

INVOLVING THE STAKEHOLDERS THAT MATTER MOST: STUDENT VOICE IN SCHOOL REFORM¹

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Abstract

Over four years the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) led efforts across the state to implement the Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) initiative. This federally funded school reform effort targeted the 22 lowest performing high schools in Michigan. One of the primary objectives of the initiative was to implement interventions to increase levels of school safety and student support. It was theorized that such climate gains would lead to increased levels of student achievement. Additionally, the Michigan Department of Education committed in the S3 project to have "student voice" help lead school reform efforts.

This article provides an overview of Neutral Zone's "youth driven spaces" (YDS) model and its implementation to help support student voice across 19 schools that were part of the S3 school reform effort. As a result, students made significant gains in 21st century skills; schools made improvements in climate and culture; and overall as a result of the comprehensive S3 school reform efforts 70% of the cohort moved off the Michigan failing schools list and graduation rates increased.

A Tale of Two Failing Districts & Student Voice

Ypsilanti and Willow Run Community Schools were neighboring school districts both faced with mounting state debt, shrinking student enrollment, and some of the lowest student achievement scores in Michigan. Confronted with these growing problems, the two communities took a risk and decided to consolidate into one district, Ypsilanti Community Schools. To steer the consolidation efforts the new district adopted a set of five guiding principles. One of these core commitments is "student voice and empowerment".

In order to address the commitment to student voice and empowerment, Ypsilanti Community Schools contracted the Neutral Zone (NZ), headquartered in Ann Arbor MI, to work with its newly formed high schools. This undertaking was part of the student voice work NZ provided to 19 total schools, from 2012-15, across the state as part of the Michigan Department of Education's Safe & Supportive Schools (S3²) initiative.

Neutral Zone helped assemble a joint team of students from across the two districts to dialogue about concerns, fears, and misconceptions and to form as a student action team

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² The Michigan Department of Education's Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) initiative was a federally funded school reform effort targeting the 22 lowest performing high schools in Michigan, with the goal of implementing interventions to increase levels of school safety and student support.

to support student collaboration as the districts merged. The group identified a number of challenges and proposed recommendations to the new school board including on-going cross-school visits and activities before the merger, strategies for creating a positive school culture, and ways to involve students in generating the new district identity. Through active workshops and guided planning activities NZ supported students as they developed artifacts for the new school district to help shape the culture and physical environment. Students also led the efforts to select a new mascot for the district.

Through this work students had an authentic voice and critical impact on one of the highest-level and challenging school governance tasks: restructuring a school district. Without this process student investment and support for the consolidation would have been more limited. Additionally, through participation in the process, students made significant gains in 21st century skill areas.

Purpose and Rationale

Traditionally, adults do not consider students as a source of valuable insight about school problems and students are not seen as mature enough to be real partners in change initiatives. Adults' negative perceptions that students are incapable of informing and leading school change drive students' exclusion from having authentic decision-making roles in school. With this mindset adults position students on the fringe of school change processes rather than making them central partners. Such an approach impedes school leaders' ability to obtain necessary perspectives about school challenges and ultimately design effective change strategies.

This article provides an overview of Neutral Zone's "youth driven spaces" (YDS) model and its implementation to support student voice in 19 low performing high schools in Michigan that were a part of the S3 school reform. We've demonstrated that student voice and engagement made a difference in some of the States' most challenging high schools. Overall students across the schools who participated in the YDS intervention made significant gains in 21st century skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). Additionally, through the student engagement process Neutral Zone played a key role in the comprehensive school reform efforts that moved 70% of a cohort of low performing schools in Michigan off the failing schools list. The narrative provides background of YDS, program methodology along with qualitative and quantitative results of the initiative.

Neutral Zone and the Youth Driven Space (YDS) Model

The Neutral Zone was founded by teens in 1998 to provide a venue for needed social, cultural, educational, leadership, and creative opportunities for high school age teens in Washtenaw County Michigan. Its mission -- by youth and for youth -- states that Neutral Zone is *a diverse, youth-driven teen center dedicated to promoting personal growth through artistic expression, community leadership, and the exchange of ideas.*

The Neutral Zone offers high quality, youth-driven program opportunities that focus on engaging youth in meaningful decision-making, mentorship, and leadership. Its support for personal growth, leadership and social learning gets enacted through a variety of programs that are organized around the interests of teens.

NZ's "youth-driven space" (YDS) philosophy is how the organization approaches creativity and leadership development for teens across its programs and how NZ operates as an organization to involve teens at all levels of the agency – programmatically, organizationally and at the governance level. At its core, YDS provides supports and opportunities for youth to make decisions, take on genuine leadership roles and foster building supportive communities of youth. Three pillars define YDS: fostering teens' intrinsic motivation, supporting young people's developmental needs, and building youth-adult partnerships.

