

Program Report 2015-2016 School Year for Schenectady 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 three cycles during the months of November, December and March.

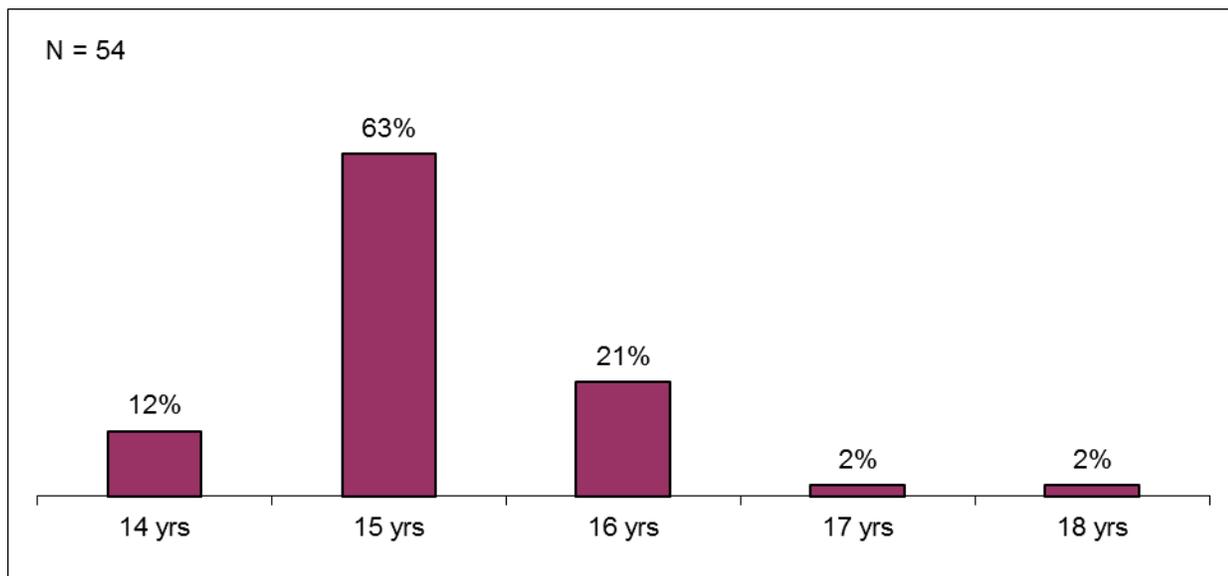
Program Description

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

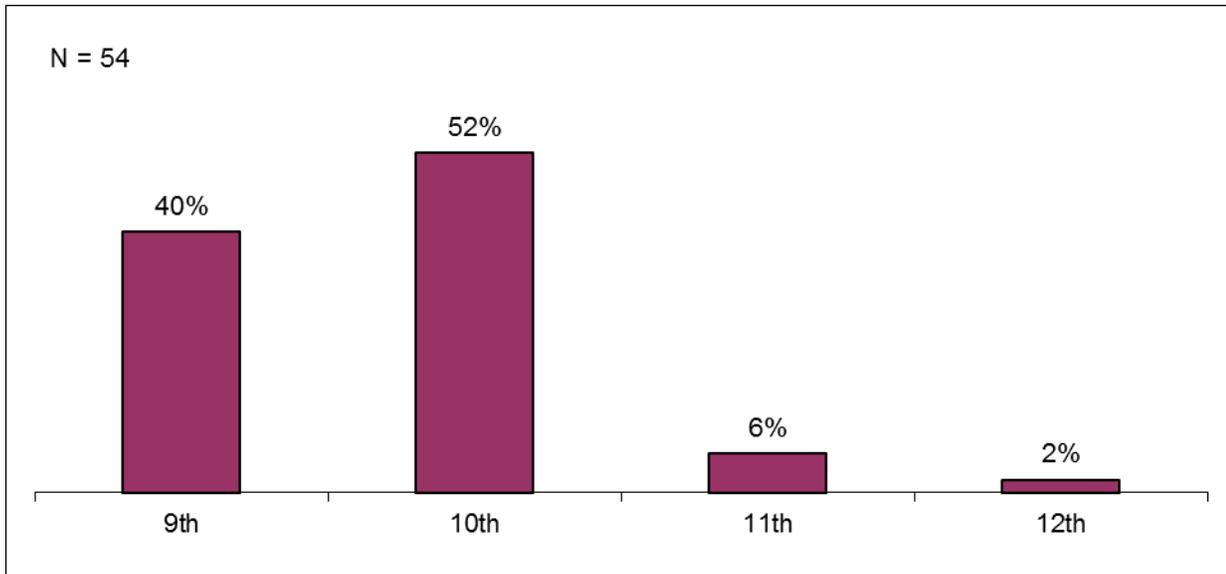
There were 54 students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 21 boys (40%) and 33 girls (60%) in grades 9 through 12 and ranging in age from 14– 18. There were 3 adult participants as well. Distributions for age, grade and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

