

## Power of Peace Aggregate Program Report 2014

### Introduction

Michael Arterberry, the Founder and Executive Director of the Youth Voices Center, Inc., a non-profit organization that 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 eight (up from six in 2013) school districts (Peekskill, New Rochelle, Port Chester, Hudson, New Lebanon, Orchard View, JH Dunbar and Schenectady). A total of 30 (up from 18 in 2013) Power of Peace workshop cycles were completed in 2014.

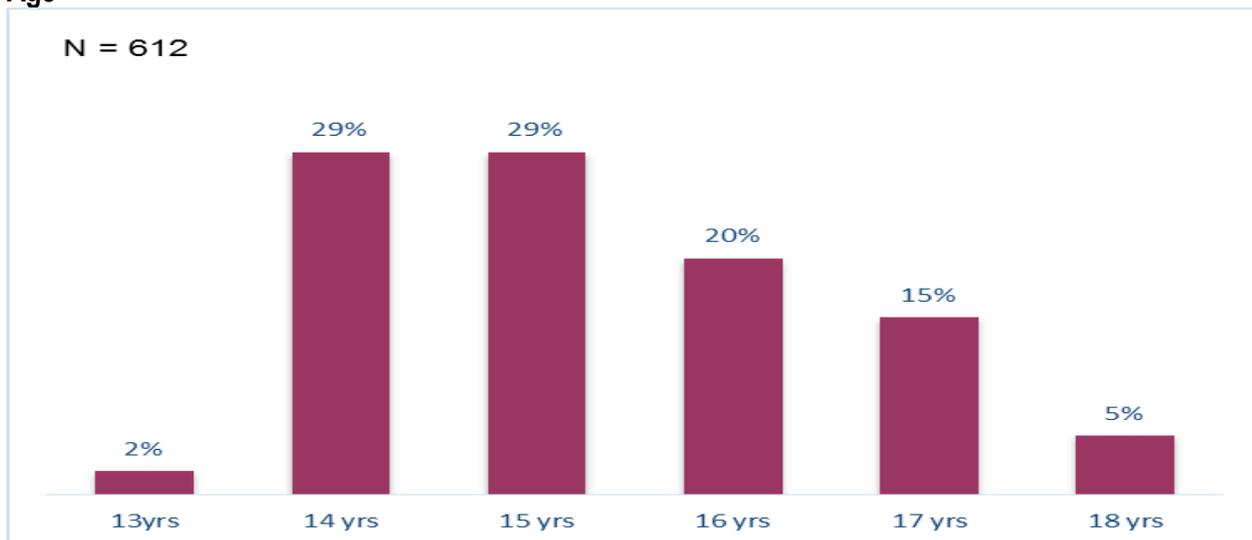