In supporting intrinsic motivation adult staff build on teens' interests, ideas and curiosity to challenge them to set and achieve their own goals (Ryan & Deci 2000). Supporting young people's developmental needs occurs by building teens' competence through active and collaborative projects in leadership and the arts. These experiences provide youth plentiful opportunities to explore who they are and encourages them to discover their talents and abilities. Trained adult staff guide youth to reflect on themselves and their processes -- supporting teens in the development of their attitudes, values, and identity (Eccles 2002). Finally youth-adult partnerships guide the work that occurs at NZ. Adults scaffold young people to run their own initiatives and make genuine decisions. Their partnership emphasizes mutuality among youth and adults, with a focus on shared leading and learning (Li & Julian 2012; Zeldin, Christens & Power 2012).

In January 2010, the Kellogg Foundation awarded Neutral Zone and its collaborating partners (The Weikart Center for Program Quality and Michigan State University's Community Evaluation and Research Collaborative) a two-year grant to share its unique, youth-led approach with other teen programs throughout the state. The group implemented a two-year training and coaching pilot in 8 diverse youth settings across Michigan. Evaluation results demonstrated significant impact on youth outcomes (21st century skills and socio-emotional learning capacities) as well as key structural changes in programs and organizations to support youth voice and decision-making. Since that time, Neutral Zone has disseminated its YDS model through intensive training and coaching to over 40 community organizations and school-based programs across Michigan with the goal of helping them strengthen youth leadership, voice, engagement and impact.

Methodology: The YDS Intervention and School Reform

In 2012 the Neutral Zone partnered with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) on the Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) initiative, a federally funded school reform effort. S3 targeted the 22 lowest performing high schools in Michigan, with the goal of raising levels of achievement. One of the primary objectives of the initiative was to implement interventions to increase levels of school safety and student support. The Michigan Department of Education committed, in the S3 project, to have "student voice" lead school reform efforts.

Each school within the S3 project implemented one or more school intervention models choosing from Restorative Practice, Bully Free Schools, Creating Safe Choices for Sexual Minority Youth, Michigan Model for Health, or Parent Engagement. The goal

through any of these models was to address the conditions for learning and improve the culture and climate in their building. Student voice was required to be a part of each school's effort, no matter which of the school reform models they adopted. In order to support the student voice objective, most of the schools (19 out of 22) also chose to work with Neutral Zone, for 1-3 years, to help develop and build capacity for their student engagement in school reform.

Using Zeldin's (2012) youth-adult partnership framework as the theoretical basis for the intervention, which focuses on supporting positive youth development through authentic civic engagement (Christens and Peterson 2012; Flanagan and Faison 2001; Sullivan and Larson 2010; Youniss et al. 1997), students from 19 of the S3 high schools in Michigan created student teams or "advisories" which engaged in projects to support school reform. The objectives were to have each team research school issues related to their school reform efforts, plan and implement a project that addressed one of the issues and to create an Advisory or Action Team that could support on-going student involvement.

The inputs that guided the intervention included:

- **Intensive 2-day Summer Residential Institute:** Each summer, in 2012-2014, Neutral Zone brought together leadership teams made up of students and adult staff/faculty from across a cohort of 5-7 schools. The purpose of the Institute was to: (a) engage these teams in learning about school reform and reform models; (b) engage students in learning skills and strategies (participatory evaluations, project planning) to explore and understand school issues; (c) provide adults professional development to support their student team; and (d) engage school groups in making a plan for initiating an action project when they returned to their home school. The Institute was designed to model and foster youth-driven practice and adult-youth partnerships in order to provide both students and adults new skills and ideas that could be applied in their school settings.
- **Coaching/Site Visits:** Neutral Zone coaches provided sites with technical assistance tailored to meet the goals and needs of individual sites, 3-4 times throughout the academic year. Coaches provided: (a) continued support of student-led projects through additional professional development, strategic planning, observation/ feedback and consulting; (b) structured reflection of successes and challenges and guidance to develop plans for improvement; (c) development of structures and strategies to create a sustainable advisory model within the school (mission, by-laws); (d) strategies to involve the larger student body in the work of the advisory.

The following is an example of a coaching/site visit:

The student team in Marion created a goal to raise money in order to offer mini-grants to other student groups that wanted to take on school improvement projects. The Neutral Zone coach conducted a three-hour workshop for students and adult advisors on planning a fundraiser and developing a corporate sponsorship package. The group engaged in an active brainstorming session, to come up with a fundraiser project and plan the steps for implementation. Through active exercises the group

drafted their own sponsor package and compiled a list of local businesses that they would ask for support.

- **One-day Summit:** Neutral Zone reconvened school cohorts, mid-year, for a professional development program. This day of training and planning allowed students and staff to reconnect with other schools, share successes and challenges and provided school groups with additional tools, strategies and training to develop a sustainable advisory council.
- **Sustainability Reflection:** Neutral Zone conducted an end of the year strategy check in with school teams or adult advisors(s) to help them plan the next steps for sustaining their advisory council.

Results

The Safe and Supportive Schools project was an unqualified success, meeting the goals set out by developers at the Michigan Department of Education. Several supports and interventions occurred at each school to help make broad school-wide gains. These are the results reported below. Additionally, at the student level, Neutral Zone measured self-reported gains of students who were directly involved in student voice work, through pre/post surveys and statistical analysis of items.

