

Program Report 2014 for New Rochelle High Schools

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 five cycles during the course of the year.

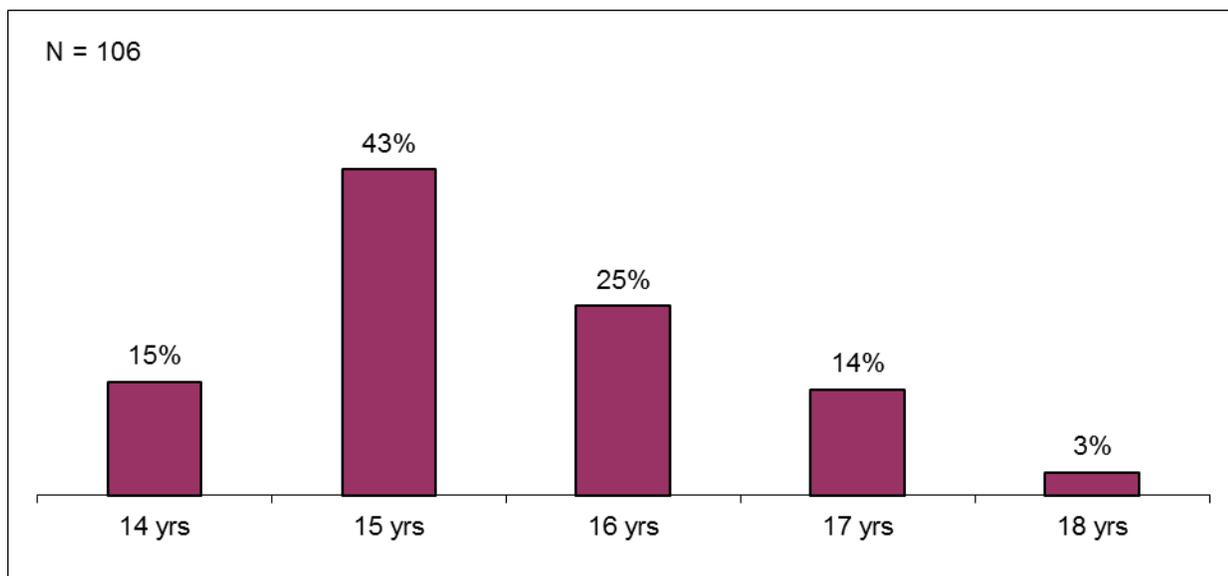
Program Description

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

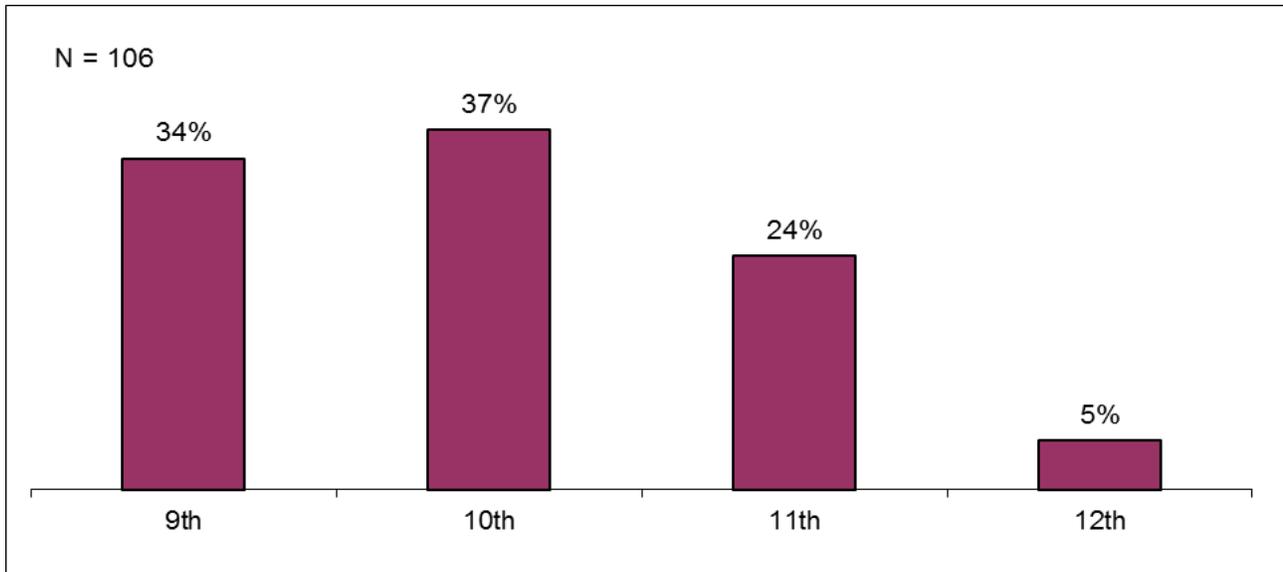
There were 106 students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 42 boys (40%) and 64 girls (60%) in grades 9 through 12 and ranging in age from 14 – 18. Distributions for age, grade and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

