

Program Report 2015-2016 School Year for New Rochelle School District

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 2015-2016 are presented in this report. The implementation of the program took place in six cycles during the months of September – March. Five of the cycles took place at New Rochelle High School while the remaining one took place at St. Gabriel’s Alternative School.

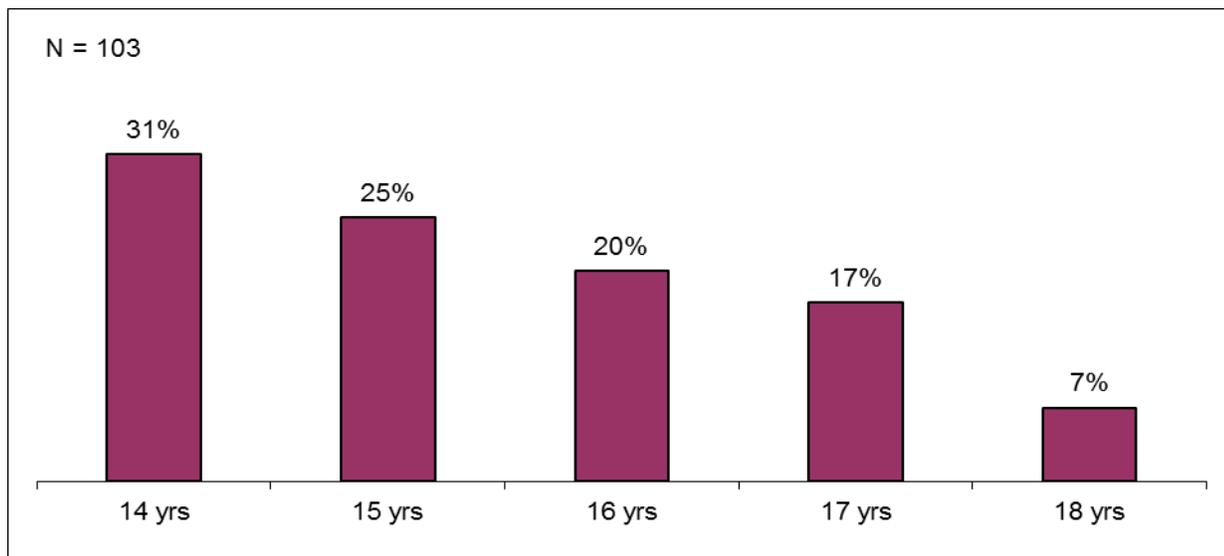
Program Description

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

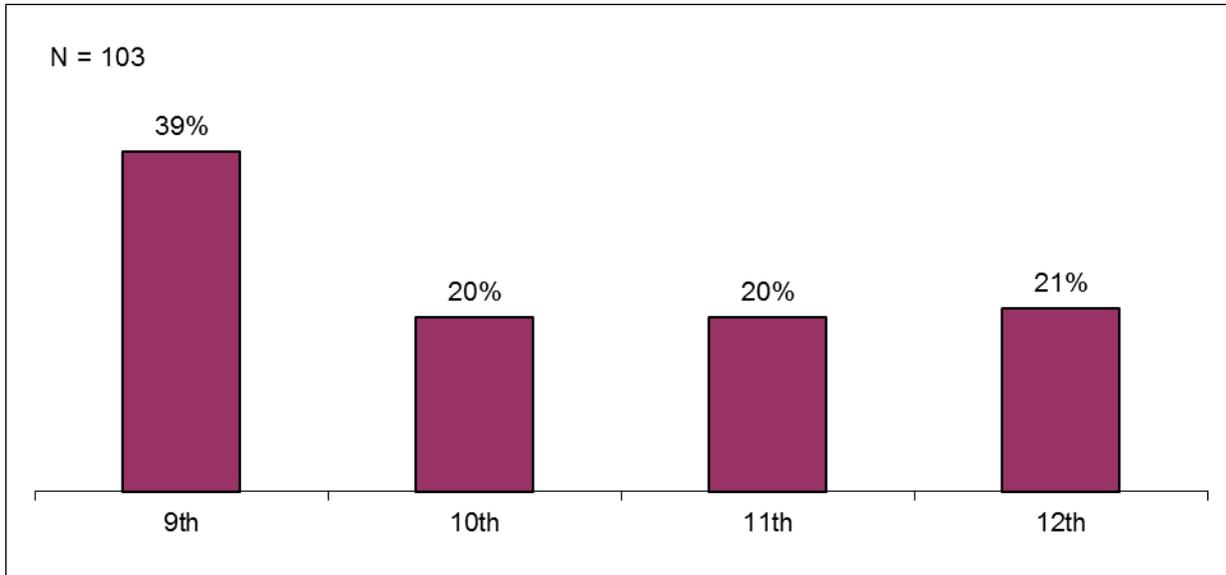
There were 103 students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 51 boys (50%) and 52 girls (50%) in grades 9 through 12 and ranging in age from 14– 18. There were 5 adult participants as well. Distributions for age and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