### Program Description

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

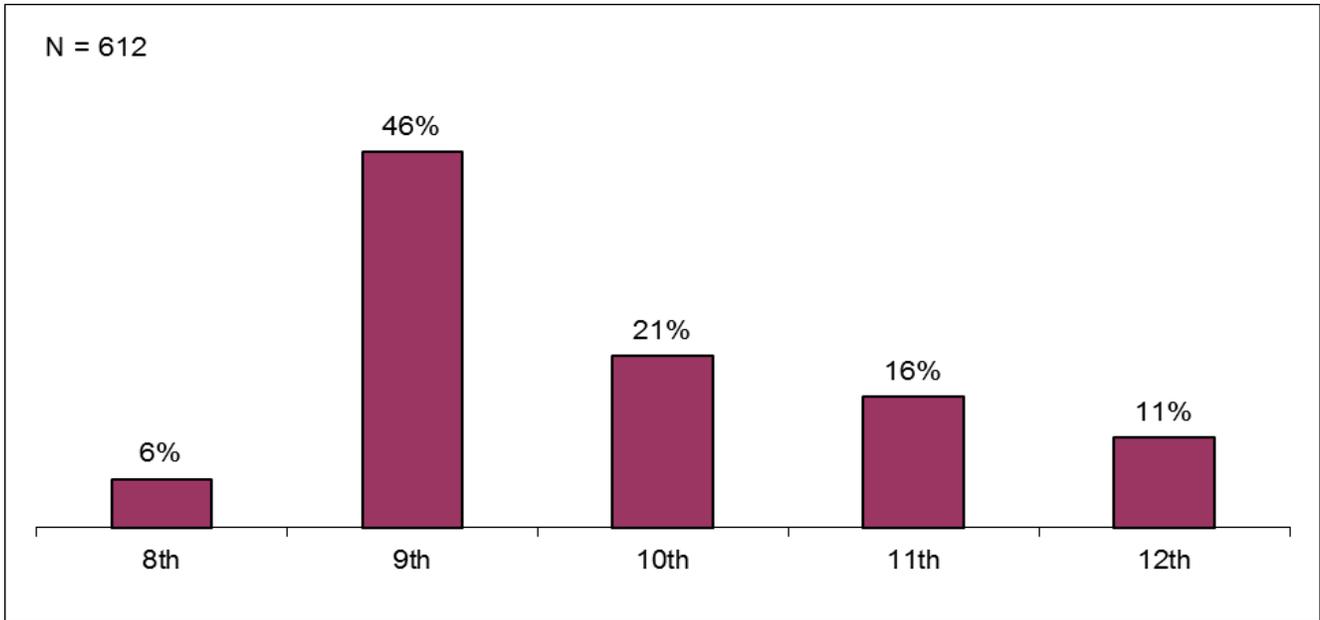
There were 612 (up from 307 in 2013) students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 293 boys (48%) and 319 girls (52%) in grades 8 through 12 and ranging in age from 13 – 18. Distributions for age, grade and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

#### Age



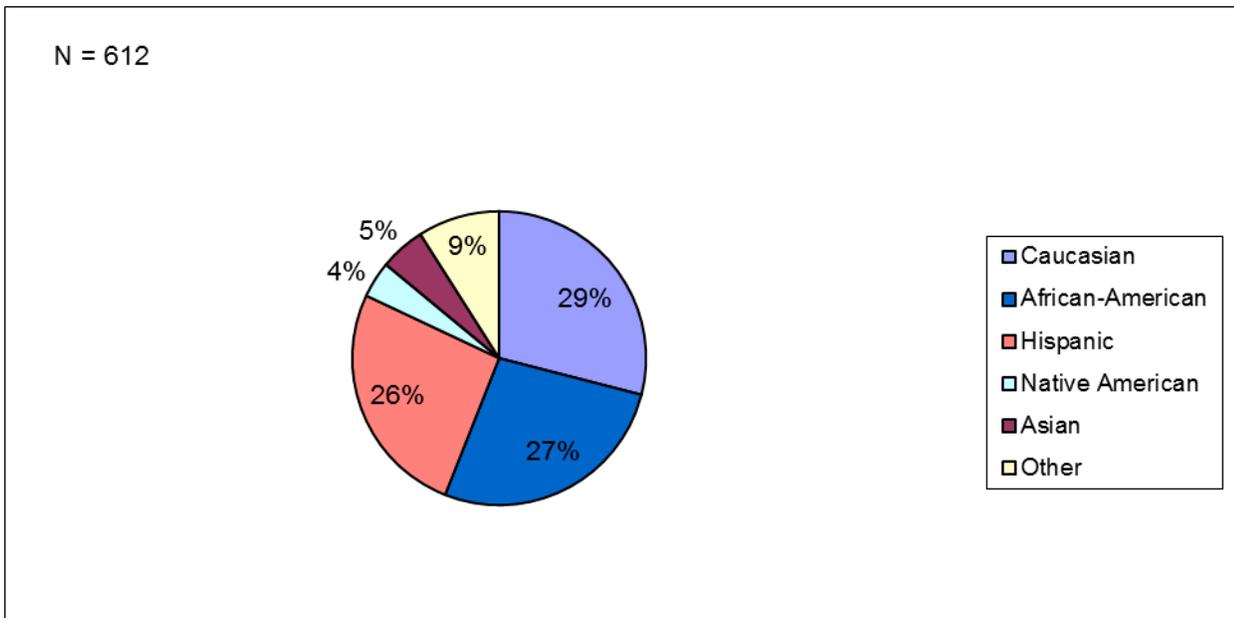
Just under one third (29%) of the participants were 14 years of age, followed by just under one third (29%) of participants 15 years of age.