Age



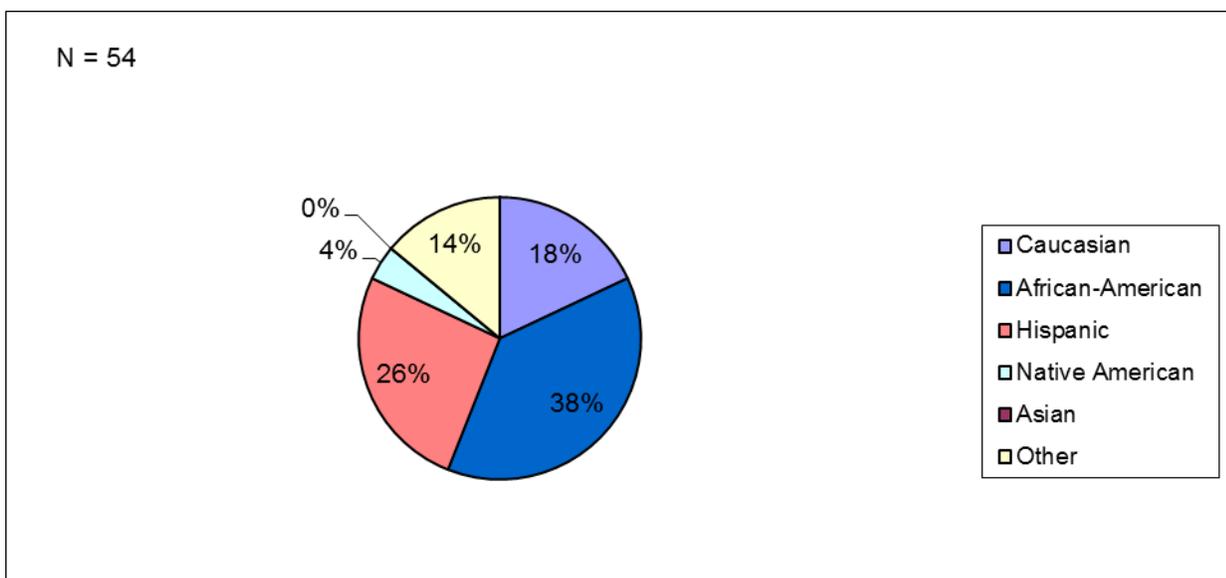
The vast majority (nearly two-thirds) of the participants were age 15.

Grade



The majority (52%) of participants were in the 10th grade.

Ethnicity



Over a third (38%) of participants identified their ethnicity as African-American followed by a quarter (26%) who identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.

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 54 participants, 100% completed the pre-survey while 91% 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."

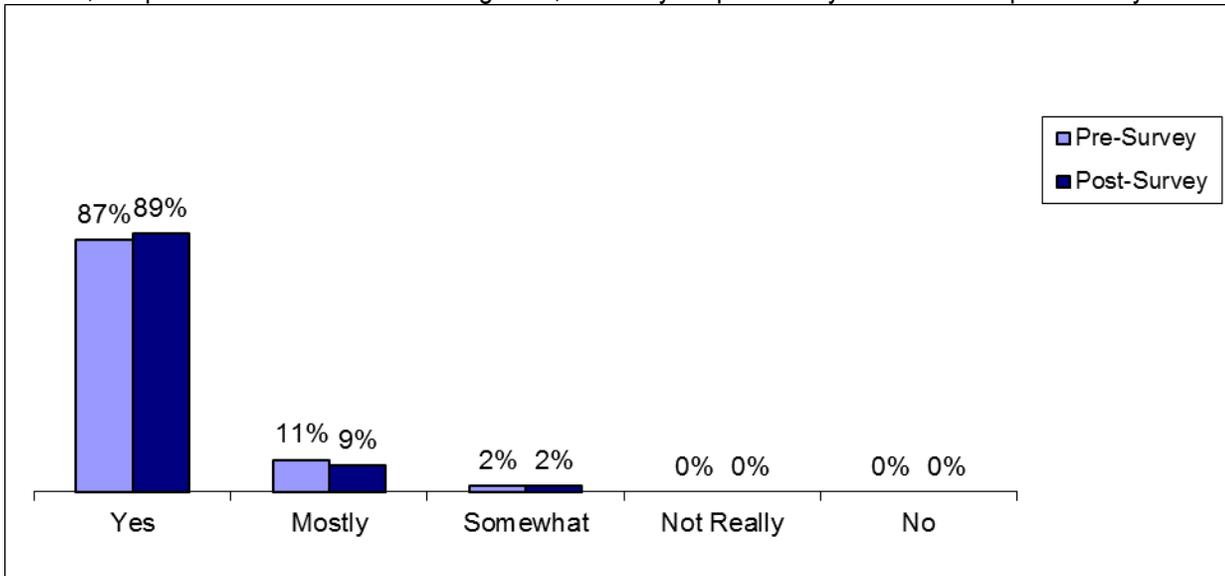
Qualitative: Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