Age



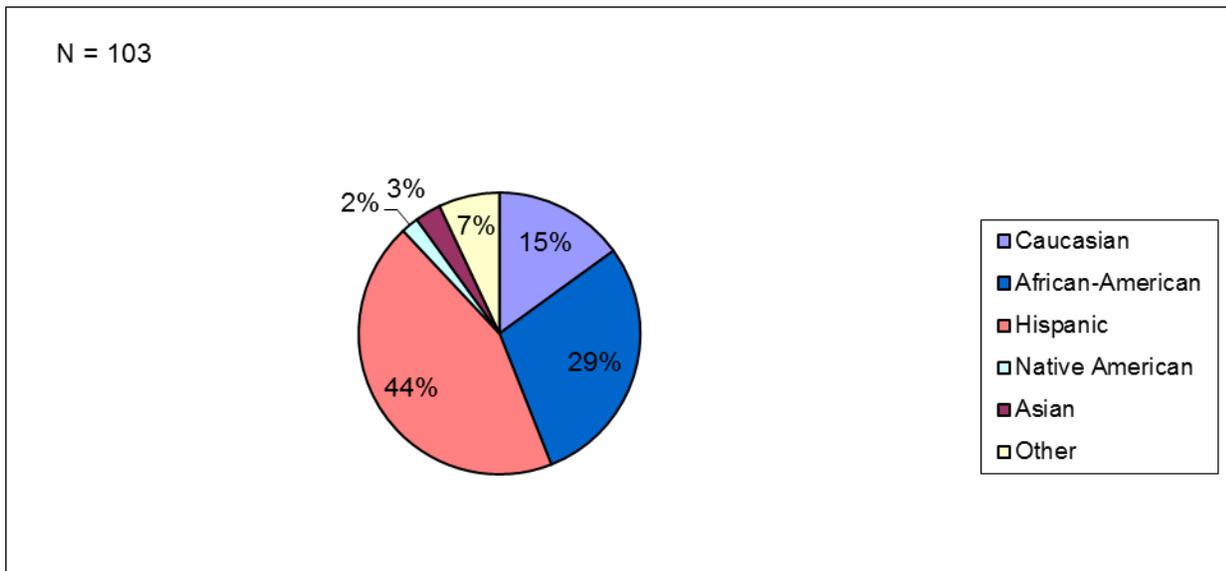
Nearly one third (31%) of the participants were 14 years of age, followed a quarter (25%) of participants age 15.

Grade



Nearly one two fifths (39%) of the participants were in the 9th grade, followed by a relatively even (20%) distribution of participants in grades 10th – 12th.

Ethnicity



Nearly half (44%) of participants identified their ethnicity as Hispanic, followed by nearly a third (29%) identified their ethnicity 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 103 participants, 100% completed the pre-survey and 92% 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.”

