

## Power of Peace Westchester County 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 three school districts (New Rochelle, Peekskill and Port Chester) throughout the year. A total of 12 Power of Peace workshop cycles were completed in 2014.

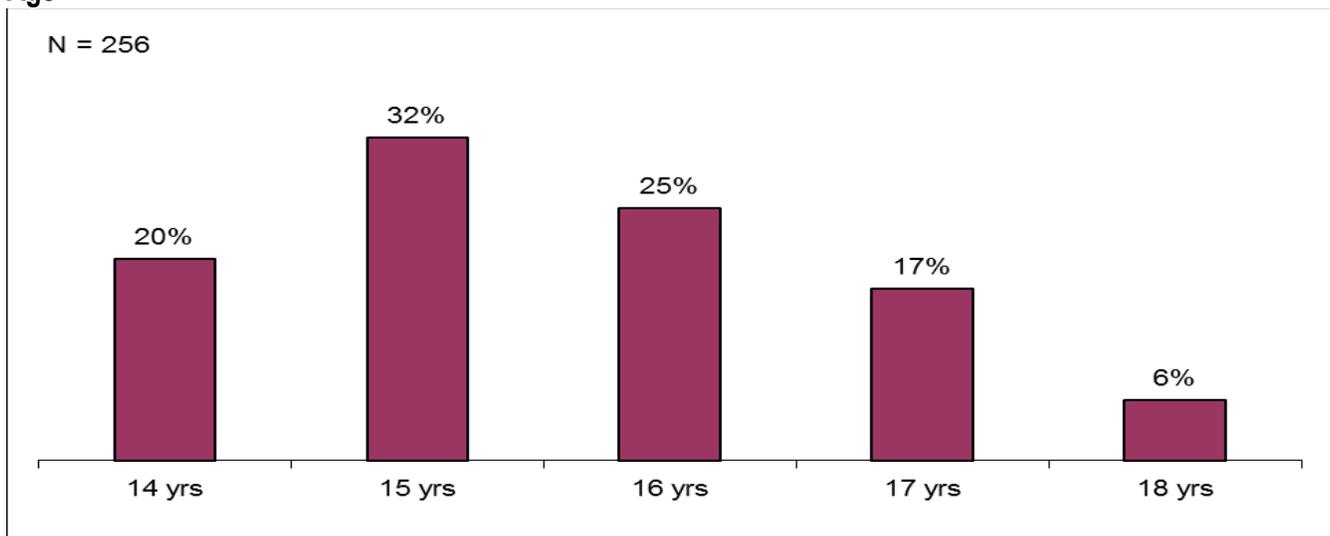
### Program Description

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

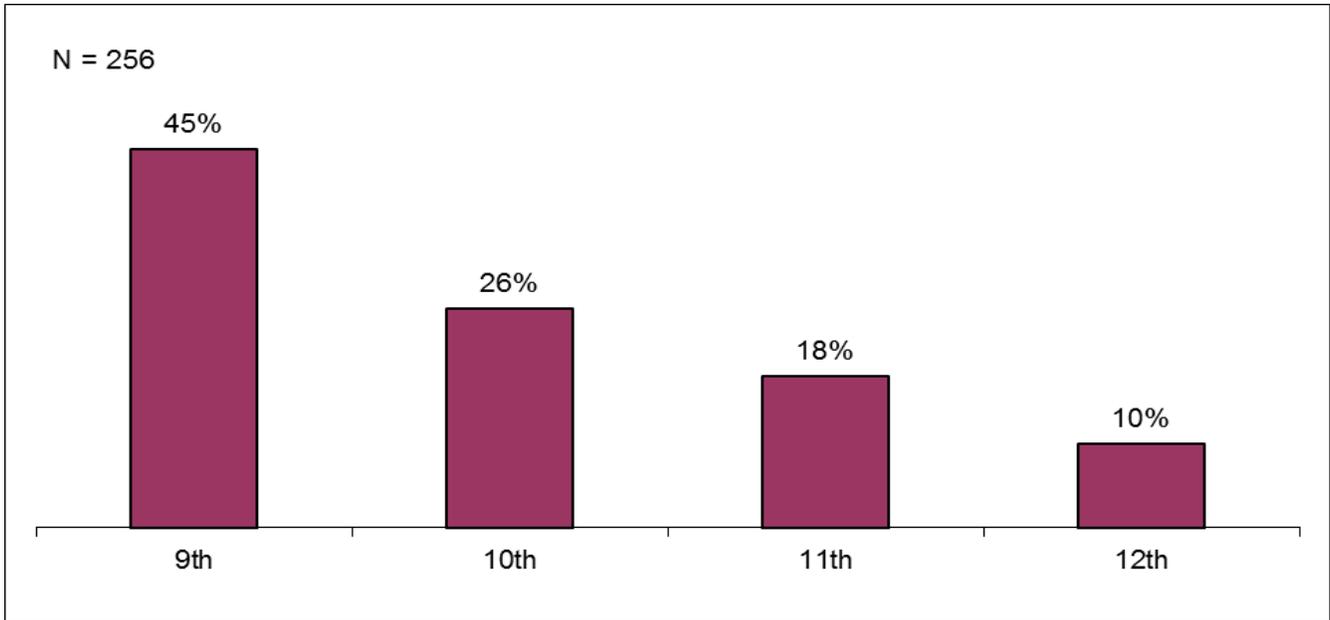