## Grade



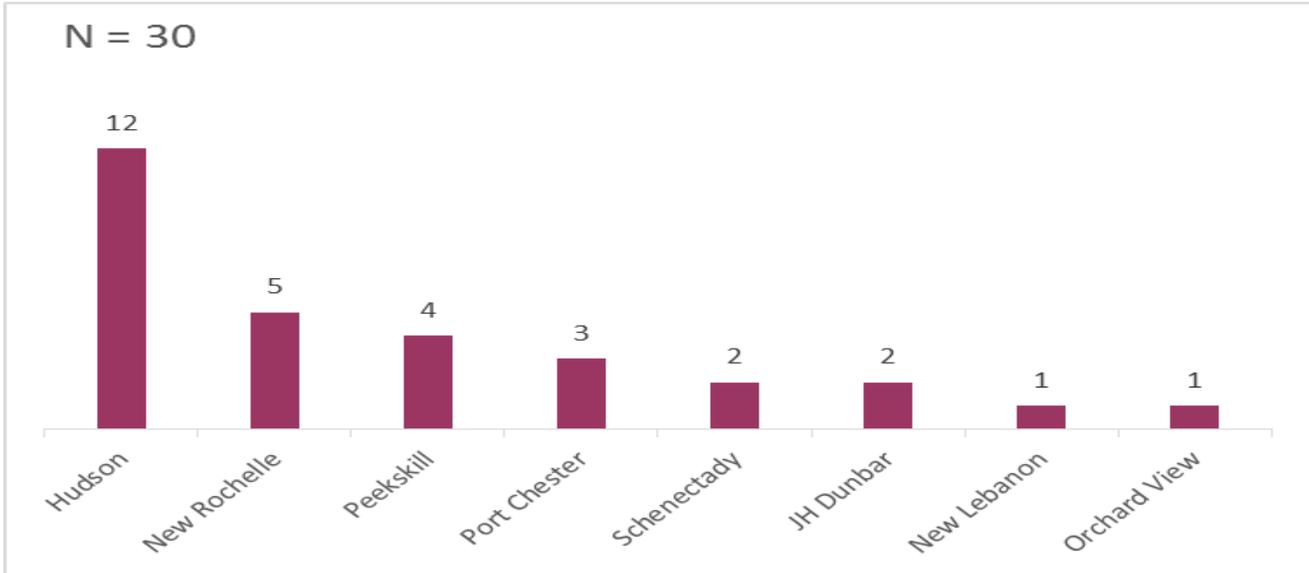
Nearly half (46%) of participants were in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, followed by just under one quarter (21%) in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Ethnicity



Just under on third (29%) of participants identified their ethnicity as Caucasian, followed by African-American (27%) and then Hispanic (26%).

## Number of Power of Peace Cycles by School District



In 2014, Hudson led the way holding twelve cycles of Power of Peace, followed by New Rochelle holding five cycles. Peekskill held four and Port Chester held three cycles of Power of Peace, while both Schenectady and JH Dunbar held two cycles each. Finally, both New Lebanon and Orchard View held one cycle each. Hudson High School was new to the Power of Peace community in 2013 and quadrupled its participation in the Power of Peace in 2014. This year, JH Dunbar, New Lebanon and Orchard View are all new participants in Power of Peace.

### 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 612 participants, 100% completed the pre-survey and the 95% 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."

