

Program Report Spring 2015 for Schenectady High School

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 are presented in this report. The implementation of the program took place in two cycles during the months of February and March.

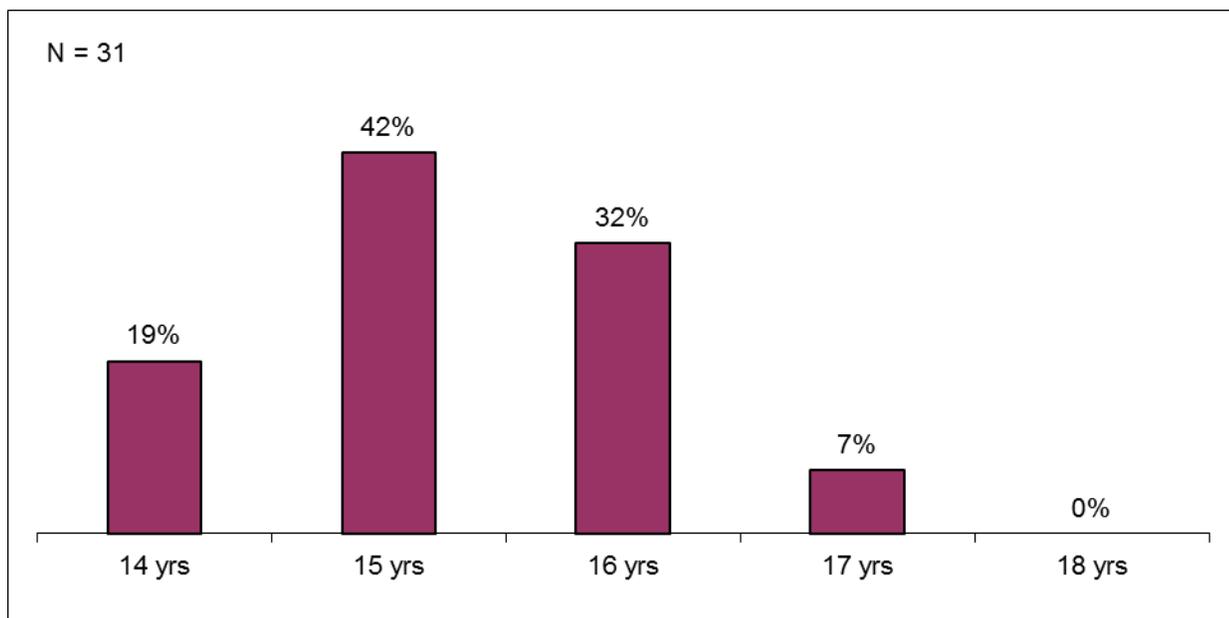
Program Description

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.