There were 256 students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 102 boys (40%) and 154 girls (60%) in grades 9 through 12 and ranging in age from 14 – 18. Distributions for age, grade and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

#### Age



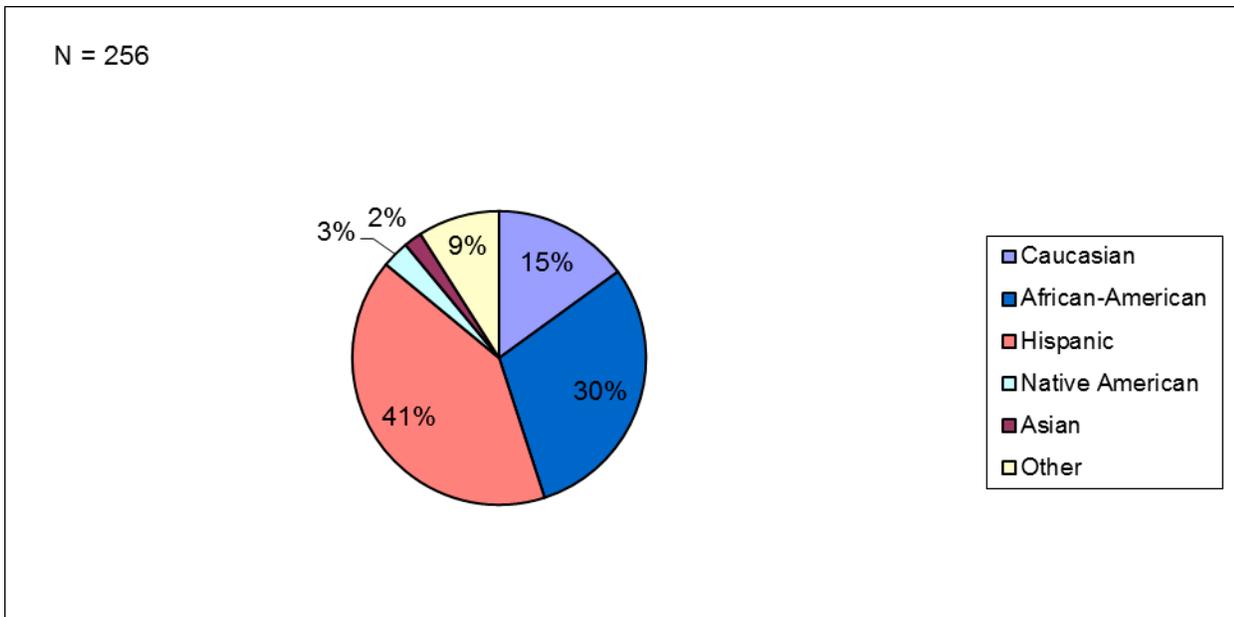
Just under one third (32%) of the participants were 15 years of age, followed by just a quarter (25%) of participants 16 years of age.