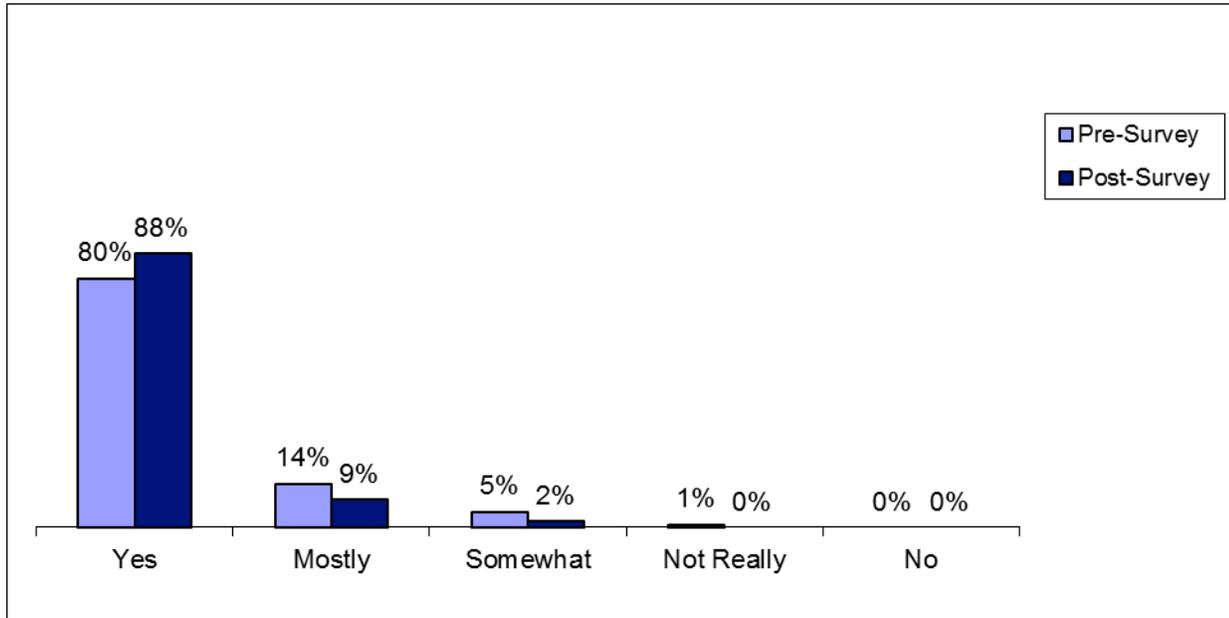
**Qualitative:** Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

### Results

From pre-survey to post-survey, statistically significant ( $p < .0001$ ) positive changes in attitudes were seen on across the board 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.**

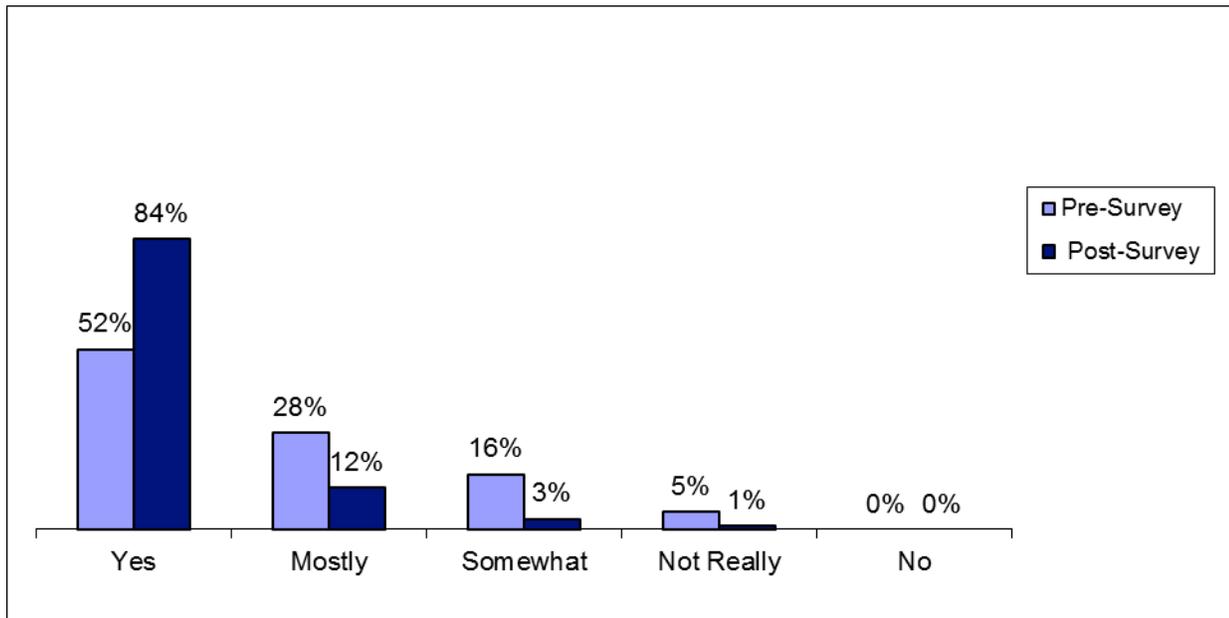
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 80% and at post-survey = 88%.