Schools Results

All of the schools in the cohort were identified as “Priority Schools” meaning that they were in the bottom 5% lowest performers on state benchmarks. By the conclusion of the project 70% of the S3 schools moved off the Michigan “Priority List” as opposed to 37% of non-S3 Priority schools. While 12% of the general pool of low performing schools across Michigan moved to “Reward” status, 30% of the S3 schools received “Reward” status. Reward status means that the school was in the top 5% of schools, in the top 5% of schools making the greatest gains in achievement or outperformed the school's predicted ranking with similar schools.

Additionally, 65% of the schools across the S3 cohort had significant improvements in school safety, as measured by scores on the Michigan Coordinated School Health and Safety Report (MiPS3). Among this group, graduation rates increased 18% (over 3 years) as compared to a 3% gain in graduation rates for schools with a decrease or no change in school climate measures.

While the evaluation wasn't designed to isolate the effects of a single intervention, among school personnel and the MDE staff supporting the project, there was wide agreement that “student voice and engagement” was one of the key program areas important to the project's success. Of the 14 schools that came off the failing schools all but one received Neutral Zone's support for student voice and engagement work.

Student Results

Youth surveys assessed 21st Century skills, or soft skills, such as goal setting, problem solving, leadership, group process skills, organizational skills, and communication skills,

using an adaptation of the Youth Experiences Survey 2.0 (Hansen & Larson, 2008). Student surveys also asked about the division of responsibilities between adults and students (adapted from the Kalamazoo Youth Development Network post training/youth version survey, 1999), the strength of partnership between adults and students (Involvement and Interaction Rating Scales, Jones & Perkins, 2006), and the sense of community and engagement (developed from work by Zeldin 2004, Chavis & Pretty, 1999, and Chavis & Wandersman, 1990 plus items from Neutral Zone's Youth Driven Formative Index, 2010).

Student surveys were revised each year through the span of the three-year project. Mostly surveys were shortened, with items removed, to concentrate on items that the implementation team felt were the most connected to the training/coaching and work taken on by students. As a result there were no inter-item validity or reliability studies conducted.

Student Engagement

Results from these surveys demonstrated statistically significant gains across several categories and items. In each of the three annual cohorts (2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15) statistically significant gains were reported in multiple items within the *engagement* subscales. Some of the items that made significant gains included: students feeling connected to their student advisory group; feeling connected to adults in their advisory; and feeling that it was important to be involved in the advisory. Appendices 1-3 provide a list of the items surveyed and those that showed statistical significant gains at the 5% confidence level.

Sharing Power Between Students and Adults

Students were also surveyed, using a 5-point scale, about their feelings for how various school improvement responsibilities were shared between adults and students (1=mostly adult, 3=equally shared, and 5=youth completely responsible). Across the 9 items that made up the "shared responsibility" subscale in the first and third years, every item increased from pre to post tests (except for one in 2014-15) and between 3-5 (out of 9) were statistically significant at the 5% confidence level each year. These gains demonstrate that students felt increasing voice, responsibility and empowerment to support school activities. Appendices 1-3 provide a list of the items surveyed and those that showed statistical significant gains at the 5% confidence level.

Student Socio-emotional Learning and 21st Century Skills

Additionally, we found lots of statistically significant gains across several of the items within the *advisory experiences* subscales. This area was further divided into skill or experience areas, which included the following: problem solving, time management, pro social behaviors, group process skills, organizational skills and leadership skills. Some of the significant increases included the following items: using creativity to solve problems, better at taking feedback, running a meeting, and organizing an event or project for school. By the final year of the intervention, 33 of the items, out of a total of 38, demonstrated statistical significance. Appendices 1-3 provide a list of the items surveyed and those that showed statistical significant gains at the 5% confidence level.

Qualitative Impact and Anecdotes

Qualitative comments were collected after the first intensive, overnight retreat/training and mid-point following the one-day professional development summit. Comments demonstrate an increased motivation on the part of students to take on active, meaningful roles in their school improvement efforts. Some of the comments included:

- I plan on having more of a voice in my school's affairs and issues
- I will take what I've learned and be more involved in improving our school and lead my school better so that more people would come and attend our school
- I plan to go back to my school and talk to (staff) about improving student involvement and doing something to improve it.
- We have created a new organization which will allow members of different groups in our school to join together and better influence our community

Other comments demonstrated an increased confidence to try new skills:

- I plan on speaking more in front of large groups
- (I will) use the 'top 10 facilitator' tips to lead my group
- (I will) plan our student advisory meetings more efficiently

Long lasting relationships between the Neutral Zone and project sites provided an opportunity to see planning and implementation of authentic projects that were student-led and driven.

One of the schools that participated in the student engagement training and coaching process was Eastern High School in Lansing. Eastern's students organized into the 'Quaker Crew' (their mascot is a Quaker) and chose "hallway safety" as the issue where they wanted to impact change. The school had recently added 7th and 8th graders into the high school building. As a result the halls were packed, especially during passing time, making them unsafe and inhibiting students from getting to class on time. The Quaker Crew developed a multi-tiered media campaign to raise awareness of the hallway issues. They created posters and a twitter feed whose messages were to get students to act safely and responsibly during passing time. Furthermore they created 'buttons' with the Quaker mascot and started a 'get to class on-time' campaign. The Crew would chose classes at random and when the bell rang gave every student who came to class on time a button. The buttons became a symbol of pride, and though a small token, actually made a difference in encouraging students to get to class on time.