## Grade



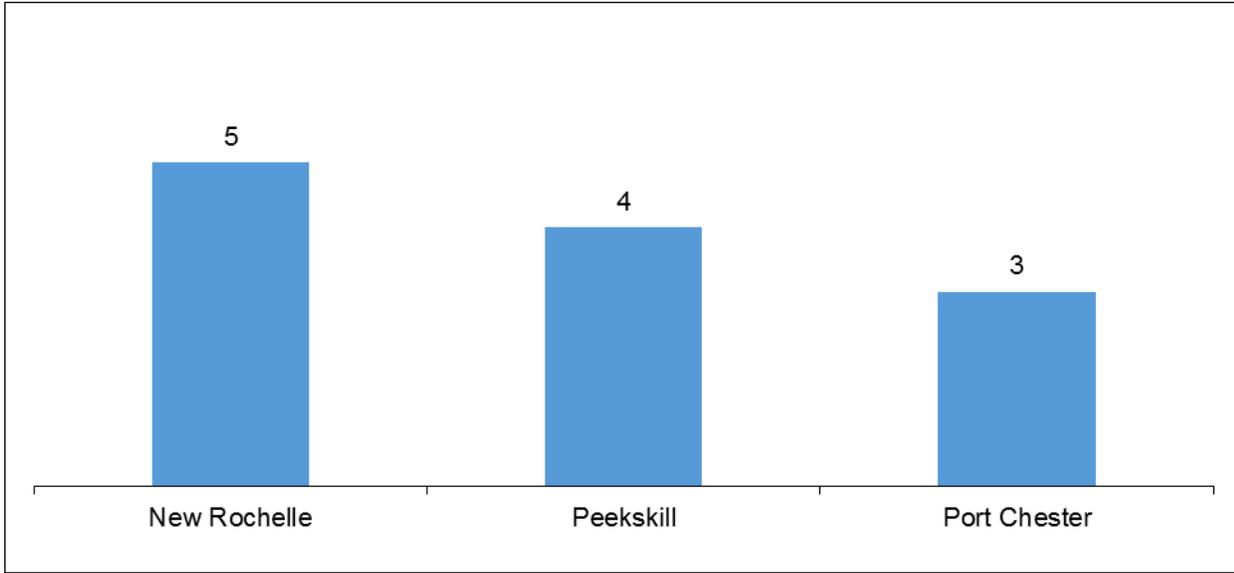
Nearly half (46%) of participants were in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, followed by just over one quarter (26%) in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Ethnicity



Nearly half (41%) of participants identified their ethnicity as Hispanic, followed by nearly one third (30%) African-American and then Caucasian (15%).

## Number of Power of Peace Cycles by School District



In 2014, New Rochelle High School led the way holding five cycles of Power of Peace, followed by Peekskill High School holding four cycles, and Port Chester High School held three cycles of Power of Peace for a total of twelve cycles throughout Westchester County.

### 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 256 participants, 100% completed the pre-survey and 94% 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.”