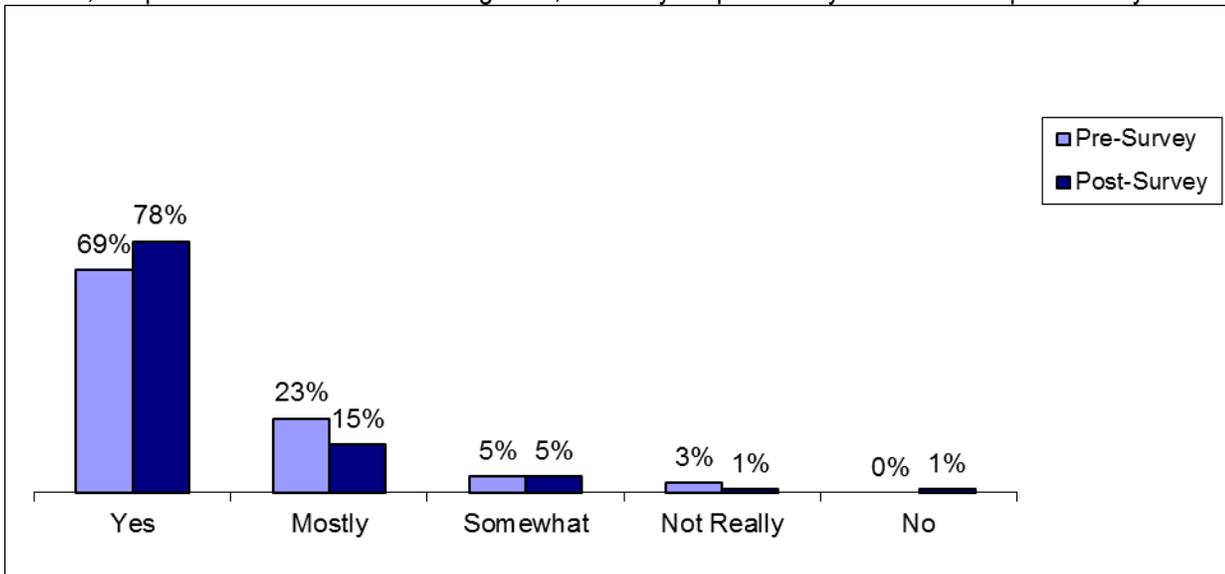
Qualitative: Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

Results

From pre-survey to post survey, positive change in attitudes were seen on 5 of the 6 items.

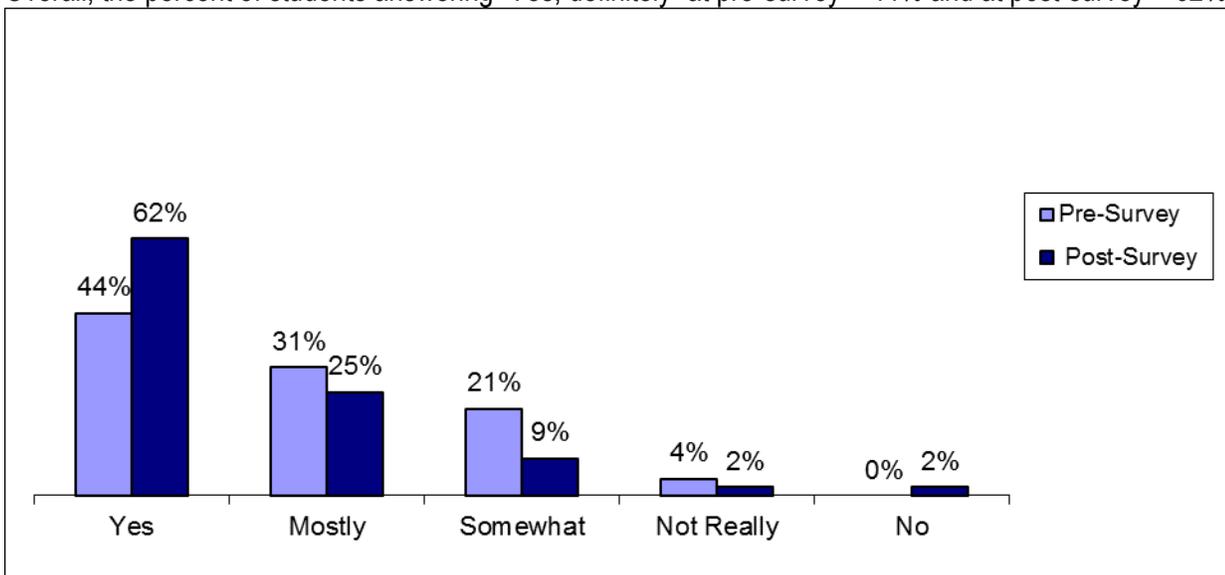
Item 1: I respect myself.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 69% and at post-survey = 78%.