Age



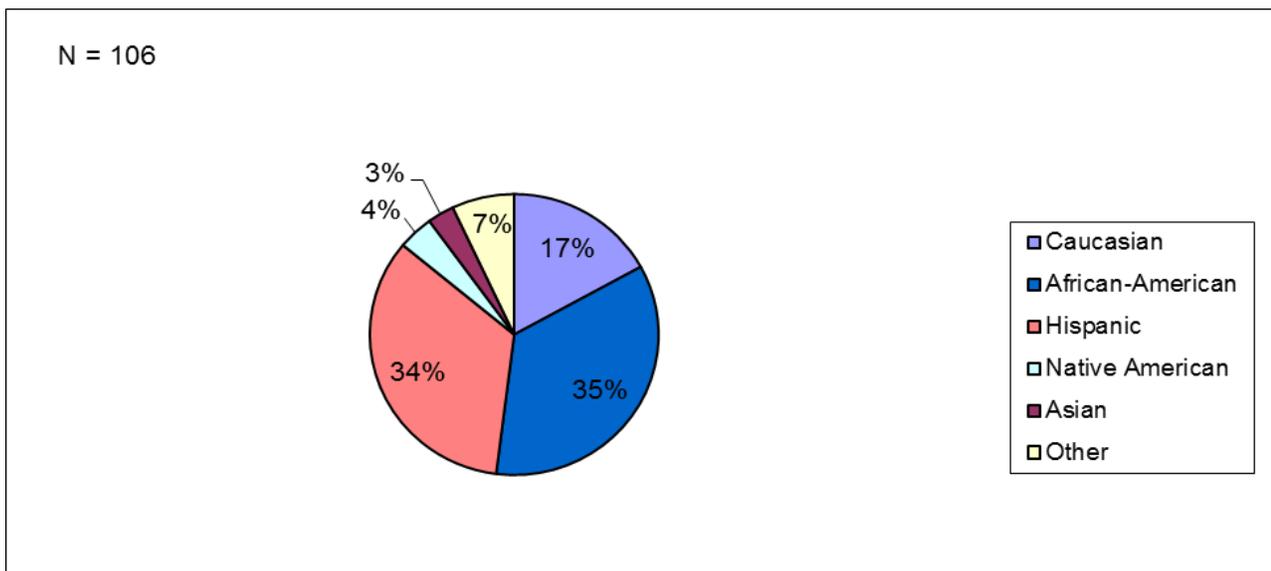
Nearly half (43%) of the participants were 15 years of age, followed by one quarter (25%) of participants at 16 years of age.

Grade



Just over one third (34%) of participants were in the 9th grade, and just over another third (37%) of participants were in the 10th grade.

Ethnicity



Just over one third (34%) of participants identified their ethnicity as Hispanic, and just over another third (35%) 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 106 participants, 100% completed the pre-survey and 90% 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.”