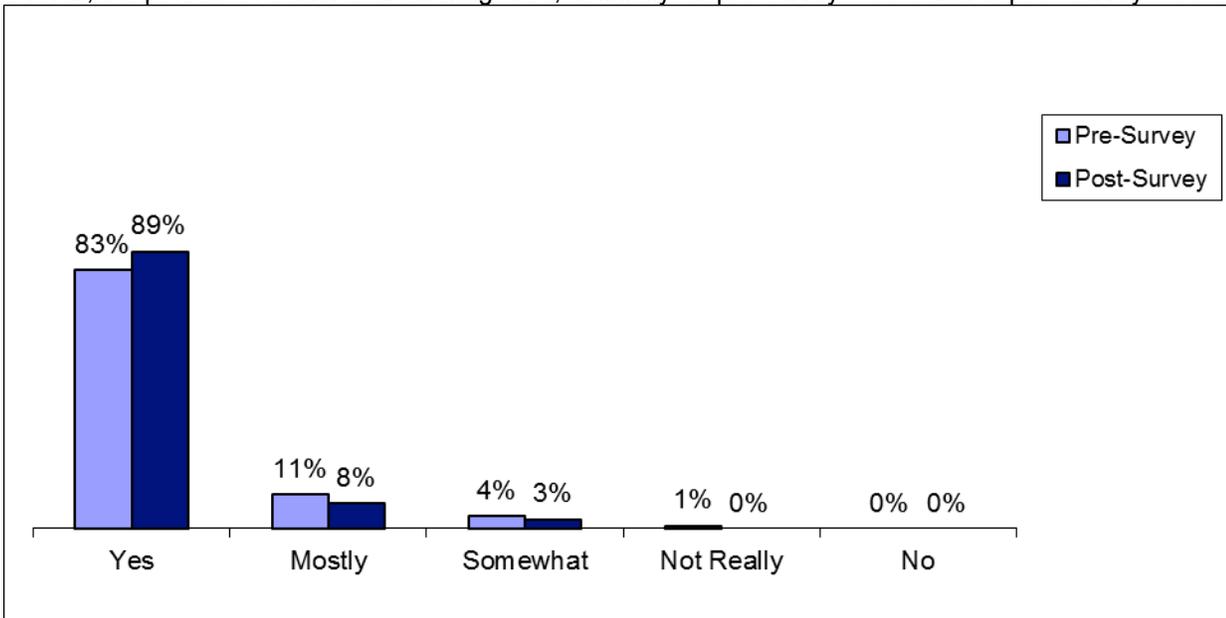
**Qualitative:** Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

### Results

From pre-survey to post-survey, significant ( $p < .001 - p < .05$ ) 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.**

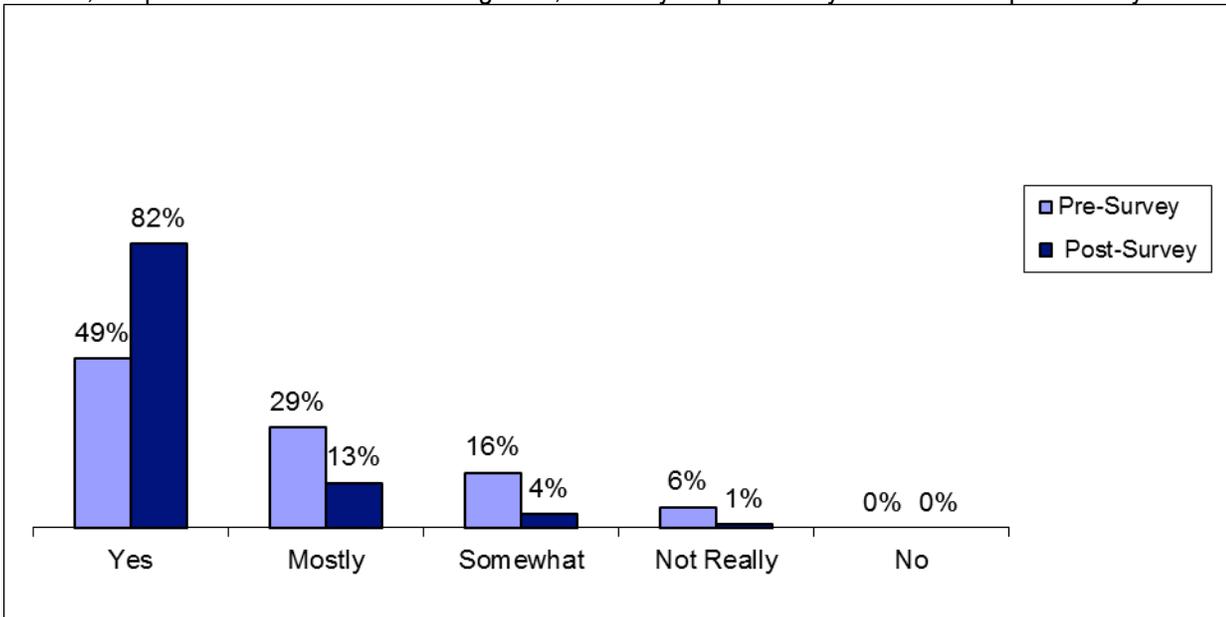
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 83% and at post-survey = 89%.