Conclusion

There are many ways to empower and amplify students' voices and engagement. School climate is the most obvious and the least restrictive. Obvious because students have the most to gain when school climates are safe and supportive, and the most to lose when they are not. Obvious too as students make up the majority of a school's population, and can easily be the body that influences the climate. Least restrictive because there are few state or locally mandated laws or policies that define school climate thereby providing the greatest latitude for student voice, buy-in and leadership. Adults should not feel the necessity to have full control around climate, as they might for other areas like

curriculum. That's because climate, different from curriculum, has no learning benchmarks or standards requirements, and teachers do not need to feel that their power as content experts is being usurped.

In order to bring students in as partners, this student engagement initiative offers several important lessons. First, if we expect students to make meaningful contributions to the school change process they need professional development. The education field is one steeped in professional development for teachers (from pre-service to in-service and continuing education). If we expect students to serve effectively, they too need training and coaching to help them learn to organize, plan and take action. A high functioning advisory requires a focus on intentional group development and community building supported by training and coaching. Second, students need intentional, institutional structures like an established advisory council or action team to organize their efforts. With this structure is the requirement that they be provided time and support to meet regularly (at least every other week, if not weekly) and time to implement projects and initiatives.

As stated earlier, the work behind this student engagement program is based on the theoretical underpinnings of youth-adult partnerships (Zeldin, Christens & Power 2012). Successful student advisory groups work in partnership with an adult advisor(s) who helps to support group development and the implementation of authentic work. It is imperative that those adults are committed to letting students have a strong voice in their work and be supportive of their ideas. This adult role is to scaffold students to keep taking on greater challenges in an unfamiliar system.

Finally, maybe the most important element in successful student voice efforts is permission. Successful student voice work requires permission for students to form a group, permission to participate in training, and permission to have quality meeting time to conduct their work. But most of all students need permission to act on their ideas about how to make positive school change. Though permission is a simple thing for adults in schools to provide students, it might be one of the most transformative ways to provide students genuine empowerment.

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Appendix 1: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2014-15 Academic Year

Engagement				
Average score (higher is desirable)	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
I feel connected to the students in my advisory group.	3.69	3.60	-2.3%	
I feel connected to the adults in my advisory group.	3.57	3.72	4.2%	
I feel at home in my advisory.	3.54	4.04	14.4%	*
It is very important to me to be involved in my advisory group.	3.59	4.13	15.2%	*
Students and adults in this advisory group really seem to like each other and have fun together.	3.76	4.14	10.2%	*
If there is a problem at this advisory group, adults and youth work together to get it solved.	3.61	4.19	15.9%	*
The activities I do in this advisory group help me get better at the things I care about.	3.63	4.04	11.4%	*
The activities I do in this advisory group are challenging (in a good way).	3.33	3.86	15.7%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.59	3.97	10.5%	*

Shared Responsibility for School Improvement Efforts				
Average Score (1=Adults completely responsible; 3=Equally shared; 5=Youth completely responsible)	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Selecting projects for school improvement.	2.52	3.10	23.2%	*
Planning projects for school improvement.	2.70	3.07	13.6%	*
Implementing school improvement activities.	2.59	3.04	17.4%	*
Creating school policies.	1.96	2.20	12.2%	
Doing assessments to better understand school issues.	2.63	2.84	8.1%	
Fundraising for school activities.	3.09	3.32	7.3%	
Featuring school programs for external audiences (visitors, parents, community members).	2.67	2.86	7.1%	
Talking to administrators at the school district about school improvement activities.	2.50	2.73	9.1%	
Making decisions about what is taught in classes.	2.31	2.09	-9.9%	
AVERAGE (across all items)	2.55	2.81	9.9%	

Appendix 1: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2014-15 Academic Year

Advisory Experiences				
Average score (higher is desirable)	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
IDENTITY EXPLORATION				
Because of this advisory, I have tried doing new things.	3.35	3.97	18.5%	*
IDENTITY REFLECTION				
This advisory has been a positive turning point in my life.	3.20	3.89	21.3%	*
GOAL SETTING				
In this advisory, I set goals for myself.	3.37	3.88	15.2%	*
In this advisory, I've learned to find ways to achieve my goals.	3.43	3.96	15.5%	*
In this advisory, I've learned to consider possible obstacles when making plans.	3.35	3.99	18.9%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.34	3.94	17.8%	*

Advisory Experiences				
Average score (higher is desirable)	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
PROBLEM SOLVING				
In this advisory, I've used my creativity to solve a problem.	3.24	3.90	20.3%	*
TIME MANAGEMENT				
This advisory has helped me learn about setting priorities.	3.31	4.01	21.1%	*
PROSOCIAL NORMS				
Because of this advisory, I was able to change my school or community for the better.	3.02	3.93	30.1%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.19	3.95	23.7%	*