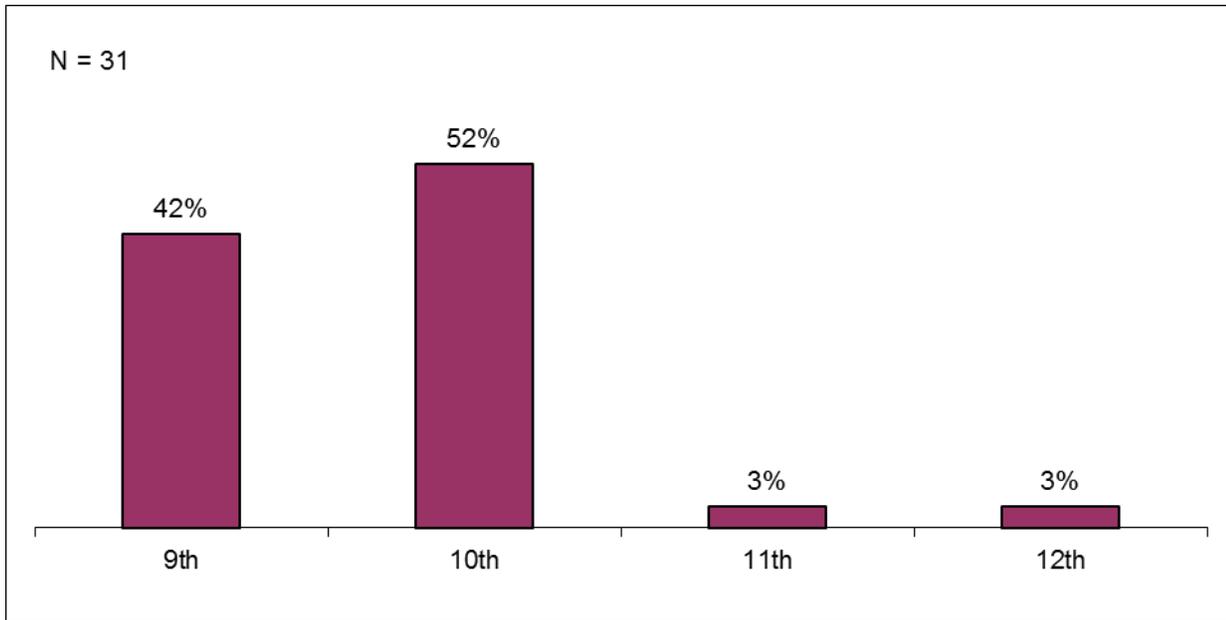
Demographics

There were 31 students who participated in the 2-day Power of Peace workshops. The student group was comprised of 17 boys (55%) and 14 girls (45%) in grades 9 through 12 and ranging in age from 14 – 17. Distributions for age, grade and ethnicity are presented in the charts listed below.

Age

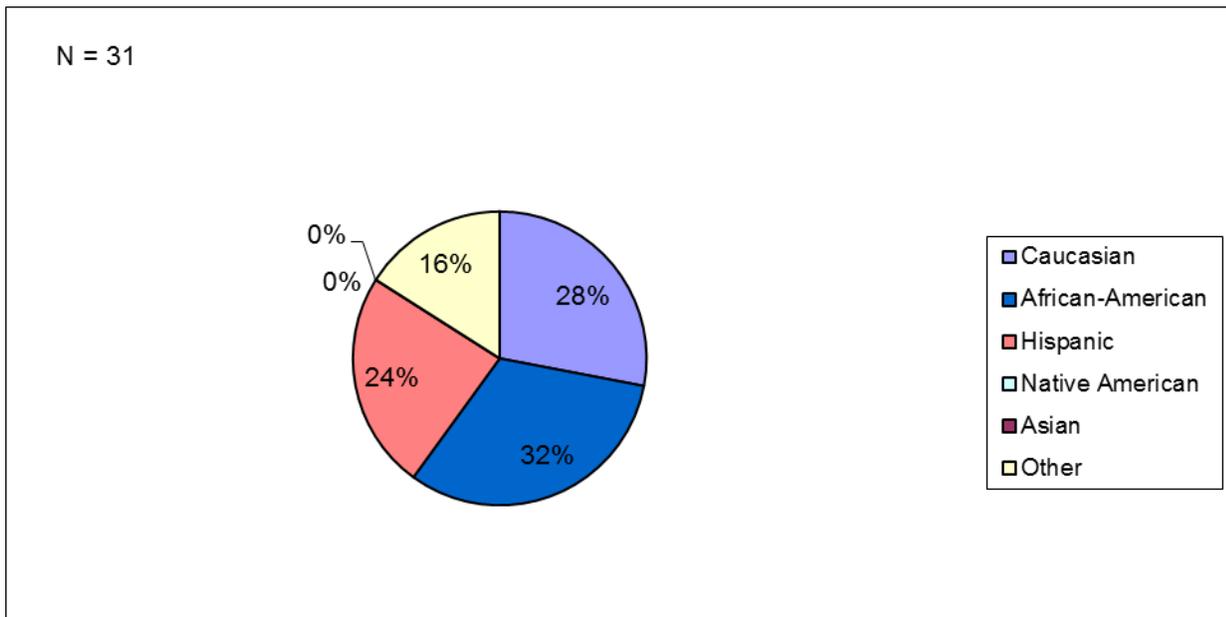


Grade



Just over Half (52%) of participants were in the 10th grade.

