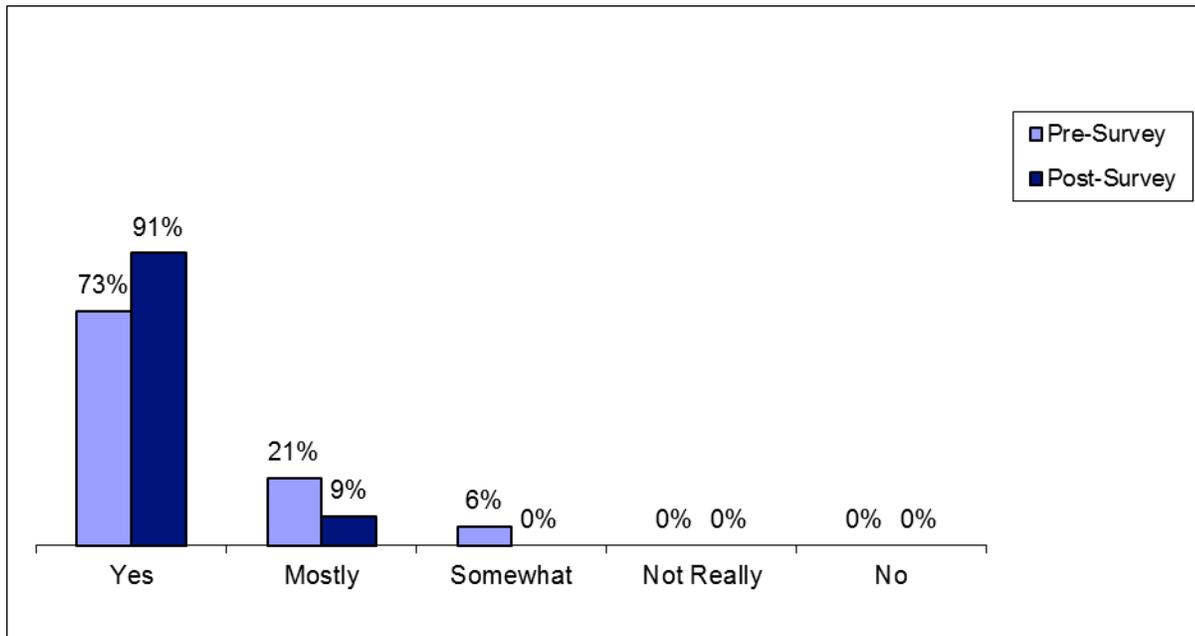
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 56% and at post-survey = 86%.



$t = 8.71, df = 611, p < .0001 = \text{statistically significant}$

**Item 3: I respect students different from me.**

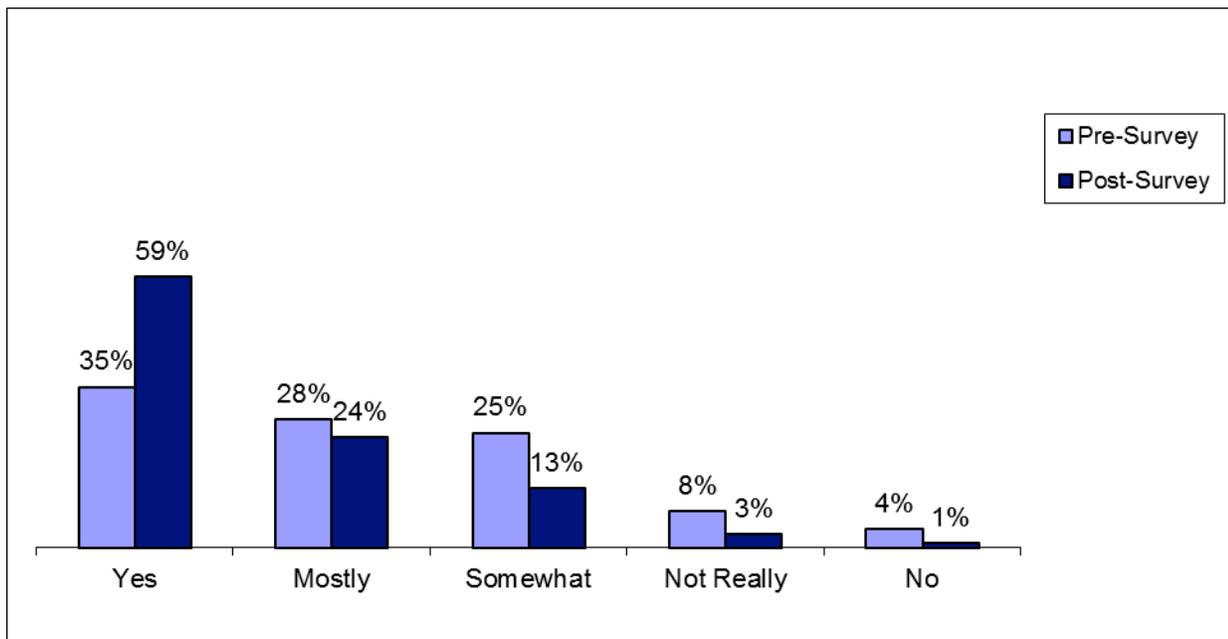
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 73% and at post-survey = 91%.