Appendix 1: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2014-15 Academic Year

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
GROUP PROCESS SKILLS				
Because of this advisory, I've become better at taking responsibility.	3.50	3.83	9.4%	
This advisory has helped me learn that you can work with people even if you don't like them.	3.24	3.93	21.2%	*
FEEDBACK				
This advisory has helped me become better at giving feedback.	3.22	3.81	18.4%	*
This advisory has helped me become better at taking feedback from others.	3.17	3.91	23.6%	*
LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY				
Because of this advisory, I've learned about the challenges of being a leader.	3.50	4.01	14.7%	*
In this advisory, I have the opportunity to be in charge of a group of peers.	3.44	3.77	9.5%	
LINKAGES TO COMMUNITY				
Because of this advisory, I've gotten to know people in the community.	3.09	3.53	14.1%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.31	3.83	15.7%	*

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
LINKAGES TO WORK AND COLLEGE				
This advisory has helped prepare me for college.	3.02	3.59	18.8%	*
This advisory has increased my desire to stay in school.	3.41	3.73	9.4%	
GROUP DYNAMICS				
In this advisory, I feel safe or comfortable expressing my ideas.	3.39	3.94	16.3%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.27	3.75	14.7%	

Appendix 1: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2014-15 Academic Year

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS				
Run a meeting.	3.33	4.04	21.3%	*
Make an agenda.	3.83	4.19	9.2%	*
Organize people to get things done.	3.74	4.21	12.7%	*
Make a budget.	3.33	3.69	10.6%	*
Organize an event that's new for my organization.	3.33	3.97	19.1%	*
LEADERSHIP SKILLS				
Negotiate with others.	4.15	4.30	3.7%	
Maintain a positive work environment for others.	3.94	4.39	11.2%	*
Run an activity or event.	3.61	4.04	12.0%	*
COMPUTER/INTERNET/MEDIA SKILLS				
Make a presentation.	3.93	4.33	10.3%	*
Do research on a topic I'm interested in.	4.22	4.57	8.3%	*
Identify community resources.	3.22	3.76	16.6%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.70	4.14	11.9%	*

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
COMMUNICATION SKILLS				
Get people to see my point of view.	3.93	4.17	6.3%	
Speak my mind, even if adults are in the group.	4.04	4.44	10.1%	*
Feel comfortable speaking in public.	3.37	3.83	13.6%	*
Respectfully disagree with others.	3.78	4.26	12.7%	*
Write promotional materials.	3.13	3.71	18.7%	*
Express my opinions on paper.	3.87	4.29	10.7%	*
Write a grant proposal.	2.50	3.30	32.0%	*
INNOVATION				
Identify a school problem and come up with an event or activity to address it.	3.22	4.13	28.1%	*
Lead people to make a change.	3.76	4.17	11.0%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.51	4.03	14.9%	*

Appendix 2: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2013-14 Academic Year

Note: For all analyses, independent sample t-test conducted. Pretest n = 23; Posttest n = 34. * = p ≤ .05, one-tailed

Engagement				
Average score (higher is desirable)	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
I feel connected to the students in my advisory group.	4.13	4.00	-3.2%	
I feel connected to the adults in my advisory group.	4.23	4.47	5.8%	
I feel at home in my advisory.	3.77	4.00	6.0%	
It is very important to me to be involved in my advisory group.	4.00	4.38	9.6%	*
I'm a vital part of this advisory group; if I left, it wouldn't be the same.	3.35	3.50	4.5%	
*This advisory group is a good place to be.	4.32	4.82	11.6%	*
There are lots of things happening in this advisory group that people feel good and excited about.	3.91	3.97	1.6%	
Students and adults in this advisory group really seem to like each other and have fun together.	4.23	4.36	3.2%	
If there is a problem at this advisory group, adults and youth work together to get it solved.	4.32	4.42	2.5%	
When we try something new, adults and youth work together to start/initiate it.	4.23	4.24	0.4%	
*The activities we do in this advisory group are not interesting to me.	4.18	3.76	-10.1%	
The activities I do in this advisory group help me get better at the things I care about.	4.00	3.78	-5.5%	
The activities I do in this advisory group are challenging (in a good way).	3.91	4.06	3.9%	
I feel like I am using my skills when working on activities in this advisory group.	3.91	4.15	6.2%	
AVERAGE (across all items)	4.03	4.14	2.6%	

*- reverse wording

Appendix 2: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2013-14 Academic Year

Shared Responsibility for School Improvement Efforts				
Average Score (1=Adults completely responsible; 3=Equally shared; 5=Youth completely responsible)	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Selecting projects for school improvement	3.09	3.16	2.2%	
Planning projects for school improvement	3.00	3.12	4.0%	
Implementing school improvement activities	3.05	2.94	-3.6%	
Creating school policies	3.00	2.41	-19.8%	*
Doing assessments to better understand school issues	2.91	3.13	7.4%	
Fundraising for school activities	3.48	3.16	-9.1%	
Featuring school programs for external audiences (visitors, parents, community members)	2.78	2.67	-4.2%	
Talking to administrators at the school district about school improvement activities	3.17	2.81	-11.4%	
Making decisions about what is taught in classes	2.39	1.97	-17.6%	
AVERAGE (across all items)	2.99	2.82	-5.6%	