*t = 3.87, df = 1171, p < .0001 = extremely statistically significant*

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

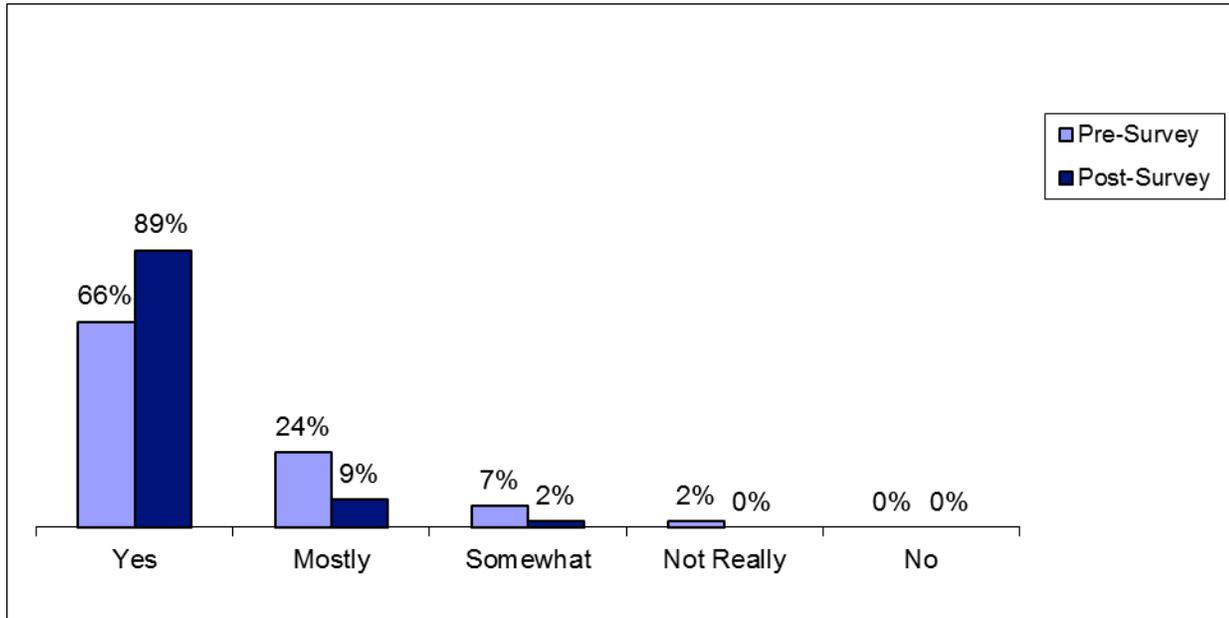
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 52% and at post-survey = 84%.