Ethnicity



Approximately one third (32%) of participants identified their ethnicity as African-American, followed by just over one quarter who identified their ethnicity as Caucasian (28%).

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 31 participants, 100% completed the pre-survey while 86% 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.”

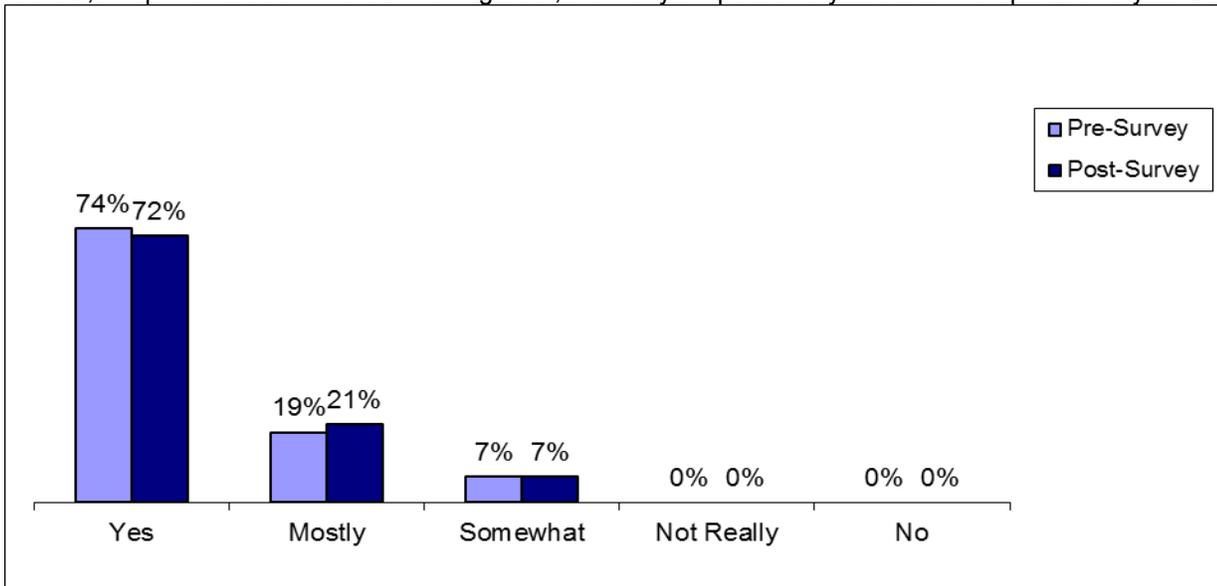
Qualitative: Two questions asking for feedback about the program were included on the post-survey regarding a) how participants felt about the Power of Peace experience and b) ways to improve the program in the future.

Results

From pre-survey to post-survey, positive changes in attitudes were seen on four of the six items. Data were unable to be analyzed using t-tests to compare pre-survey responses with post-survey responses due to the small N = 31.