Advisory Experiences				
Average score (higher is desirable)	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
IDENTITY EXPLORATION				
Because of this advisory, I have tried doing new things.	3.05	3.70	21.1%	
This advisory has let me try new way of acting around people.	3.22	4.06	26.0%	*
I do things here I don't get to do anywhere else.	2.44	3.36	37.6%	*
IDENTITY REFLECTION				
This advisory got me thinking about who I am.	2.94	3.79	28.6%	*
This advisory has been a positive turning point in my life.	3.18	4.12	29.7%	*
GOAL SETTING				
In this advisory, I set goals for myself.	3.11	4.03	29.5%	*
In this advisory, I've learned to find ways to achieve my goals.	3.11	4.03	29.5%	*
In this advisory, I've learned to consider possible obstacles when making plans.	3.06	3.94	28.9%	*
EFFORT				
In this advisory, I put all my energy into the activities I participate in.	2.89	3.91	35.3%	*
Because of this advisory, I've learned to focus my attention.	3.22	3.97	23.2%	
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.02	3.89	28.7%	*

Appendix 2: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2013-14 Academic Year

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
PROBLEM SOLVING				
In this advisory, I've observed how others solve problems and learned from them.	3.17	3.88	22.5%	
In this advisory, I've learned about developing plans for solving a problem.	3.11	4.00	28.6%	*
In this advisory, I've used my imagination to solve a problem.	3.28	3.61	10.0%	
TIME MANAGEMENT				
This advisory has helped me learn about organizing time and not procrastinating (not putting things off).	2.83	3.64	28.3%	
This advisory has helped me learn about setting priorities.	3.00	3.58	19.2%	
This advisory has helped me practice self-discipline.	2.83	3.79	33.7%	*
PROSOCIAL NORMS				
This advisory has helped me learn about helping others.	3.22	4.15	28.8%	*
Because of this advisory, I was able to change my school or community for the better.	2.67	3.76	40.9%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.01	3.80	26.1%	*

Appendix 2: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2013-14 Academic Year

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
GROUP PROCESS SKILLS				
This advisory has helped me learn that working together requires some compromising.	2.94	4.24	44.1%	*
Because of this advisory, I've become better at sharing responsibility.	3.17	4.27	34.9%	*
Because of this advisory, I've learned to be patient with other group members.	3.00	4.09	36.4%	*
This advisory has helped me learn that you can work with people even if you don't like them.	3.06	4.27	39.8%	*
FEEDBACK				
This advisory has helped me become better at giving feedback.	3.11	4.06	30.5%	*
This advisory has helped me become better at taking feedback from others.	3.00	3.97	32.3%	*
LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY				
Because of this advisory, I've learned about the challenges of being a leader.	3.33	4.06	21.8%	
In this advisory, I have the opportunity to be in charge of a group of peers.	3.11	3.67	17.9%	
LINKAGES TO COMMUNITY				
Because of this advisory, I've gotten to know people in the community.	3.22	3.78	17.3%	
Because of this advisory, I feel more supported by the community.	2.72	3.81	40.1%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.07	4.02	31.2%	*

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
LINKAGES TO WORK AND COLLEGE				
This advisory has helped prepare me for college.	2.59	3.45	33.3%	
This advisory has increased my desire to stay in school.	2.91	4.00	37.5%	*
SOCIAL INCLUSION				
I feel like I belong in this advisory.	4.45	4.42	-0.7%	
GROUP DYNAMICS				
In this advisory, I (do not) get stuck doing more than my fair share.	4.41	4.06	-7.9%	
In this advisory, I feel safe or comfortable expressing my ideas.	4.00	4.30	7.6%	
In this advisory, youth do what they say they'll do.	4.64	3.94	-15.0%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.83	4.03	5.1%	

Appendix 2: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2013-14 Academic Year

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS				
Run a meeting.	2.65	3.61	36.0%	*
Make an agenda.	3.39	3.97	17.1%	*
Organize people to get things done.	3.64	3.94	8.3%	
Make a budget.	3.13	3.42	9.4%	
Organize an event that's new for my organization.	3.18	3.85	21.0%	*
LEADERSHIP SKILLS				
Negotiate with others.	3.48	3.82	9.8%	
Get people excited and energized.	3.30	3.76	13.7%	
Maintain a positive work environment for others.	3.61	4.00	10.8%	
Run an activity or event.	3.39	4.12	21.5%	*
COMPUTER/INTERNET/MEDIA SKILLS				
Make a presentation.	3.43	4.09	19.1%	*
Do research on a topic I'm interested in.	4.00	4.06	1.5%	
Identify community resources.	3.36	3.88	15.3%	
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.38	3.88	14.6%	*