*t = 5.71, df = 612, p < .0001 = statistically significant*

**Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.**

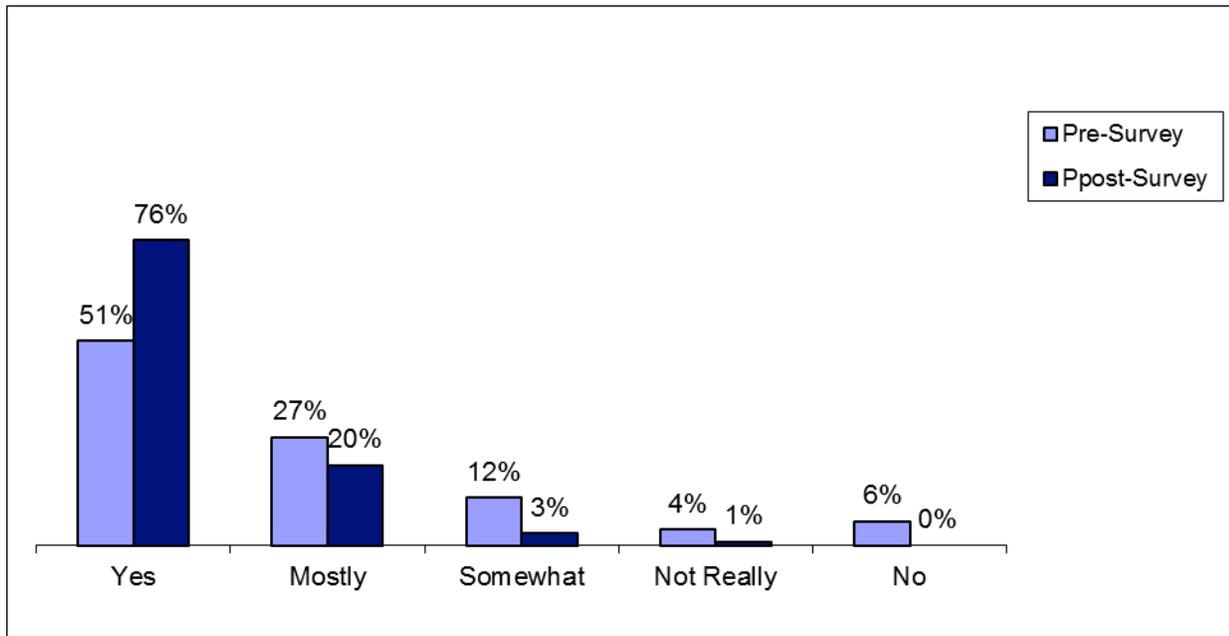
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 35% and at post-survey = 59%.



*t = 6.90, df = 610, p < .0001 = statistically significant*

**Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.**

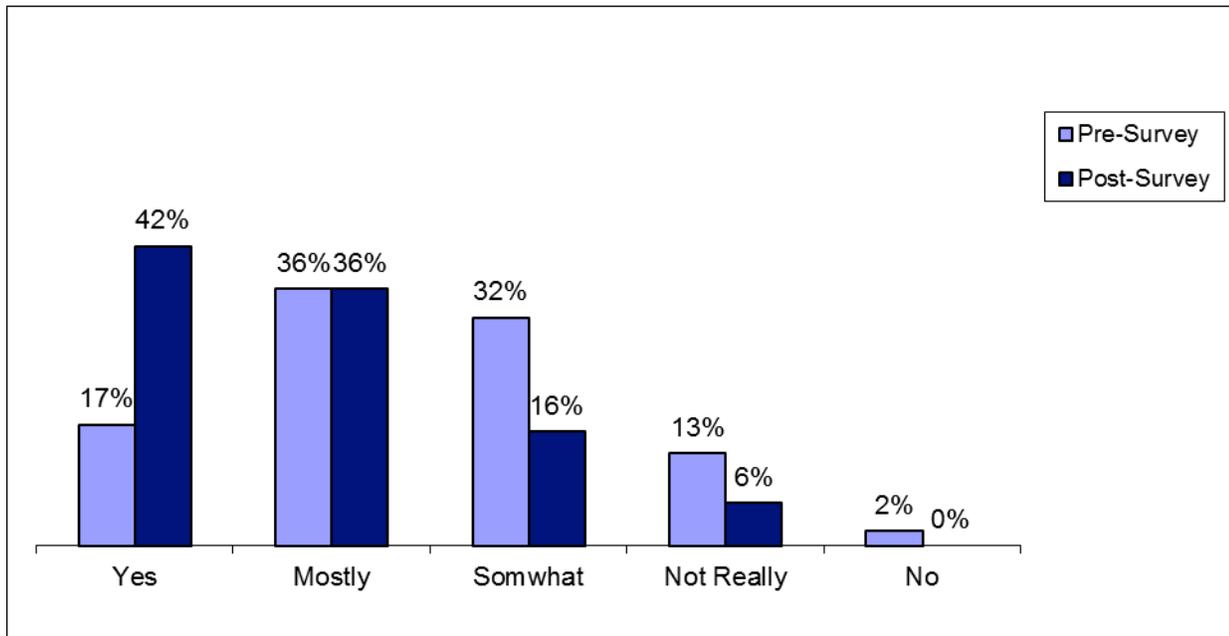
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 51% and at post-survey = 76%.