*t = 12.21, df = 1171, p < .0001 = extremely statistically significant*

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

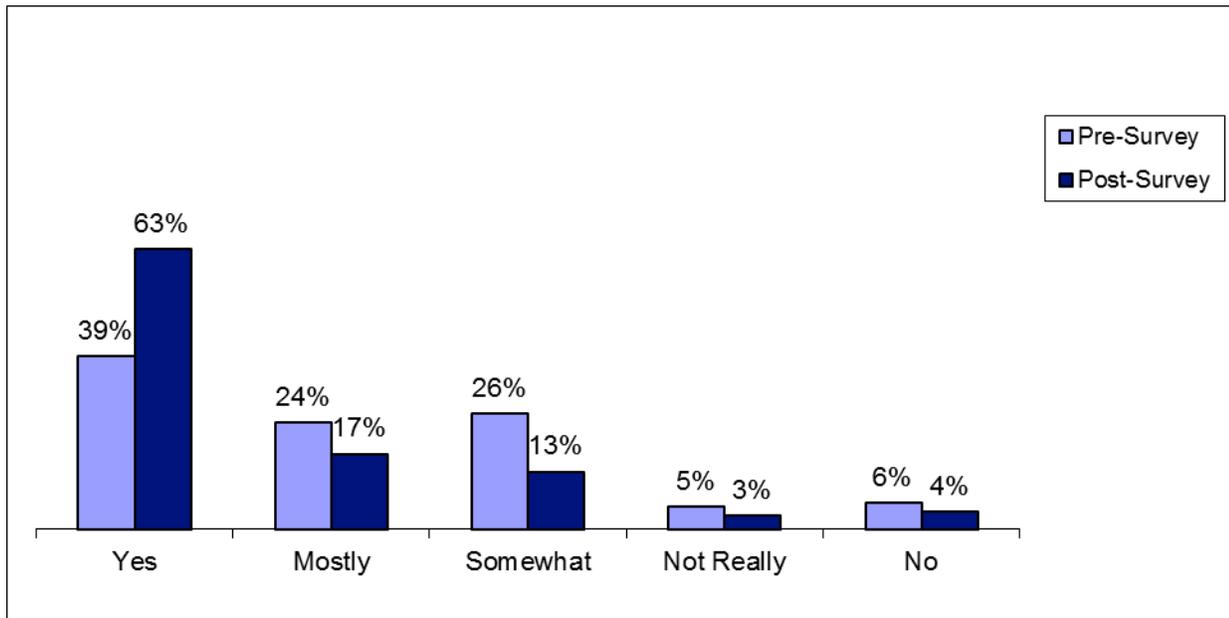
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 66% and at post-survey = 89%.



*t = 8.71, df = 1174, p < .0001 = extremely statistically significant*

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

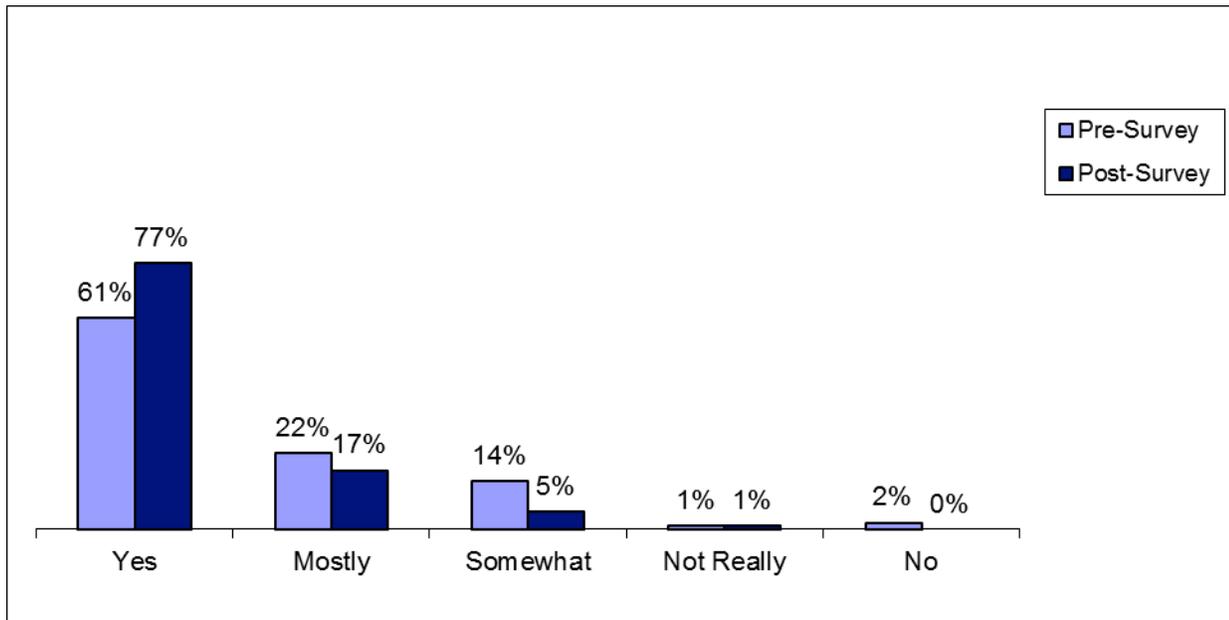
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 39% and at post-survey = 63%.