*t = 1.83, df = 494, p = non-significant*

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

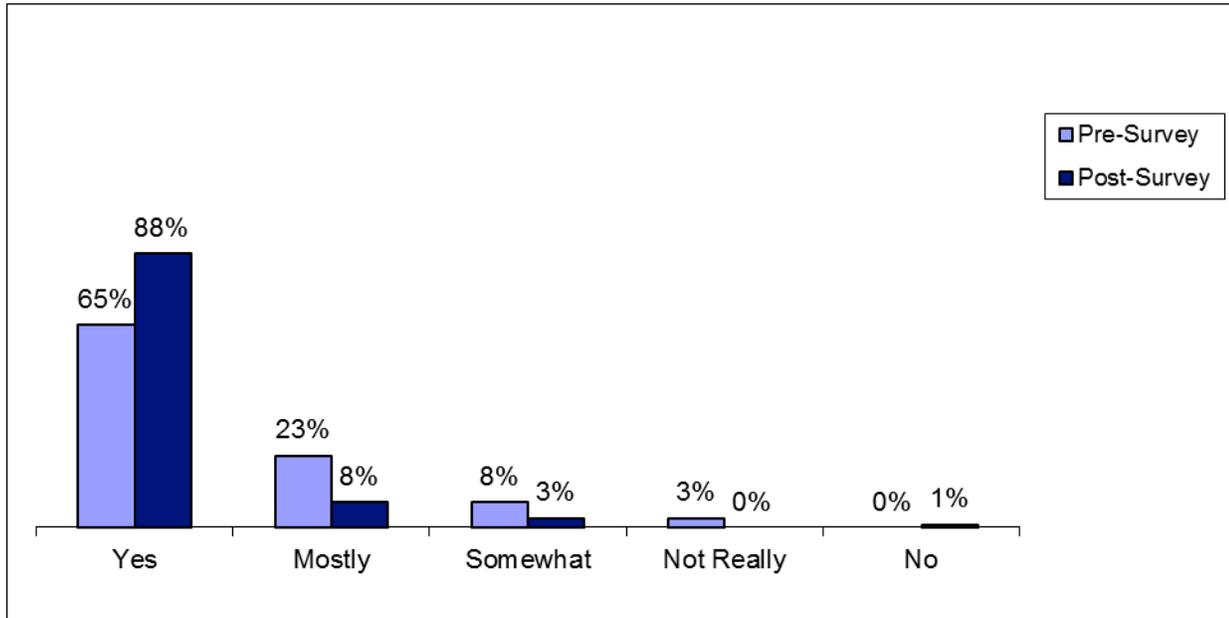
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 49% and at post-survey = 82%.