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
COMMUNICATION SKILLS				
Get people to see my point of view.	3.61	4.15	15.0%	*
Speak my mind, even if adults are in the group.	3.83	4.18	9.3%	
Feel comfortable speaking in public.	3.39	3.91	15.3%	
Respectfully disagree with others.	3.30	4.06	22.9%	*
Write promotional materials.	2.96	3.41	15.2%	
Express my opinions on paper.	3.48	3.94	13.3%	
Write a grant proposal.	2.57	2.88	12.2%	
INNOVATION				
Take risks with a new idea.	3.39	4.00	17.9%	*
Respectfully challenge the norm (the way things are).	3.43	3.79	10.3%	
Identify a school problem and come up with an event or activity to address it.	3.57	3.85	7.9%	
Lead people to make a change.	3.52	4.18	18.7%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.37	3.85	14.3%	*

Appendix 3: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2012-13 Academic Year

Note: For all analyses, independent sample t-test conducted. Pretest n = 30; Posttest n = 50. * = p ≤ .05, two-tailed

Engagement				
Average score (higher is desirable)	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
I feel connected to the students in my advisory group.	3.43	4.18	21.7%	*
I feel connected to the adults in my advisory group.	3.97	4.42	11.4%	*
I feel at home in my advisory.	3.60	4.22	17.2%	*
It is very important to me to be involved in my advisory group.	4.13	4.32	4.5%	
I'm a vital part of this advisory group; if I left, it wouldn't be the same.	3.24	3.73	15.0%	*
*This advisory group is a good place to be.	4.30	4.44	3.3%	
There are lots of things happening in this advisory group that people feel good and excited about.	3.86	4.26	10.3%	
Students and adults in this advisory group really seem to like each other and have fun together.	3.87	4.16	7.7%	
If there is a problem at this advisory group, adults and youth work together to get it solved.	4.07	4.41	8.4%	
When we try something new, adults and youth work together to start/initiate it.	3.93	4.32	9.8%	
*The activities we do in this advisory group are not interesting to me.	4.03	4.20	4.1%	
The activities I do in this advisory group help me get better at the things I care about.	3.86	4.08	5.6%	
The activities I do in this advisory group are challenging (in a good way).	3.69	4.00	8.4%	
I have to concentrate to complete activities in my advisory group.	3.59	3.62	0.9%	
I feel like I am using my skills when working on activities in this advisory group.	3.82	4.14	8.4%	
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.83	4.17	8.9%	

Appendix 3: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2012-13 Academic Year

Shared Responsibility for School Improvement Efforts				
Average Score (1=Adults completely responsible; 3=Equally shared; 5=Youth completely responsible)	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Selecting projects for school improvement	2.75	3.11	13.0%	
Planning projects for school improvement	2.71	3.19	17.6%	*
Implementing school improvement activities	2.46	2.95	19.9%	*
Creating school policies	2.19	2.26	3.2%	
Doing assessments to better understand school issues	2.56	3.07	20.1%	*
Fundraising for school activities	3.00	3.25	8.3%	
Featuring school programs for external audiences (visitors, parents, community members)	2.07	2.87	38.4%	*
Talking to administrators at the school district about school improvement activities	2.18	2.67	22.8%	*
Making decisions about what is taught in classes	2.07	2.15	3.7%	
AVERAGE (across all items)	2.44	2.83	16.0%	

Advisory Experiences				
	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
IDENTITY EXPLORATION				
Because of this advisory, I have tried doing new things.	3.32	4.00	20.4%	*
This advisory has let me try new way of acting around people.	3.63	4.20	15.7%	*
I do things here I don't get to do anywhere else.	3.30	4.06	23.2%	*
IDENTITY REFLECTION				
I started thinking more about my future because of being in this advisory.	3.44	3.76	9.2%	
This advisory got me thinking about who I am.	3.30	3.82	15.9%	*
This advisory has been a positive turning point in my life.	3.44	3.96	15.0%	*
GOAL SETTING				
In this advisory, I set goals for myself.	3.58	3.94	10.2%	
In this advisory, I've learned to find ways to achieve my goals.	3.48	4.06	16.6%	*
In this advisory, I've learned to consider possible obstacles when making plans.	3.56	4.10	15.3%	*
EFFORT				
In this advisory, I put all my energy into the activities I participate in.	3.26	4.08	25.2%	*
In this advisory, I challenge myself to do more when I want to give up.	3.41	3.84	12.7%	
Because of this advisory, I've learned to focus my attention.	3.33	3.92	17.5%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.42	3.98	16.3%	*

Appendix 3: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2012-13 Academic Year

Advisory Experiences			Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)	Pretest	Posttest		
PROBLEM SOLVING				
In this advisory, I've observed how others solve problems and learned from them.	3.22	4.22	31.1%	*
In this advisory, I've learned about developing plans for solving a problem.	3.30	4.12	25.0%	*
In this advisory, I've used my imagination to solve a problem.	3.11	4.06	30.5%	*
Because of this advisory, I've tried to learn from my mistakes.	3.33	4.16	24.9%	*
TIME MANAGEMENT				
This advisory has helped me learn about organizing time and not procrastinating (not putting things off).	3.33	3.98	19.4%	*
This advisory has helped me learn about setting priorities.	3.26	3.78	16.0%	*
This advisory has helped me practice self-discipline.	3.30	3.74	13.5%	
PROSOCIAL NORMS				
This advisory has helped me learn about helping others.	3.22	3.98	23.5%	*
This advisory has helped me learn what it was like to be in someone else's position	3.33	4.02	20.6%	*
Because of this advisory, I was able to change my school or community for the better.	3.31	3.98	20.3%	*
This advisory has helped me learn to stand up for something I believed was morally right.	3.48	4.02	15.5%	*
At this advisory, we discussed morals and values.	3.07	4.08	32.8%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.27	4.01	22.6%	*