*t = 7.21, df = 1167, p < .0001 = extremely statistically significant*

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

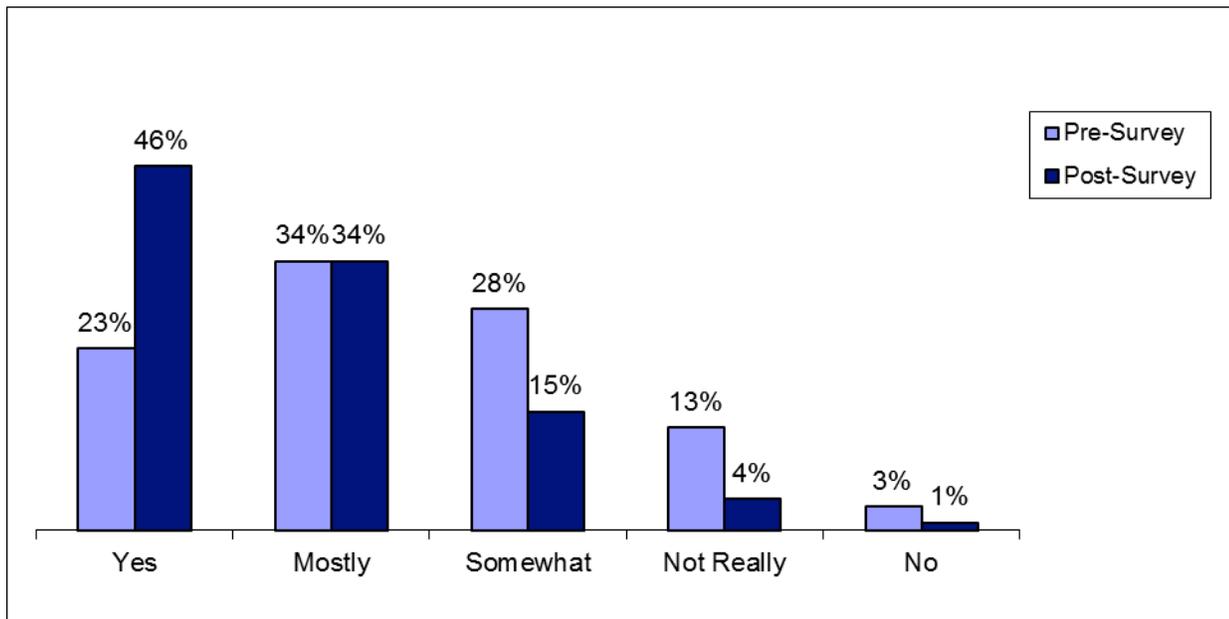
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 61% and at post-survey = 77%.



*t = 6.25, df = 1168, p < .0001 = extremely statistically significant*

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

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 23% and at post-survey = 46%.