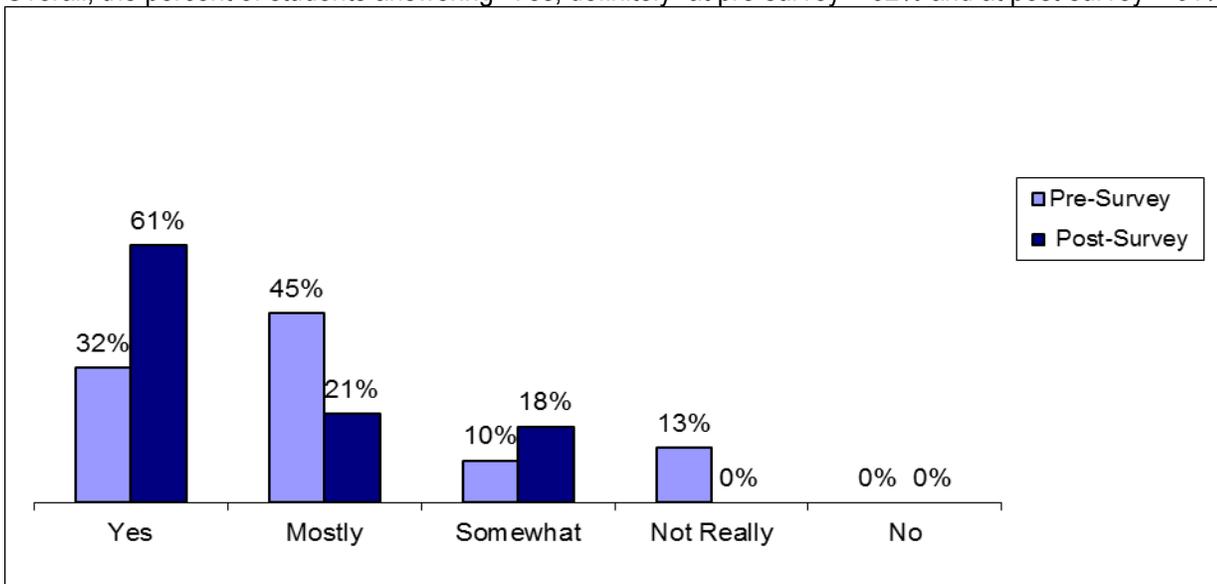
Item 1: I respect myself.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 74% and at post-survey = 72%.



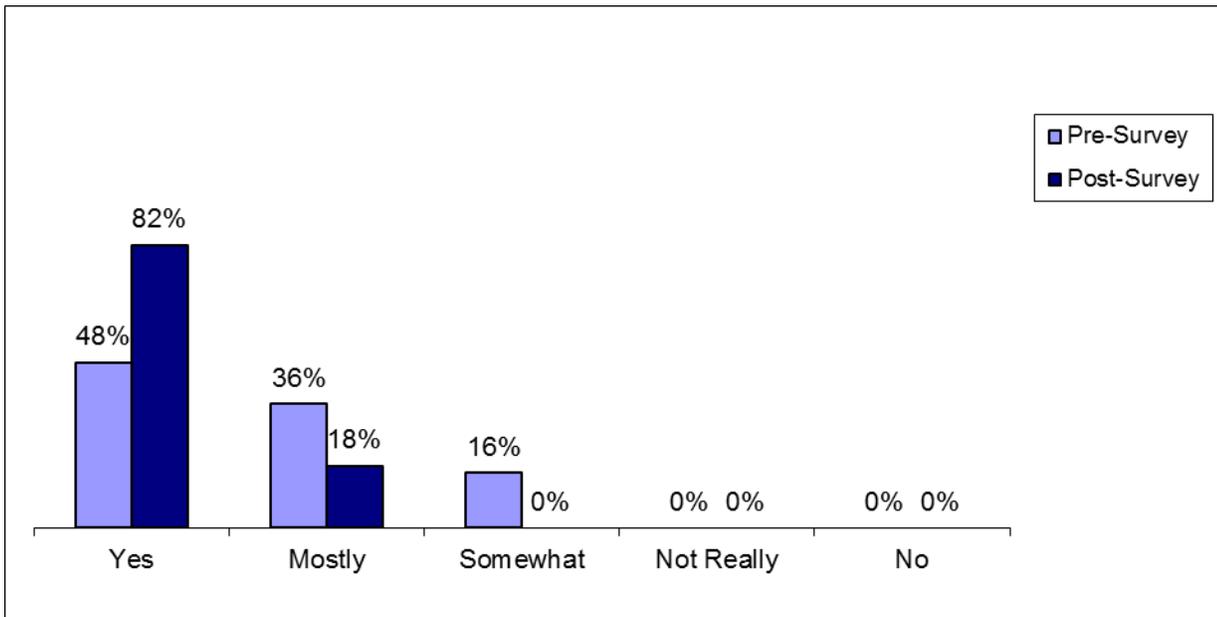
Item 2: I am willing to talk to a student different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 32% and at post-survey = 61%.