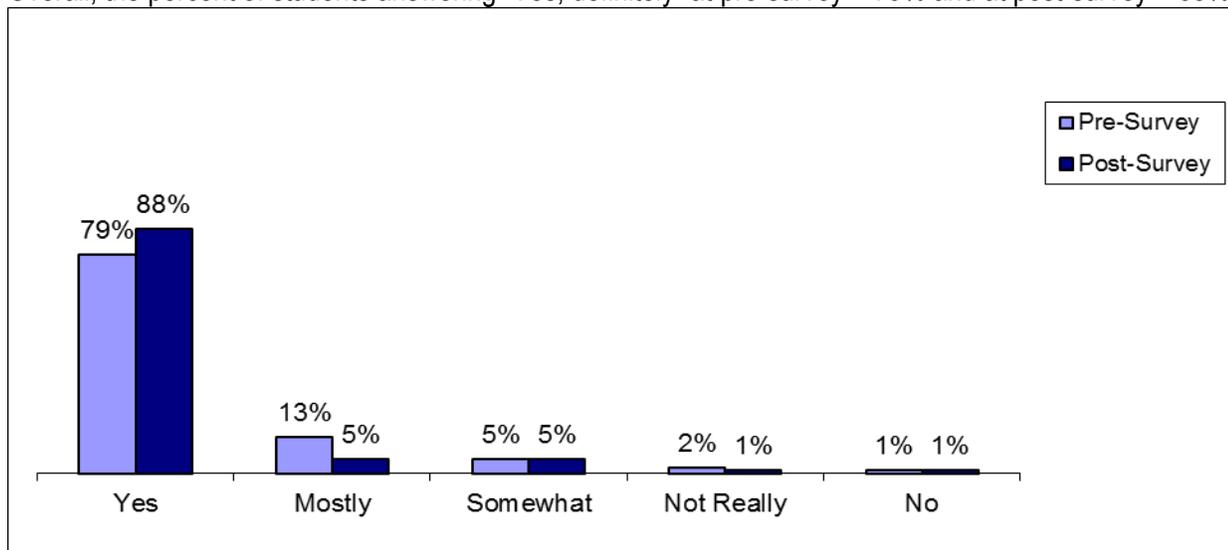
Qualitative: Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

Results

From pre-survey to post-survey, significant ($p < .0001 - p < .005$) statistically significant positive changes in attitudes were seen on five of the six items. Data were analyzed using t-tests to compare pre-survey responses with post-survey responses.

Item 1: I respect myself.

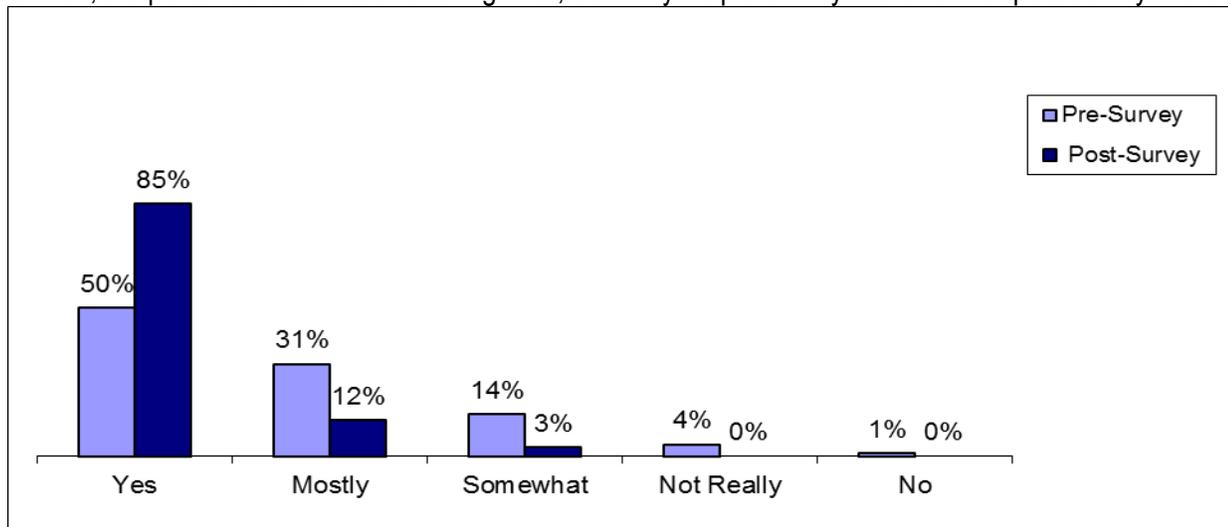
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 79% and at post-survey = 88%.