*t = 8.00, df = 495, p < .0001 = statistically significant*

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

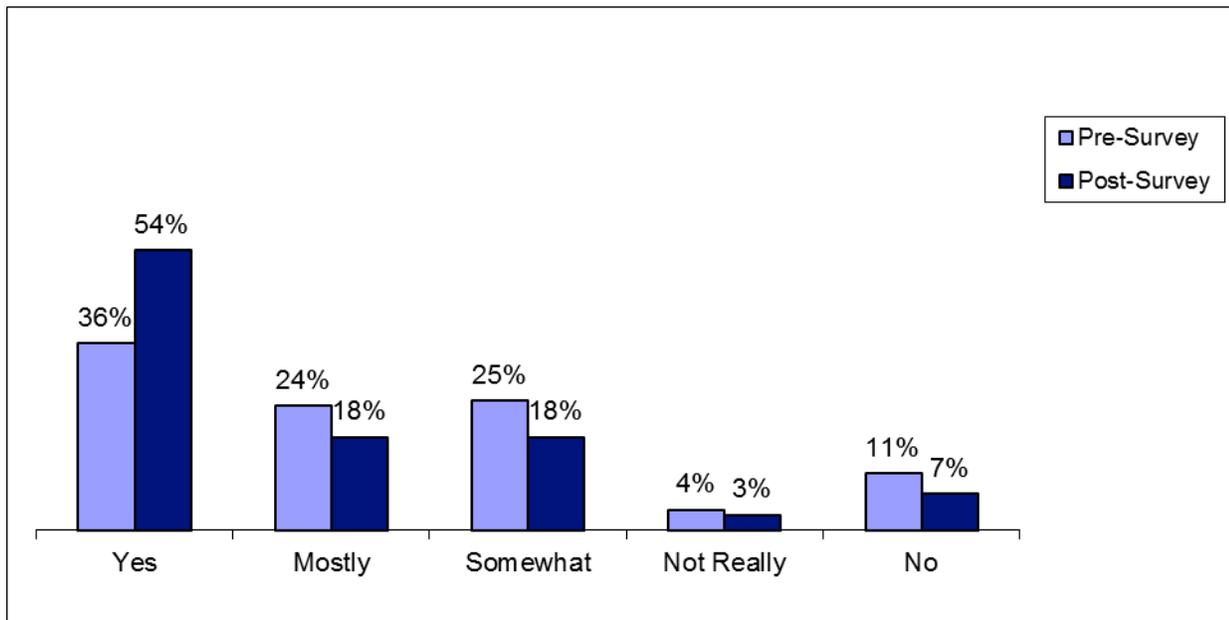
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 65% and at post-survey = 88%.



*t = 4.94, df = 494, p < .0001 = statistically significant*

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

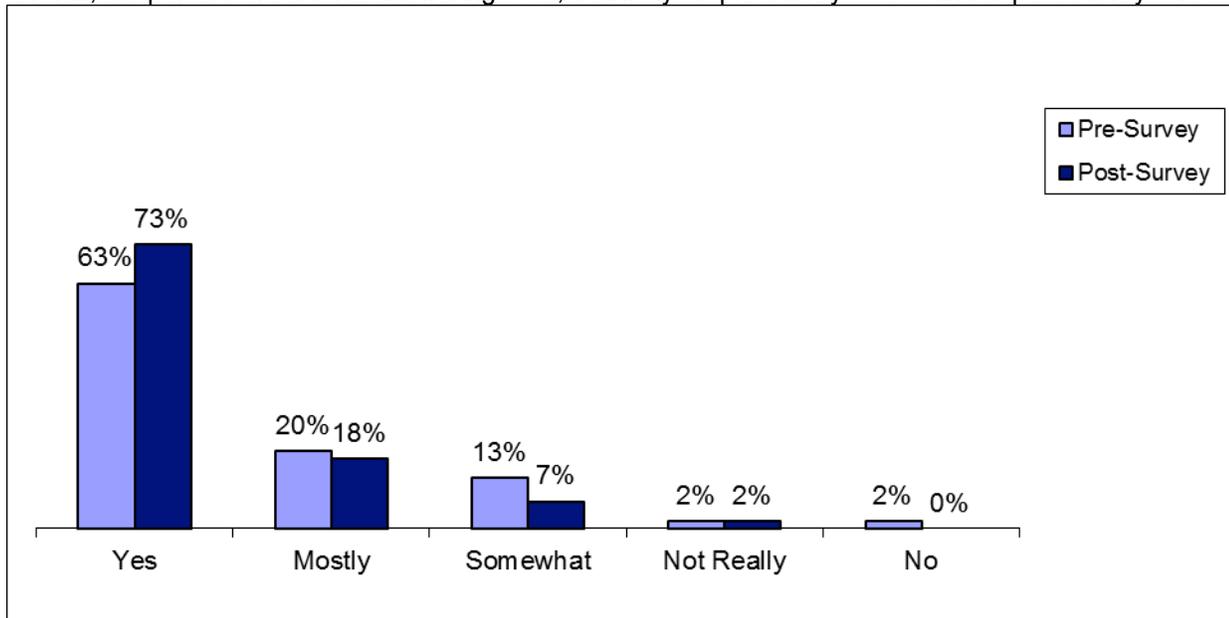
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 36% and at post-survey = 54%.