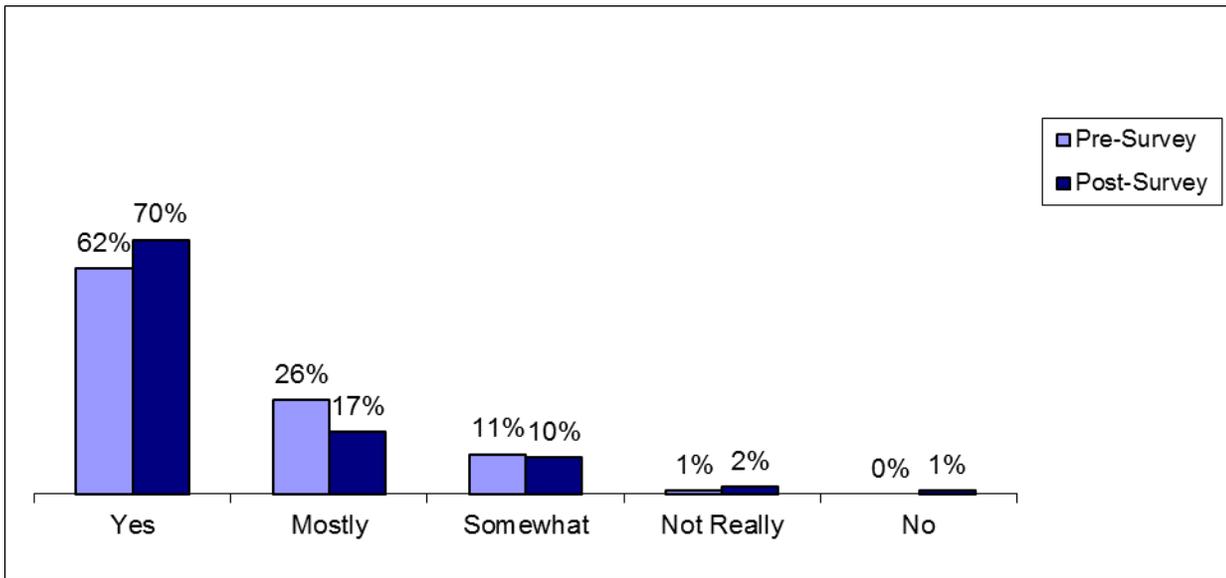
Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 44% and at post-survey = 62%.