Appendix 3: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2012-13 Academic Year

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
GROUP PROCESS SKILLS				
This advisory has helped me learn that working together requires some compromising.	3.63	4.38	20.7%	*
Because of this advisory, I've become better at sharing responsibility.	3.41	4.18	22.7%	*
Because of this advisory, I've learned to be patient with other group members.	3.48	4.12	18.4%	*
This advisory helped me learn how my emotions and attitude affect other in the group.	3.41	3.98	16.8%	*
This advisory has helped me learn that you can work with people even if you don't like them.	3.48	4.04	16.1%	*
FEEDBACK				
This advisory has helped me become better at giving feedback.	3.59	4.04	12.5%	
This advisory has helped me become better at taking feedback from others.	3.41	3.92	15.0%	*
LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY				
Because of this advisory, I've learned about the challenges of being a leader.	3.63	4.12	13.6%	*
Others in this advisory count on me.	3.19	3.67	15.3%	
In this advisory, I have the opportunity to be in charge of a group of peers.	3.26	3.80	16.5%	
LINKAGES TO COMMUNITY				
Because of this advisory, I've gotten to know people in the community.	3.33	3.76	12.7%	
Because of this advisory, I feel more supported by the community.	2.93	3.73	27.6%	*
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.40	3.98	17.2%	*

Appendix 3: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2012-13 Academic Year

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
LINKAGES TO WORK AND COLLEGE				
This advisory has opened up job or career opportunities for me.	2.85	2.29	2.3%	
This advisory has helped prepare me for college.	3.11	3.43	10.2%	
This advisory has increased my desire to stay in school.	3.44	3.65	6.1%	
SOCIAL INCLUSION				
I feel like I belong in this advisory.	3.89	3.90	.01%	
I (do not) feel left out at this advisory.	4.07	3.92	-3.8%	
There are (not) cliques in this advisory.	3.67	3.76	2.4%	
GROUP DYNAMICS				
In this advisory, I (do not) get stuck doing more than my fair share.	3.92	3.81	-1.2%	
In this advisory, people (do not) take credit for the things I've done.	3.81	3.84	.06%	
In this advisory, I feel safe or comfortable expressing my ideas.	4.07	3.96	-2.8%	
In this advisory, youth do what they say they'll do.	3.67	3.90	6.3%	
In this advisory, youth (do not) goof off and listen when we're trying to get things done.	4.07	3.73	-8.3%	
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.69	3.71	0.5%	

Appendix 3: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2012-13 Academic Year

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS				
Run a meeting.	3.17	3.88	22.3%	*
Make an agenda.	3.31	3.94	19.0%	*
Organize people to get things done.	3.76	4.18	11.2%	
Make a budget.	2.93	3.16	7.8%	
Organize an event that's new for my organization.	3.25	3.86	18.7%	*
LEADERSHIP SKILLS				
Negotiate with others.	3.61	3.90	8.1%	
Get people excited and energized.	3.36	3.94	17.3%	*
Maintain a positive work environment for others.	3.46	4.04	16.7%	*
Run an activity or event.	3.36	4.02	19.8%	*
COMPUTER/INTERNET/MEDIA SKILLS				
Make a presentation.	3.64	3.92	7.6%	
Edit Photos or make video clips.	3.79	3.43	-10.5%	
Do research on a topic I'm interested in.	3.89	3.61	-7.2%	
Identify community resources.	3.32	3.49	5.1%	
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.45	3.80	10.1%	

Advisory Experiences	Pretest	Posttest	Pre/Post % change	Statistically significant
Average score (higher is desirable)				
COMMUNICATION SKILLS				
Get people to see my point of view.	3.89	4.10	5.4%	
Speak my mind, even if adults are in the group.	3.71	4.29	15.4%	*
Feel comfortable speaking in public.	3.00	3.94	31.3%	*
Respectfully disagree with others.	3.70	4.10	10.8%	
Write promotional materials.	2.81	3.84	36.7%	*
Express my opinions on paper.	3.44	4.10	19.1%	*
Write a grant proposal.	2.82	2.80	-2.0%	
INNOVATION				
Take risks with a new idea.	3.85	4.04	4.9%	
Respectfully challenge the norm (the way things are).	3.67	4.37	19.1%	*
Identify a school problem and come up with an event or activity to address it.	3.41	4.02	18.0%	*
Lead people to make a change.	3.63	4.18	15.3%	
AVERAGE (across all items)	3.45	3.98	15.3%	*

Appendix 3: Pre/Post Survey Results: YDS Student Engagement Intervention 2012-13 Academic Year