*t = 3.51, df = 494, p < .0005 = statistically significant*

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

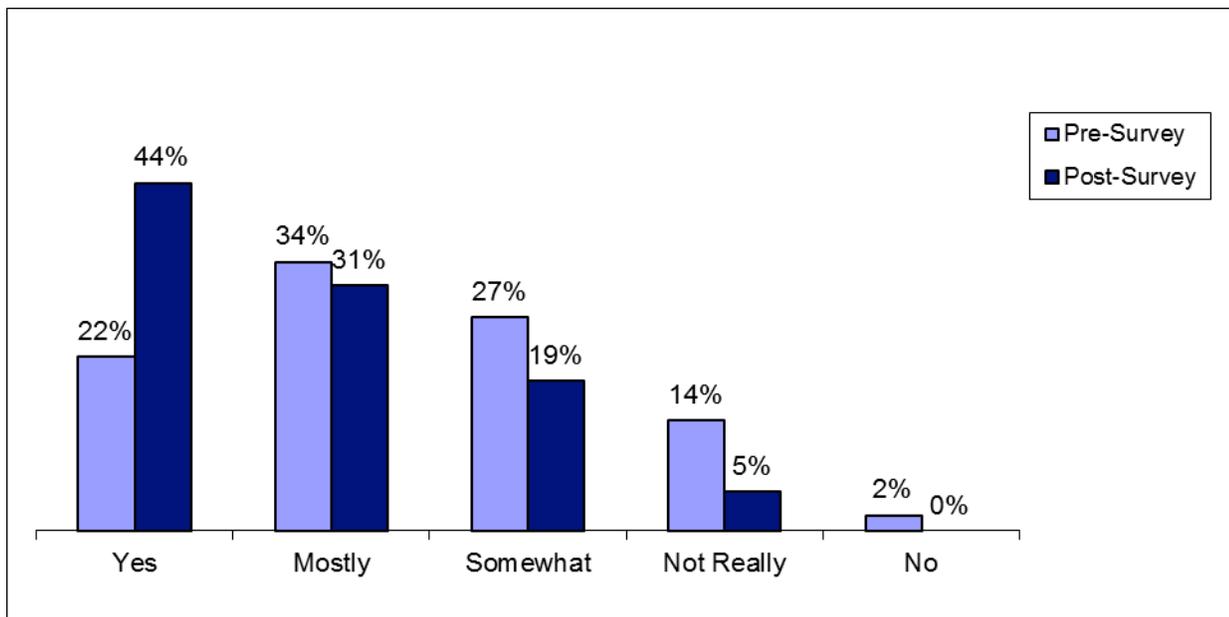
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 63% and at post-survey = 73%.