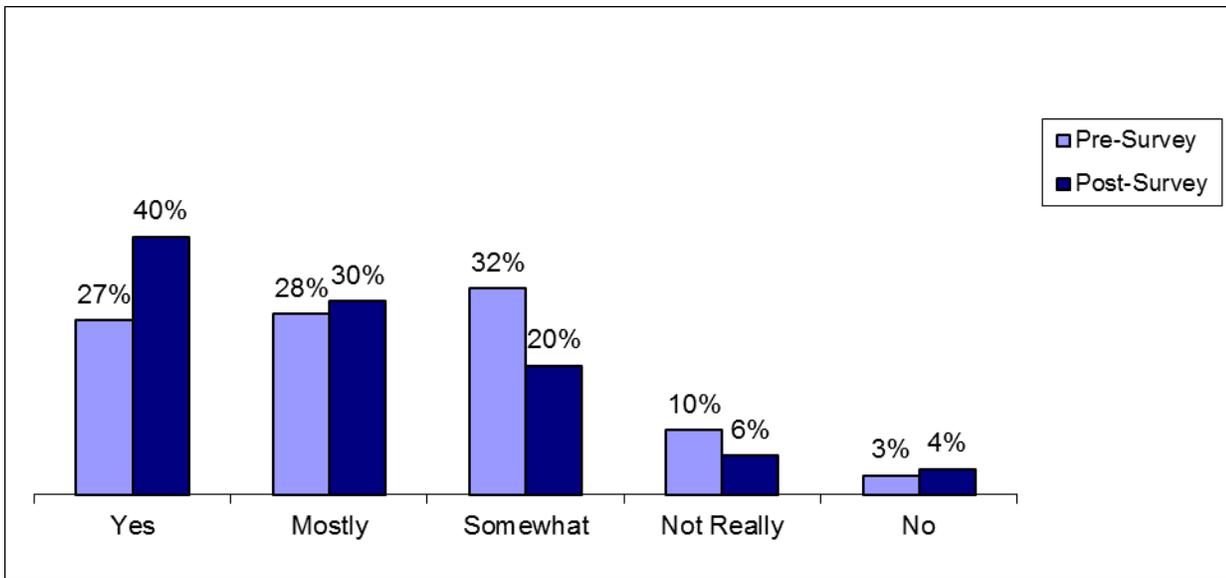
Item 3: I respect students different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 62% and at post-survey = 70%.



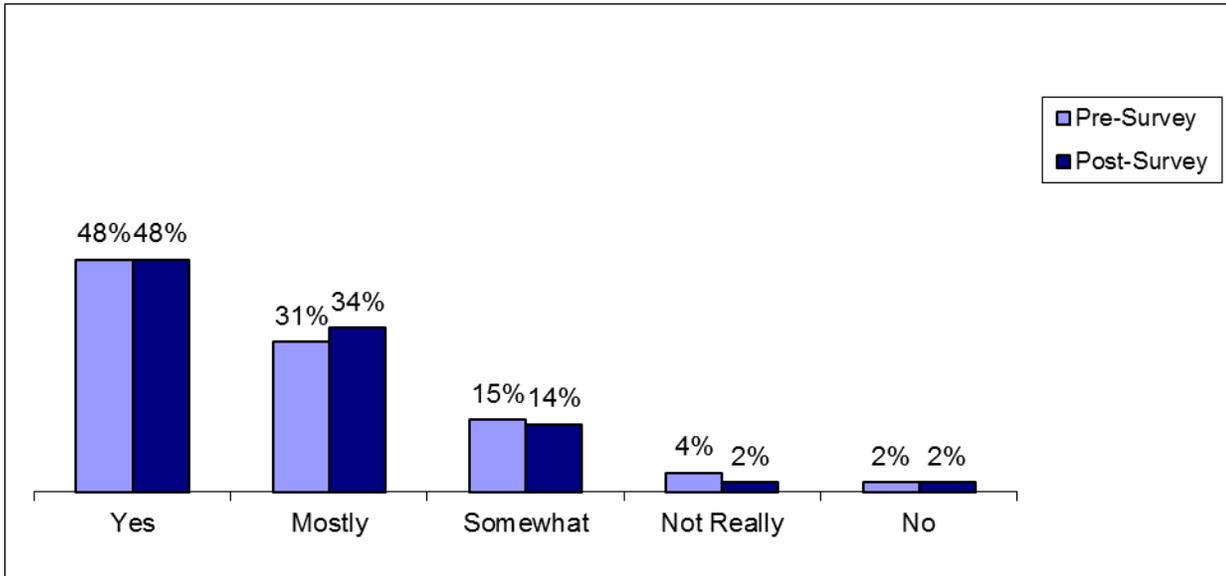
Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 27% and at post-survey = 40%.