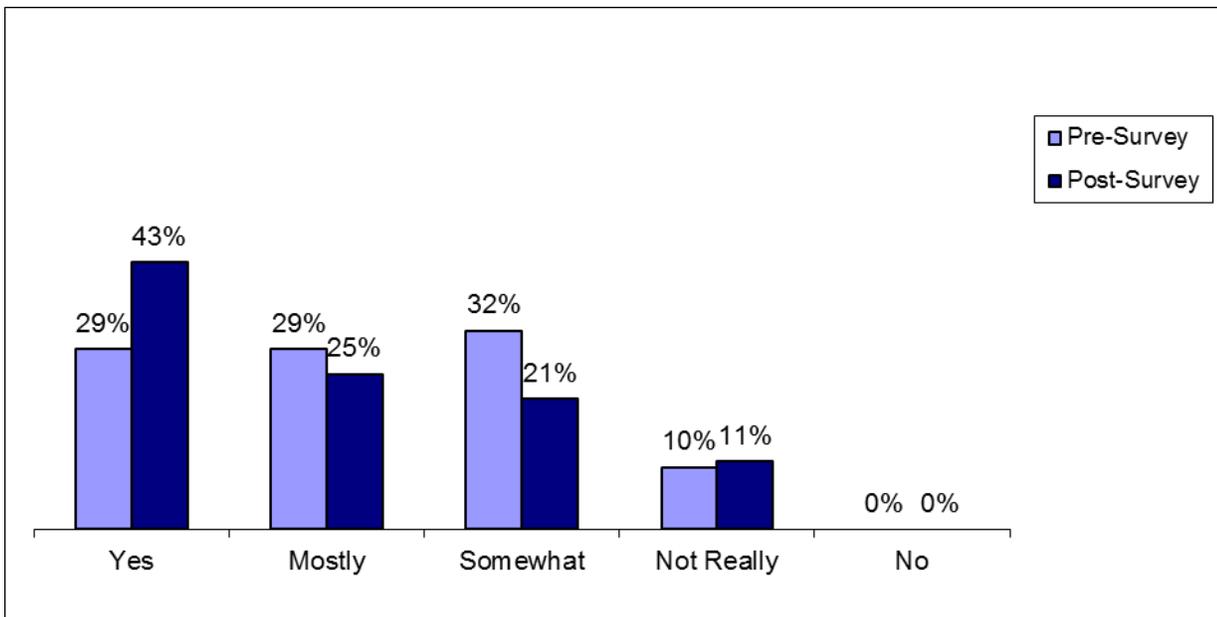
Item 3: I respect students different from me.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 48% and at post-survey = 82%.



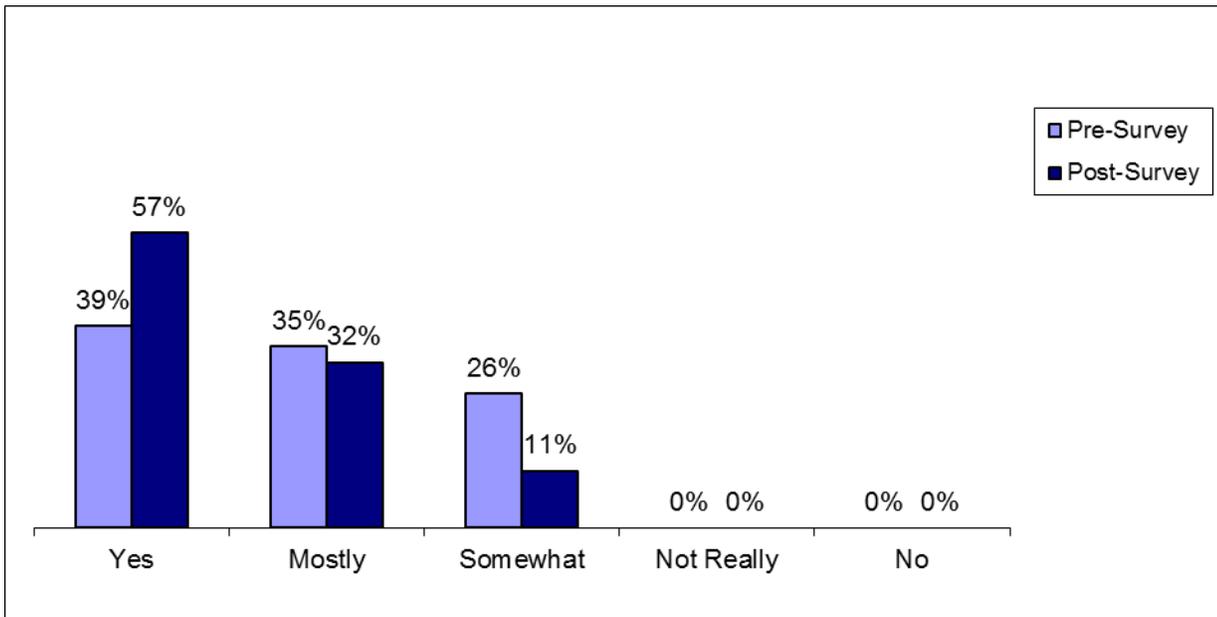
Item 4: I believe violence will not resolve conflict.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 29% and at post-survey = 43%.