$t = 2.65, df = 493, p < .005 = \text{statistically significant}$

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

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 22% and at post-survey = 44%.

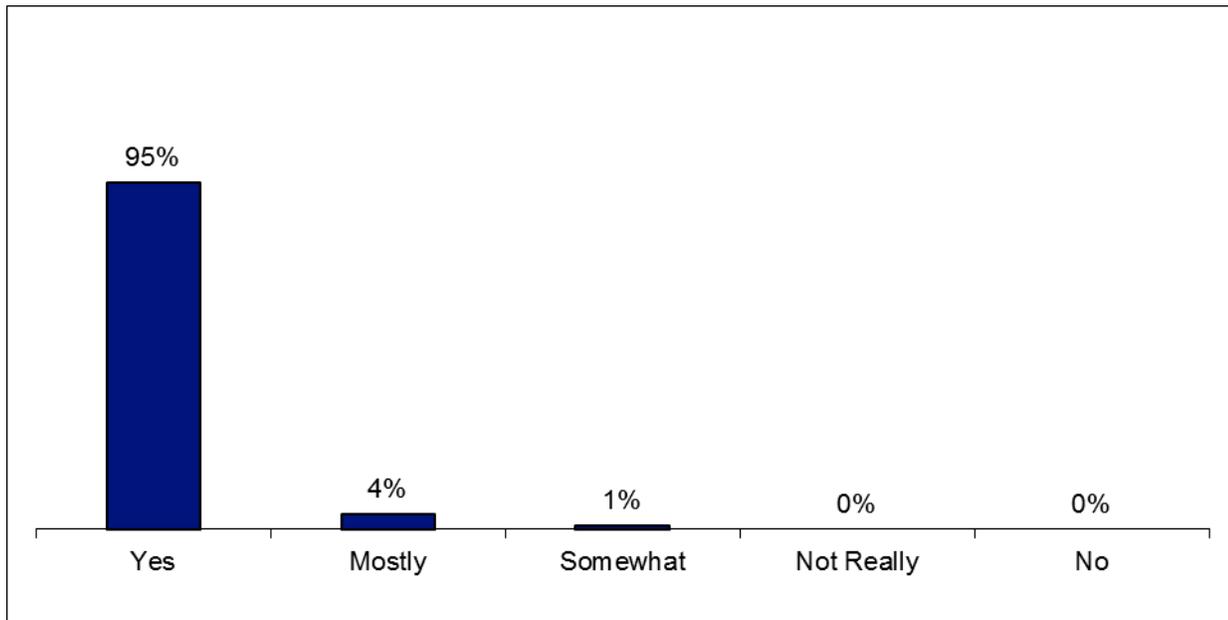


$t = 6.06, df = 493, p < .0001 = \text{statistically significant}$

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 (95%) of the participants answered "Yes, definitely."



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

Of the 240 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 great, fantastic, wonderful, awesome, insightful and inspirational.

Quotes from participants include:

- It is an experience that I will never forget.*
- It helped me to see that I am not the only person who goes through stuff in life.*
- Taught me how to improve myself.*
- I made some friend that I never would have made without Power of Peace.*
- Power of Peace should be a requirement integrated into the High School experience.*
- It helped me to become a stronger person.*
- It gave me relief to be able to express my feelings. Thank you!*
- Power of Peace changed a lot of my views about different things.*
- I liked being able to open up and have others open up to me.*
- 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 240 students who completed the post-survey, 96% of them took the time to comment on improving the Power of Peace experience. The majority, 89% 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: include teachers and principals, hold workshops more often and for longer than two days, have smaller circles.

## **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 33%). The statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 1: I respect myself (an increase of 6%). None of the items indicated a negative change in attitude (i.e., decrease from pre-survey to post-survey).

## **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 five of six areas represented by the following statements:

- 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.