Results

From pre-survey to post-survey, positive changes in attitudes were seen on all six of the six items.

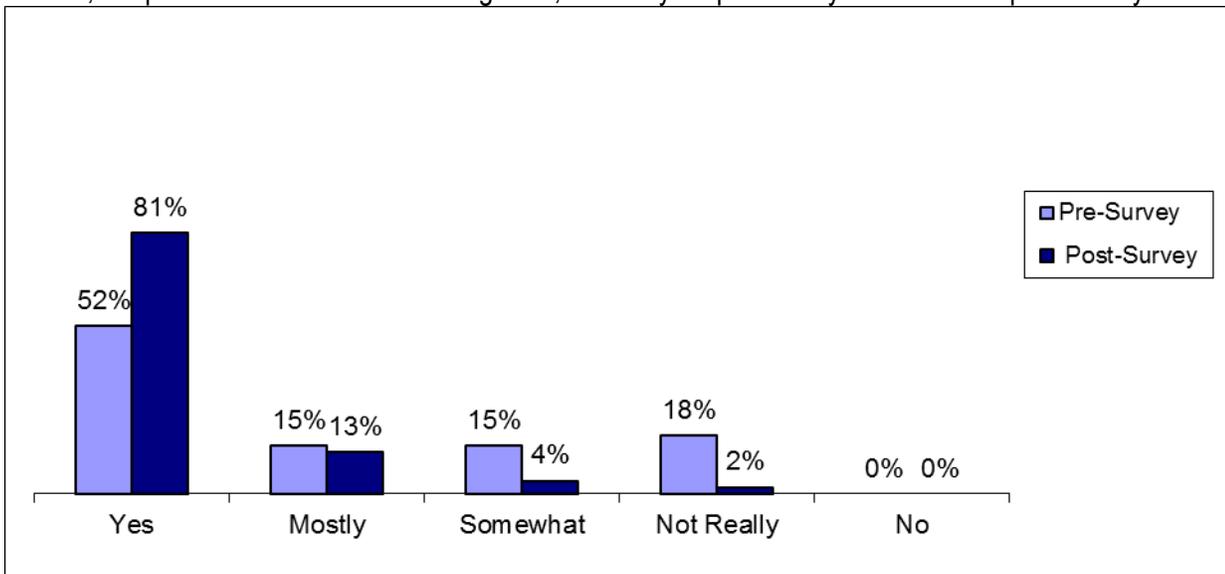
Item 1: I respect myself.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 87% and at post-survey = 89%.