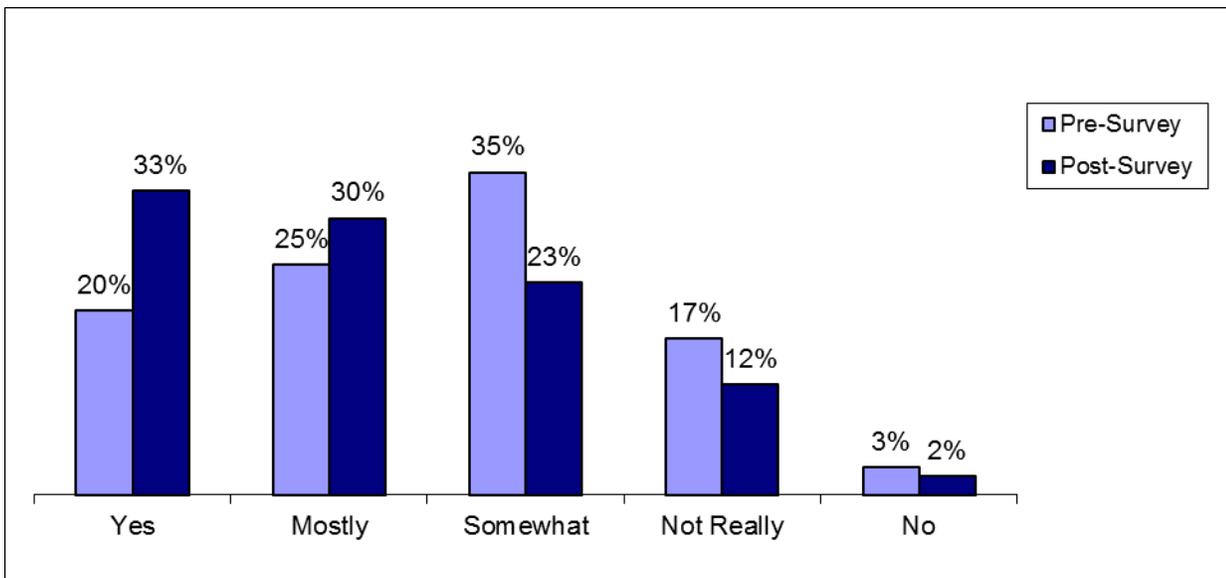
Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 48% and at post-survey = 48%.



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

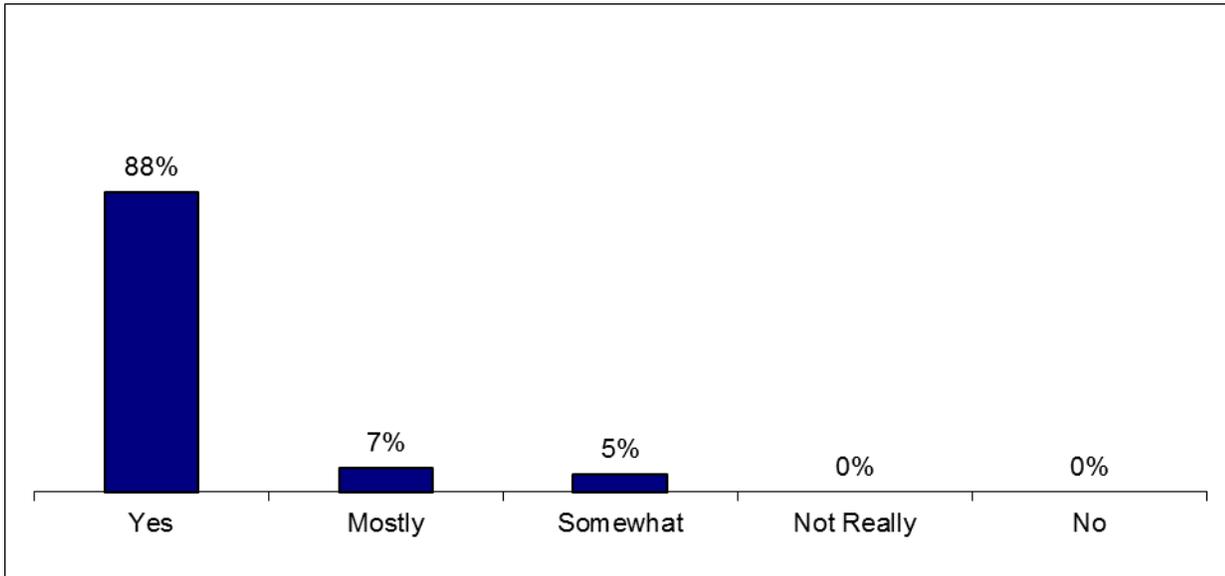
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 20% and at post-survey = 33%.