$t = 1.40, df = 199, \text{not statistically significant}$

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

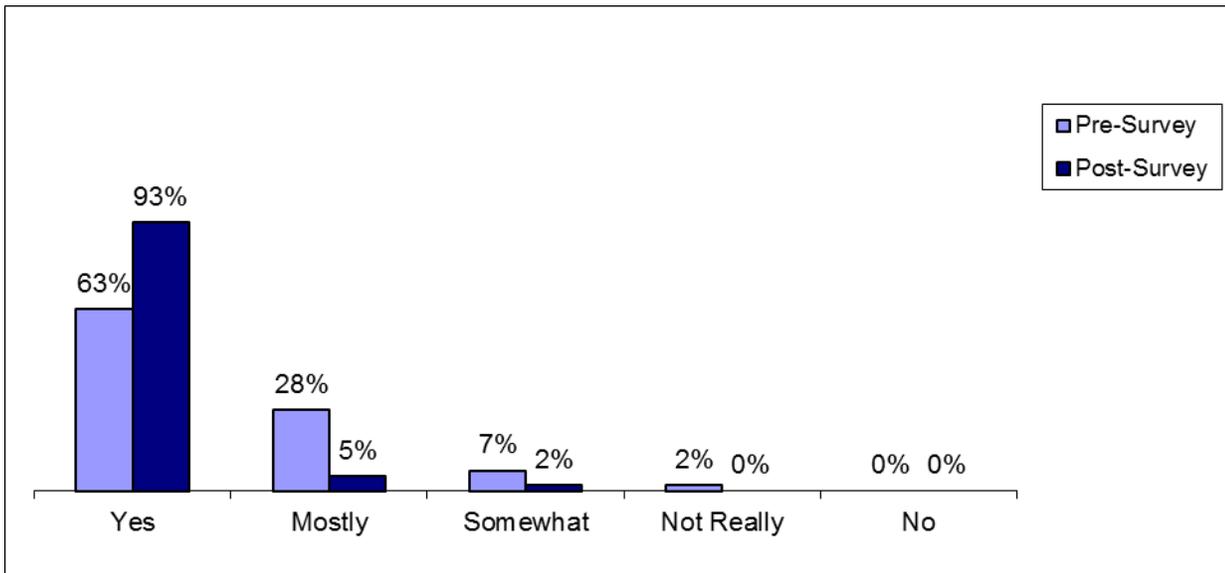
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 50% and at post-survey = 85%.



$t = 5.49, df = 199, p < .0001 = \text{extremely statistically significant}$

Item 3: I respect students different from me.

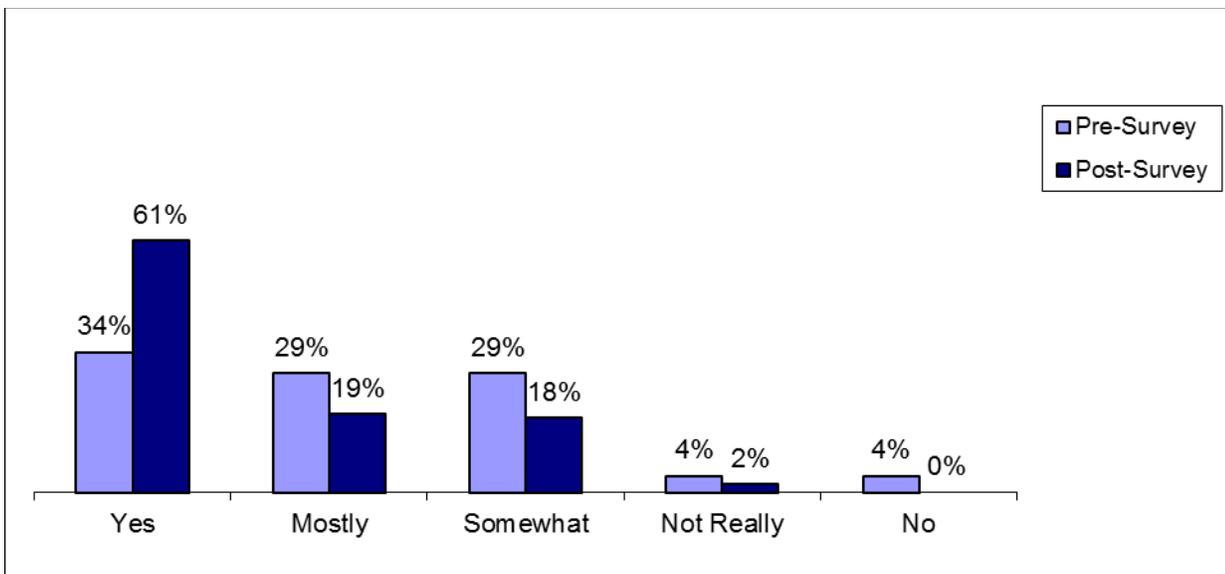
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 63% and at post-survey = 93%.