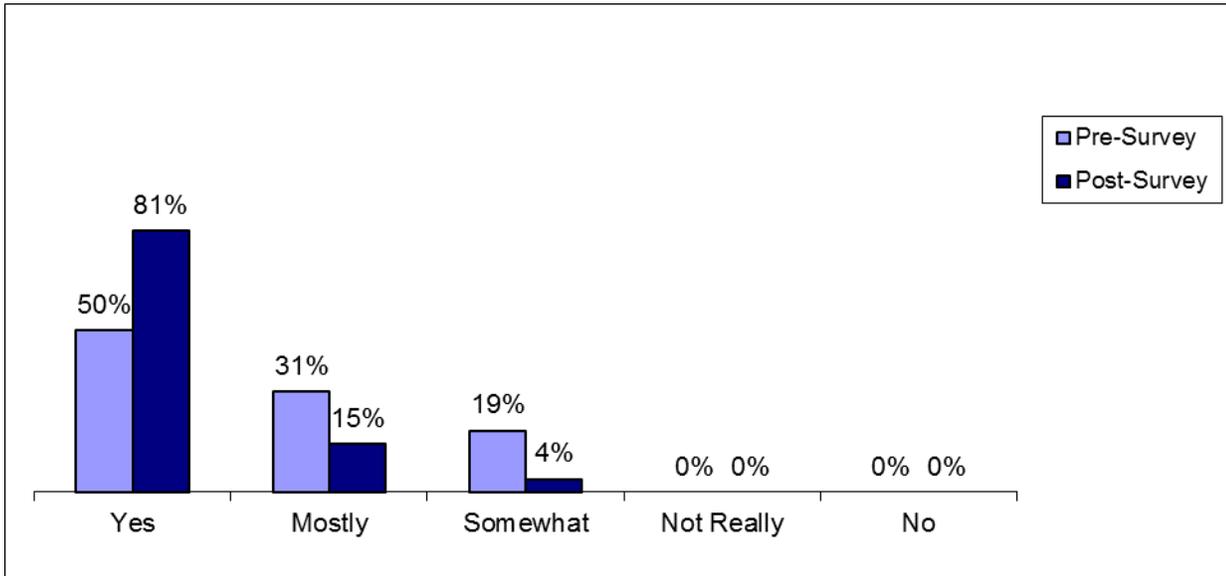
Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 52% and at post-survey = 81%.



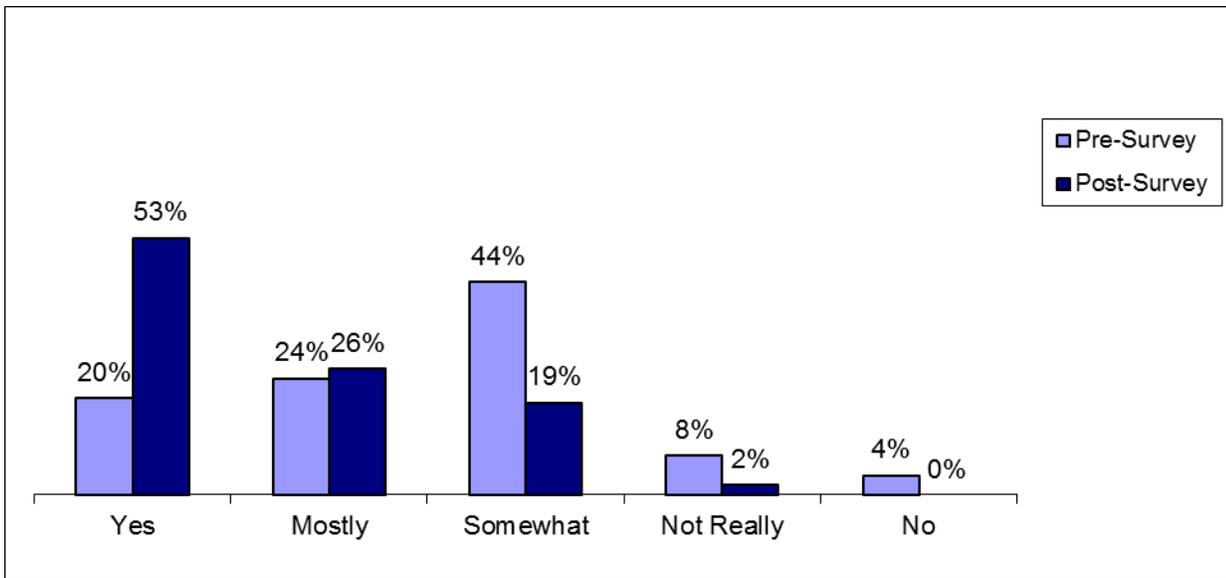
Item 3: I respect students different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 50% and at post-survey = 81%.