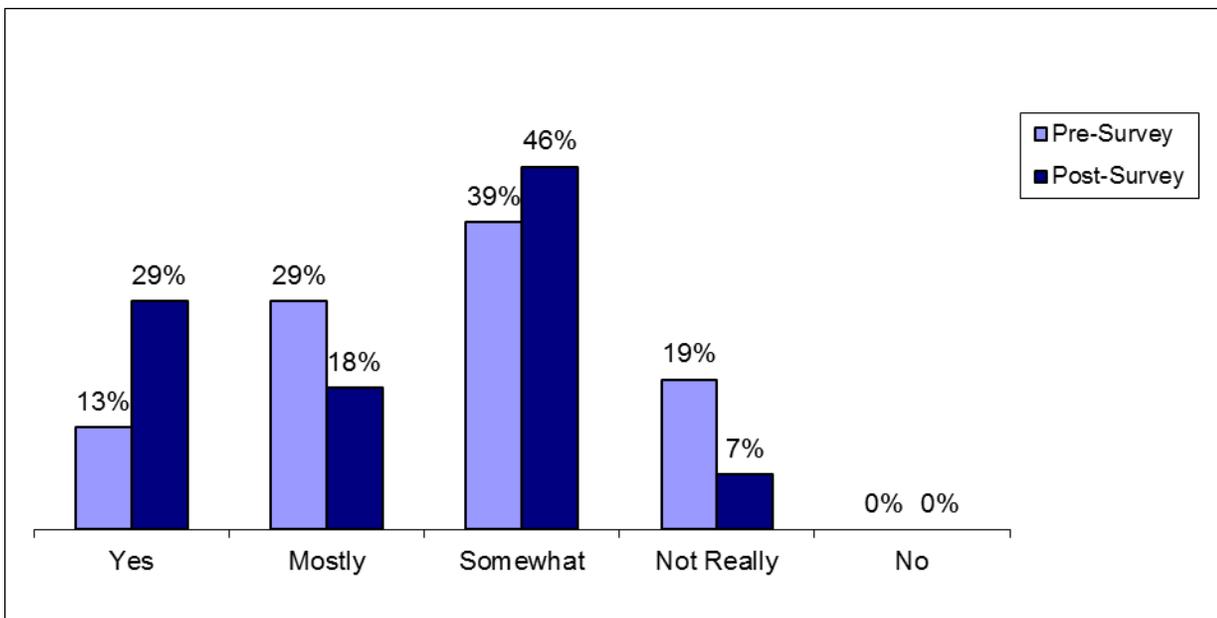
Item 5: I am aware of alternatives to violence.

Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 39% and at post-survey = 57%.