$t = 4.68, df = 199, p < .0001 = \text{extremely statistically significant}$

Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.

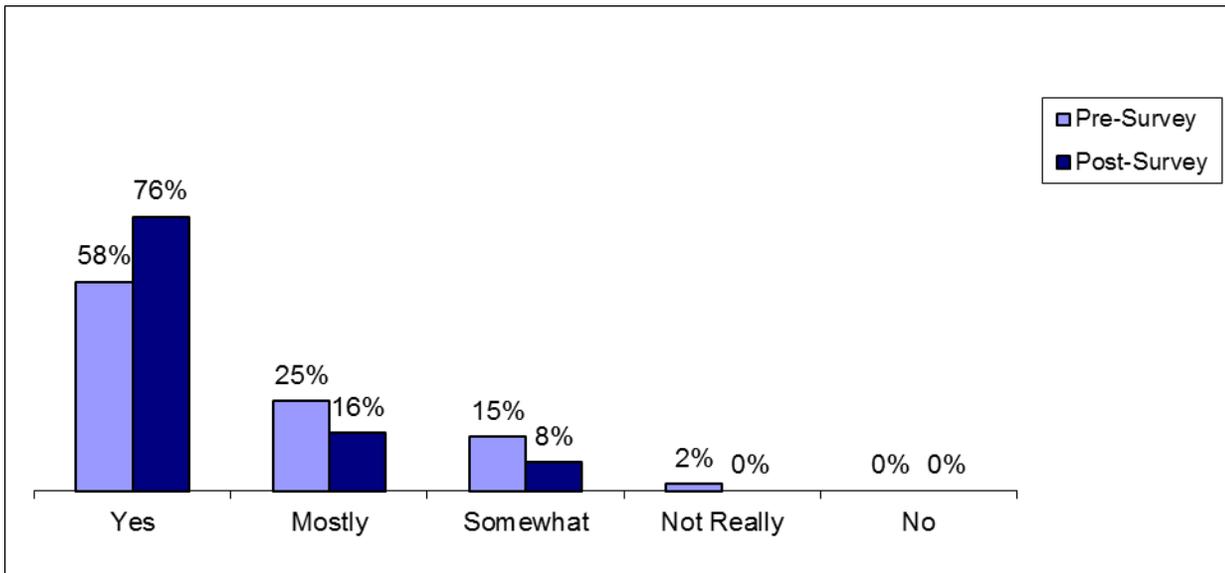
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 34% and at post-survey = 61%.



$t = 3.89, df = 199, p < .005 = \text{very statistically significant}$

Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.

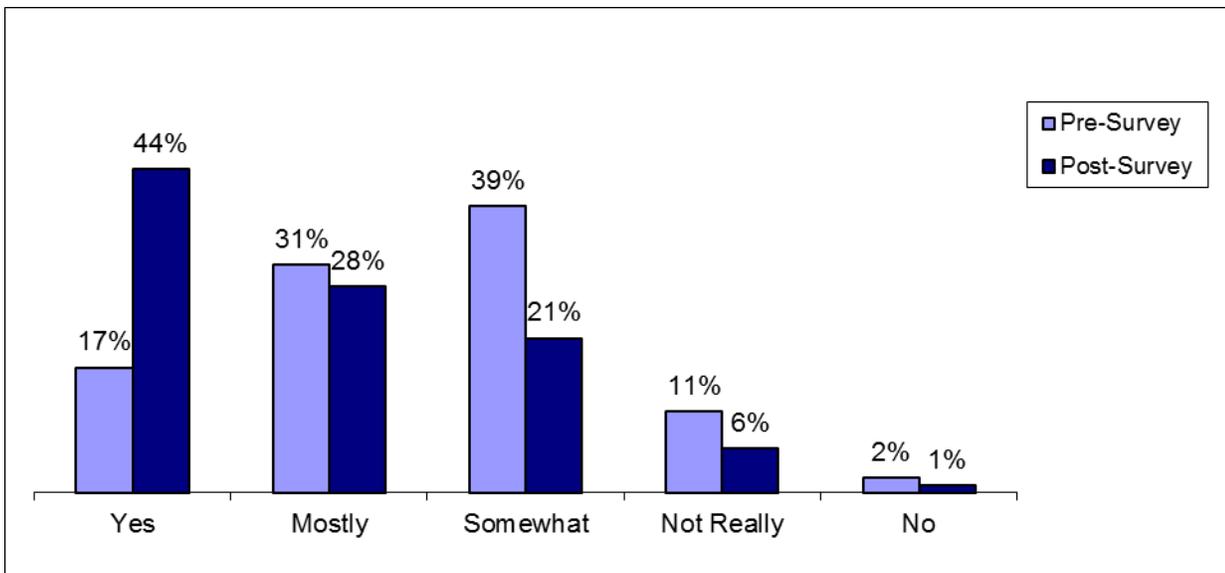
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 58% and at post-survey = 76%.