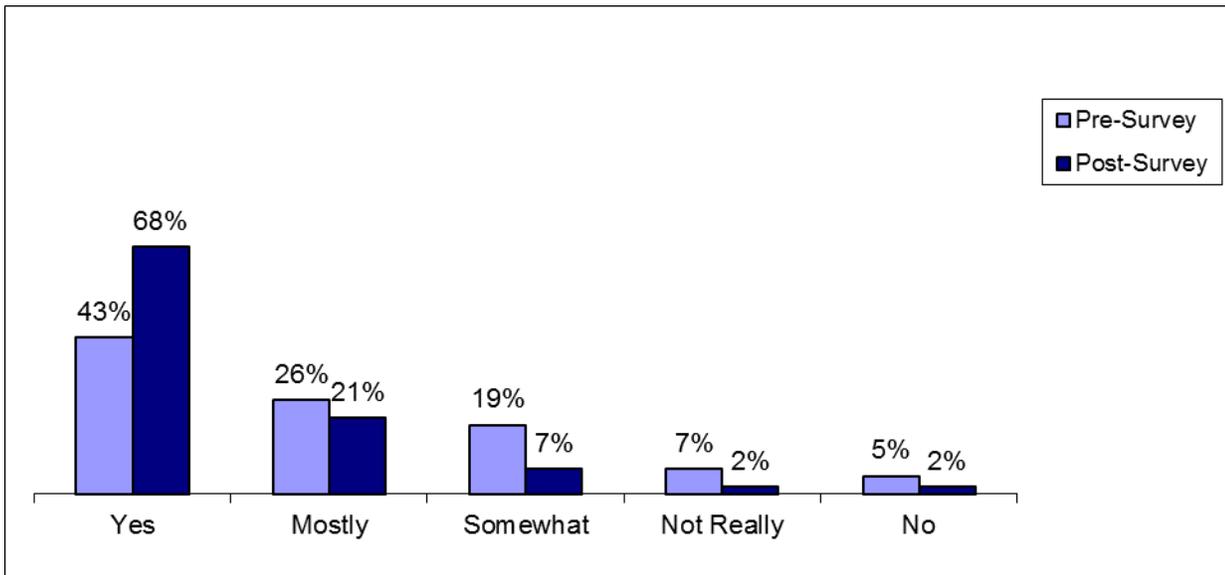
Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 20% and at post-survey = 53%.



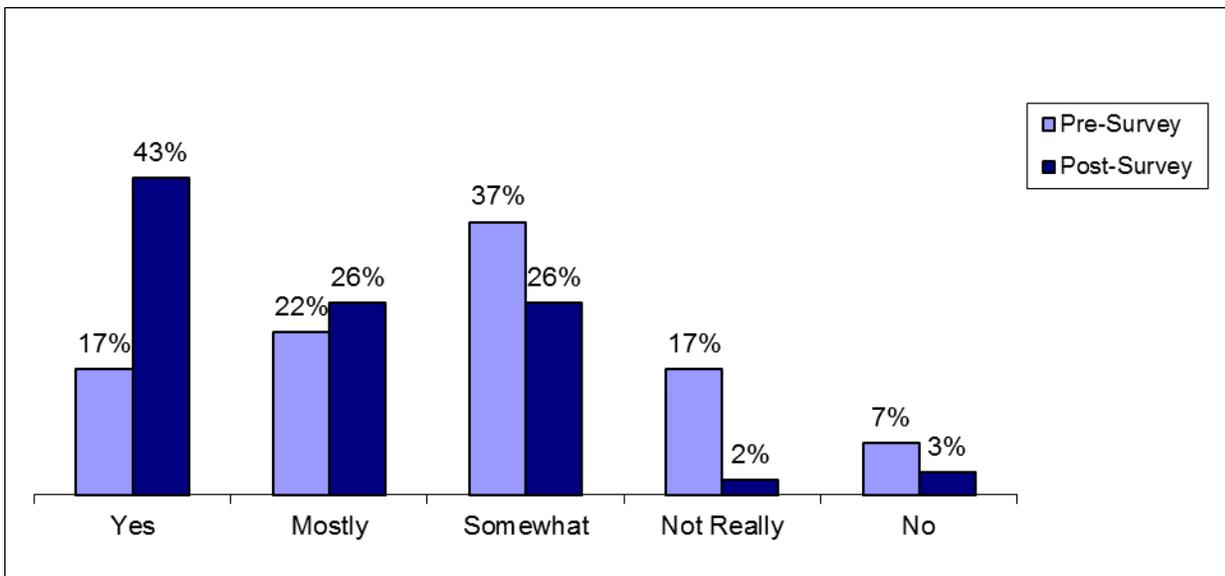
Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 43% and at post-survey = 68%.