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, 88% of the participants answered "Yes, definitely."



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

Of the 95 students who completed the post-survey, 92% of them took the time to comment on how they felt about the Power of Peace experience. The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive.

Quotes from participants include:

- First I was feeling weird but then I got open into people and I expressed feelings I feel really good because I got to meet new people and I always felt welcomed. Thank you!*
- I feel proud and happy to be part of this program because I learned lots of things and it helped open my eyes more. I feel that Power of Peace has been a great experience for me. I would suggest this program to others, because some people need some peace in their lives. Every session won't be the same because each group will have a different vibe.*
- Power of Peace opened up my eyes. I now see that not everyone is the same and everyone has a story to tell. I thank everyone who accepted me and let me express myself.*
- It was an amazing experience. I recommend it to anyone. Spread the word!*
- Power of Peace is something where you can express and let out what you go through. Also, let you know that you can move on from situations and you're not the only one.*
- Power of Peace really helped me see who I am and let go of all the negatives that is on me.*
- Power of Peace is where they teach you to overcome anything you go through and give you support.*
- It is a good learning experience that you can grow from. It helps me see I'm not alone and there are others like me or maybe have it worse.*
- I feel like Power of Peace is a really good program. It makes people realize what's important to them and they need to focus on what they want to achieve and ignore trouble*
- Power of Peace helps you realize good and bad and that violence is never the answer.*
- I think that Power of Peace is a great program. It allows everyone to be honest with themselves and express how they feel. It gave me the opportunity to meet new people.*

I thought this program was very inspirational. I feel like I have released some of the negativity in myself and the bad thoughts that linger in my mind too often.

This workshop made me think differently. It makes me feel like I'm in a safe place for a bit and I'm able to comfortably tell my feelings.

I feel that this program helps our self-esteem and helps us release bottled up anger in a good way.

Power of Peace made me feel safe around new people I never would have talked to before the workshops.

Power of Peace is a touching program. It made me open up to other people in my surroundings.

I feel comfortable about being in Power of Peace because you can share bad things that happened to you and you can express your feelings and not be judged.

Power of Peace is a good place to be and there are other people like us and everyone has a story.

Adult – *It is so transformative! Very well written and explained.*

Adult – *This is a wonderful and useful program for our students. Thank you for your efforts.*

Adult – *Wonderful workshop. Very well run!*

Adult – *It was a great workshop. It shined a lot on the story of all of the students and reminded me how much each student goes through. But I felt you gave them hope and real world advice. You inspired me to reach out in a different way to the students I teach.*

Adult – *It's a powerful experience that gives teens an opportunity to talk about their feelings and experiences and reflect on themselves and who they are, who they want to be.*

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

Of the 95 students who completed the post-survey, 83% of them took the time to comment on improving the Power of Peace experience. 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:

Get more people to come

Speak to children more often

Have more than just 2 days

To be honest, I wouldn't change a thing

It should be extended for a longer period of time

Have more teachers to help others

Too much sitting down

Adult – *I think a group of staff mixed with students would be nice*

Discussion

The one statement indicating the greatest change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was: Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me (an increase of 18%). The one statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence (0% change).

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. 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.