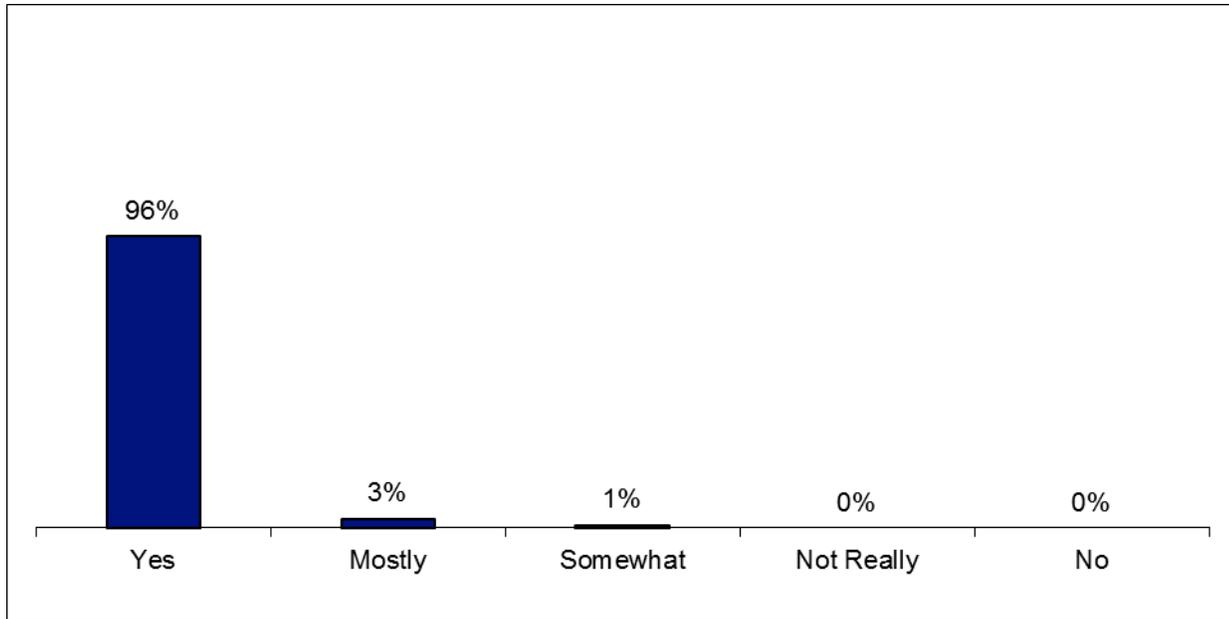


*t = 9.80, df = 1169, p < .0001 = extremely statistically significant*

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 overwhelming majority (96%) of the participants answered "Yes, definitely."



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

Of the 575 students who completed the post-survey, 97% 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 eye-opening, amazing, informative, awesome, helpful, inspirational, positive, impactful, intense, excellent, life-changing, and insightful.

**Quotes from participants include:**

- Power of Peace helps you get to know yourself and other people around you.*
- At first I thought this program was not for me, but these two days have been the best days of my life.*
- Power of Peace made me realize not to judge people because you never know what they have been through.*
- This program challenged me and made me grow and see how to learn from my mistakes.*
- Power of Peace helps to build community which is really needed in a big schools.*
- This program gives hope to youth and should become a mandated part of school curriculum.*
- Power of Peace is a great cathartic program with profound effect on students.*
- This should be a National program and every student should have a chance to meet Mighty Mike.*
- It made me feel better about myself and it helped me stop talking about other people.*
- I'm going to use what I learned in Power of Peace for the rest of my life.*
- The Power of Peace made me feel like a weight was lifted off my shoulders.*
- This program opened my eyes to the fact that everyone has something going on in life, not just me.*
- I was blown away by the level of engagement, participation and openness brought about by this program.*
- Power of Peace allowed me to open up and talk to people I would never talk to before.*
- I made some new friends that I never would have made without Power of Peace.*
- I feel happier after taking the workshops – like a weight has been lifted off of me.*

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

Of the 575 students who completed the post-survey, 95% of them took the time to comment on improving the Power of Peace experience. The majority, over 98% 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:

- Share this program with younger kids.
- Share this program with adults.
- Get to deep problems quicker so there is more time to spend on them.
- Conduct program at the beginning of the school year, with a follow-up/review later in the year.
- Include an activity devoted exclusively to bullying/acceptance, self-esteem and self-love.
- Provide some time for one-on-one talks for students who need it for further exploration.
- Spread the word and help more people.
- Hold workshops more often and for longer than two days.
- Include more teachers and definitely principals in the program.

## **Discussion**

The one statement indicating the highest 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 32%). The statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 1: I respect myself (8%).

## **Conclusion**

The results presented in this report indicate that the Power of Peace program did have a statistically significant positive effect in changing student attitudes in from pre-survey to post-survey in all six areas.

- 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.