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

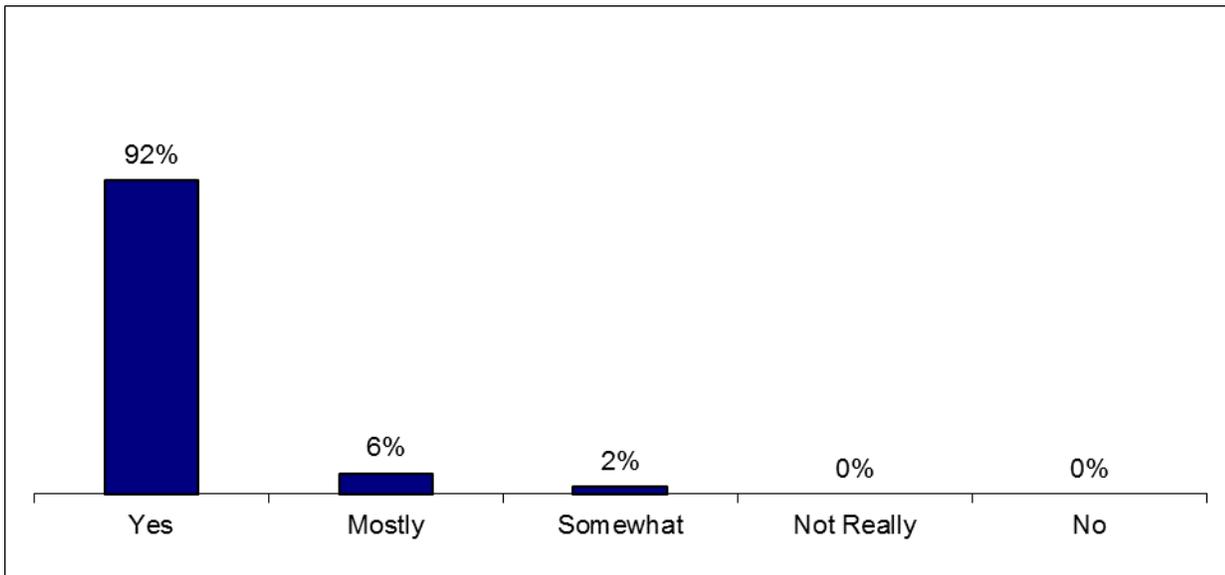
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 17% and at post-survey = 43%.



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, 92% of the participants answered "Yes, definitely."



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

Of the 54 students who completed the post-survey, 94% 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:

I feel like it's a way to help us change our lives.

I feel awesome about the Power of Peace program because it really helped me.

It is motivational and life changing.

I felt awkward and weird about it because I'm not an emotional person but it got to me and it's a really good program.

I feel like it is wonderful opportunity for people to experience, and helps them cope with stress.

I believe this is a very relevant program and everyone needs it.

The students were just strangers when I first came in. Now, I feel like every single person that attended this is like my family. I can put my life in anyone of their hands.

It helps to tell your feeling and lets you know you're not alone.

I was a little weirded out at first but then I loved it and I really want to come back.

It's an amazing life changing experience. I wish it lasted longer. I never felt heard in my life until now.

It's a really cool place where I could express myself. It helped get me comfortable with others which I never thought could happen.

It's the best thing I ever did in my life and makes me want to be a better person.

I feel that this is an amazing opportunity for people to finally open up to others without getting judged.

I think it's wonderful. It helps people understand they are not alone and be open and free with their thoughts.

It made me feel like people really do listen to me.

I think it's an unforgettable experience and more people need to attend.

Power of Peace is a trustworthy home. A faithful, loving, caring environment. Something I want to keep doing.

This really works! It really does! I'm a new man, I'm happy! I'm free! Thank you! Thank you so much! God Bless you, I love you all!

I feel like Power of Peace helped me and explained to me that I need to make a change in my life before it's too late.

It's a great program to join because instead of holding in all pain, you are able to be free

This program was amazing. It taught me so much and I loved it. I'm definitely doing it again.

Adult – *It's excellent! So many of our students need this program. We need to work on continuing the program in between workshops.*

Adult – *This was an amazing experience, to be able to see students who struggle with appropriate classroom behaviors, manage themselves well shows how impressive this program is.*

Adult – *All students NEED to participate in Power of Peace. This program will change your life. The group is well organized and promotes a positive message that all students need to hear.*

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

Of the 54 students who completed the post-survey, 85% 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:

Have more activity to get to know each other more.

Ask more questions!

Have more time to talk. Three days maybe.

It's already close to perfect

Make it where parents can join

Have more games

Take more breaks

Adult – *It would be nice to be able to continue this group afterwards to enable the kids to continue processing their experiences with one another*

Adult – *Continue to work hard and improve. Add a piece where students are able to write or help provide peer feedback to other students*

Discussion

The statement indicating the greatest change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey: Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict (an increase of 33%). The one statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 1: I respect myself (an increase of 2%).

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.