$t = 2.86, df = 198, p < .005 = \text{very statistically significant}$

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 = 44%.

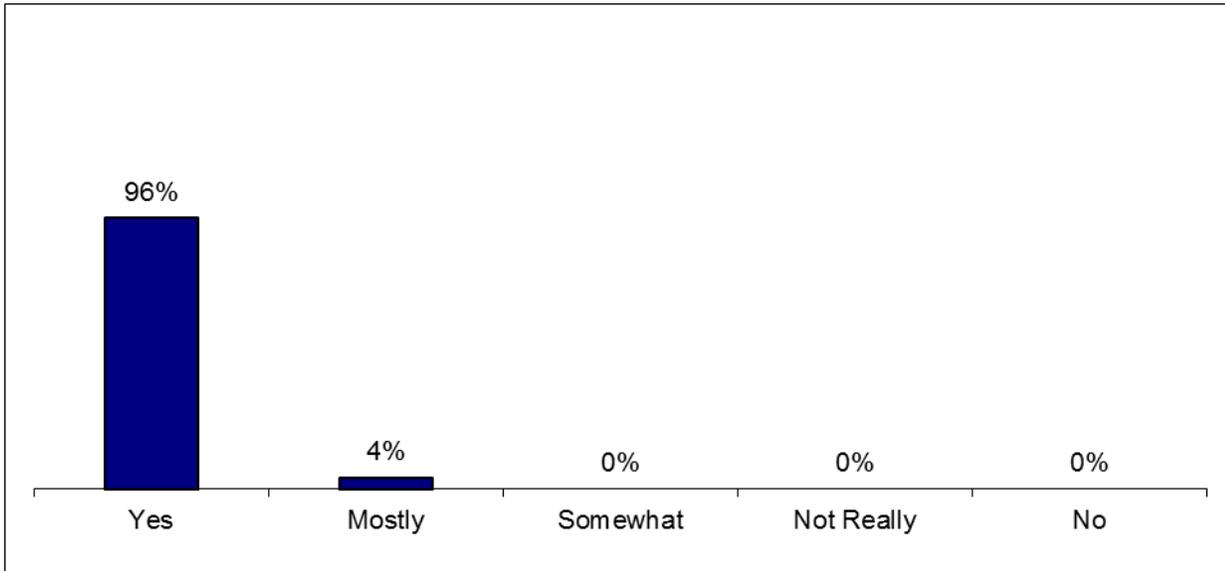


$t = 4.04, df = 198, p < .0001 = \text{extremely statistically significant}$

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.

An overwhelming majority (96%) 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, 99% 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: amazing, fantastic, eye-opening, awesome, and inspiring.

Quotes from participants include:

- It creates awareness of other people's challenges and the things they have to overcome in life.*
- Power of Peace should be a requirement integrated into the High School experience.*
- It is a necessary program that provides a wonderful outlet for students.*
- Power of Peace is a gateway to inspirational change and influence.*
- Students I don't know are no longer just faces but people with hearts, pasts and futures.*
- A worthwhile and meaningful life experience for all.*
- This program made me feel like I belong.*
- I never would have told anyone the things I told this group and I feel relieved.*
- Taking these workshops is a great way to boost a student's self-esteem.*
- Power of Peace showed me that there are other students just like me and I am not alone.*
- I love how I got to open up and nobody judged me.*
- I am going to take what I learned at Power of Peace into my future.*
- It made me grow and realize that I do have a purpose in life.*

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

Of the 95 students who completed the post-survey, 97% of them took the time to comment on improving the Power of Peace experience. The majority, 93% 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:

- Invite more people to participate
- Have follow up mini workshops
- Make it longer than two days

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 35%). The statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 1: I respect myself (an increase of 8%).

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 five of which achieved statistical significance:

- 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.