*t = 7.75, df = 612, p < .0001 = statistically significant*

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

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 17% and at post-survey = 42%.

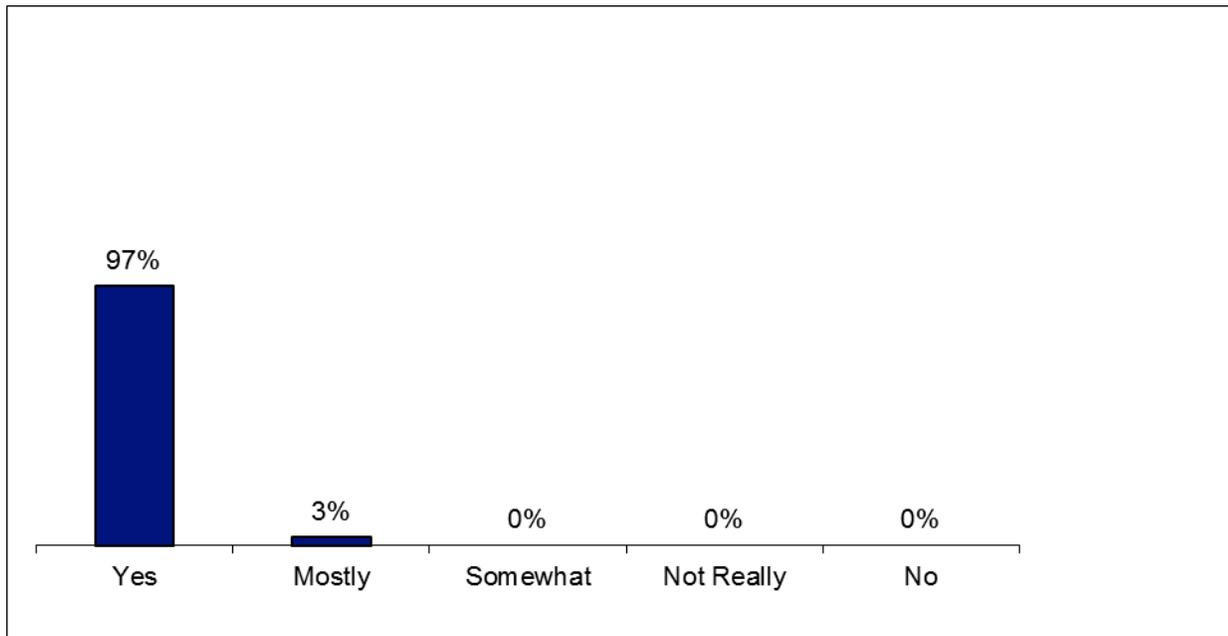


*t = 7.88, df = 612, p < .0001 = statistically significant*

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 overwhelming majority (97%) of the participants answered "Yes, definitely."



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

The feedback received on how students felt about the Power of Peace experience was overwhelmingly positive. Adjectives used to describe the Power of Peace program in response to this survey item include: fun, deep, cool, eye-opening, genuine, wise, insightful, life-changing, enlightening and the real deal.

Quotes from participants include:

- This was a great eye opening experience that really makes you value and reevaluate everything in your life.*
- Power of Peace is amazing because of the way it can help you feel better about yourself and other people.*
- Power of Peace can help students or are stressed with school and overwhelmed with life in general.*
- It helped me so much that I cried, I felt relieved and happy and now I am a better person.*
- It serves as a support group and helps raise kids' self-esteem.*
- It made me open up and shedding tears made me realize important things and what they symbolize.*
- Power of Peace gives young people the opportunity to express themselves and give them confidence.*
- The program is a good place to express yourself and not be judged.*
- It's an amazing program and helped me open up and get to know others different than me.*
- Thanks to these workshops I found out some things about myself that I want to work on*
- Power of Peace has changed my perspective on things.*
- After Power of Peace I actually feel confident of myself to finally talk to people I don't know and I feel proud.*

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

The majority 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: expand program, more of a variety of different races of students in the same group, more workshops, other countries, more adult participation, more times per year, more stories, more games, and longer (a week).

## **Discussion**

The one statement indicating the highest change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 2: I respect students different from me (an increase of 29%). The statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 1: I respect myself (an increase of 14%).

## **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. Statistically significant change was demonstrated in all six areas represented by the following statements:

- I respect myself.
- I am willing to talk to a student different from me.
- I respect students different from me.
- I believe violence will not resolve conflict.
- I am aware of alternatives to violence.
- 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.