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

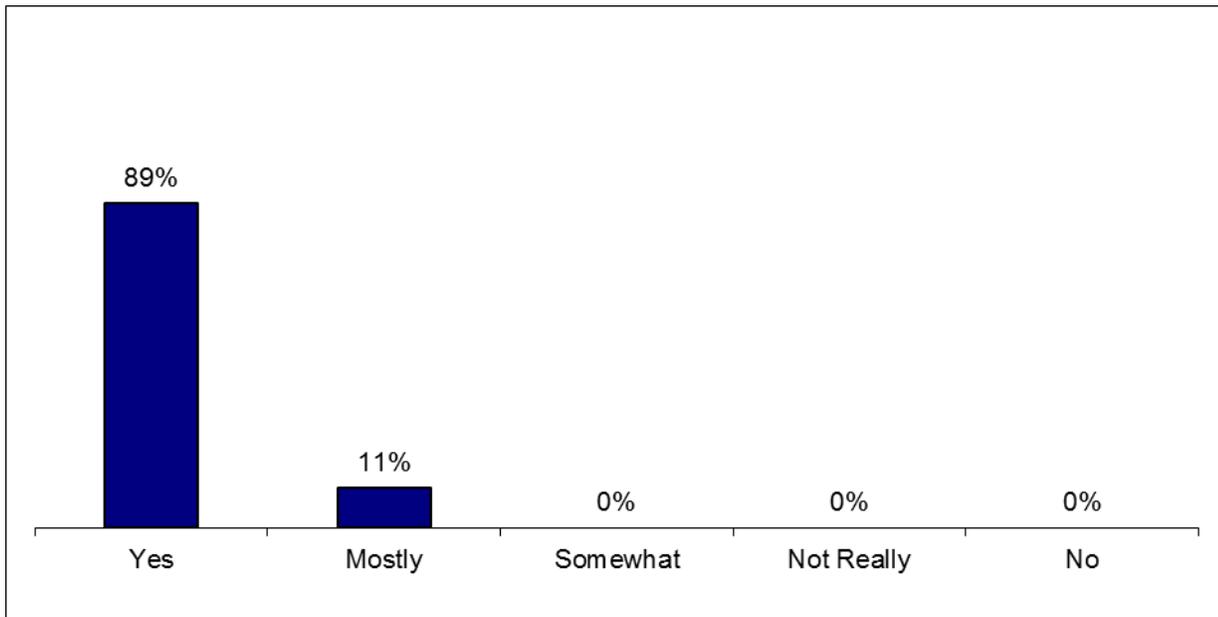
Overall, the percent of students answering “Yes, definitely” at pre-survey = 13% and at post-survey = 29%.



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, 89% of the participants answered "Yes, definitely."



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

Of the thirty-one students who completed the post-survey, 100% 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, perfect, safe and loving.

Quotes from participants include:

- *I feel really good about Power of Peace. It helps people a lot.*
- *I feel better knowing that I am not alone and there are others like me*
- *It was a great way to not hold back when you can't hold it in any more*
- *BEST program EVER!*
- *I learned how to open up more*
- *It will help all students and violence will lessen*
- *It helped me realize more than I did that everyone has a story*
- *It helps you to get along and see how everyone feels and lives*
- *Power of Peace made me feel safe and loved. It helped me to relieve my stress and frustrations*
- *Its good and helpful for students who are going through things*
- *Amazing and very badly needed!*
- *I feel like it's a good place to come and talk about things you wouldn't tell others*
- *This program is a blessing for any student who joins the workshop*
- *I feel really good about Power of Peace because it's a place to express what you're feeling*
- *I believe after this program you can change and become something*
- *Power of Peace should be something that every student goes through*
- *Power of Peace helped me to realize that I need to put myself first before I'm stuck at rock bottom.*
- *You got a room of strangers to open up to each other and form powerful bonds*

- I think it was nice I got to meet lots of different people
- It has brought us close and was a great experience
- It helps people with their struggles

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

Of the thirty-one students who completed the post-survey, 86% 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:

- *Make it longer*
- *It should be bigger than it is.*
- *It should be something all grades participate in.*
- *It should be like after school or at Votech, like a class.*
- *Pick people who want to come here*
- *Have a bigger group of students*
- *Allow students to talk about any topic*

Discussion

The one statement indicating the highest change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey was Item 3: I respect students different from me (an increase of 34%). The one statement indicating the least change in attitude from pre-survey to post-survey: Item 1: I respect myself (a decrease 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.