



# Campaign Action Plan

## Student-Led School Improvement



*Challenge*  
Restoring Respect

*Related Elements of Student Voice*  
Relationship Development  
Communication/Culture of Listening

### I. Research: Student Voice School Review

#### 1. The Problem

- 50% of students have complained about the lack of respect students show each other (student survey)
- 55% of students feel that students do not treat each other with respect (NYC DOE School Survey)
- 50% of students don't feel teachers respect them (NYC DOE School Survey)
- Some students don't respect teachers and classroom rules. "There is a lack of respect within our classrooms with students feeling the need to do what they want and not what they are supposed to." (Grade team meetings)
- Some students don't identify with the principal (student breakfast/focus group with principal.)

#### 2. What's at the Root?

##### *Element #1: Relationship Development*

- 100% of students feel comfortable with at least one staff member (student survey)
- But 50% don't feel respected by adults in general at school (student survey)
- 30% of Students don't feel that student sexuality is respected. (meeting with GSA and student survey)

##### *Element #2: Communication*

- 40% of students feel that teachers don't respect or acknowledge their feedback. (student survey)
- 25% of students chose to fight rather than engage in school-provided mediations (teacher/student conversations)
- 50% of students feel a lack student voice. (student survey)

##### *Element #3: Culture of Listening*

- 35% of students feel mediation doesn't work (student breakfast/focus group w/ principal)
- 50% of students don't feel they receive positive feedback from their peers and teachers (student survey)
- 90% of students DO feel respect has to be EARNED in our school community (student survey)

#### 3. What's Already Being Done About It

##### *Mediations*

- Teacher and student mediations have been a success for the most part. At least 25% who have conflicts with other students, brings it to the attention of guidance counselors or advisors.
- Student-to-student mediations are not as successful as teacher-led/supervised mediations when students conducting mediations are part of the conflict (without the knowledge of adults).

##### *Senior Buddies* (freshmen and sophomores paired with upperclassmen for mentoring)

- The lower grade students connects with 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade students
- Senior buddies are *only* provided to students that are usually disobedient and struggle with their classwork
- Not extended to students who face bullying or struggle with fitting in with our school community
- Not extended to our middle school

### *Advisory*

- Students connect with at least one adult who they go to when struggling in classes or dealing with personal issues
- Student-based discussions held address important topics in school and society
- Some students find advisory a waste of time; they say it's boring and nothing is really going on. So, some refuse to go and end up roaming the hallways instead.

### *Mini-Campaigns (GSA, LGTA, Anti-Bullying, etc.)*

- Usually these campaigns last a week or month where we focus on a particular issue in the world or school (Breast cancer month, What Does It Mean to Be a Young Writer?, etc.)
- Usually student-run (by COSA, GSA, or Student Council)
- Students participate on a school wide level
- 45% of students don't think they have a direct say in these campaigns since they are run and organized by a small portion of our school community.

### *First Name Basis*

- Students, teachers, and administrators are all on a first name bases (no "Mr." or "Ms.")

## **4. What Students Think We Should Do About It**

- Have more in school assemblies (town halls) addressing topics such as respect and bullying in our school community
- Allow more students, other than student council, to develop student-run campaigns that allow for students to reveal their own individuality
- Go on more trips that involve peer bonding
- Make sure that peer mediations involve a responsible peer in the room who is trained to successfully mediate
- Have individual advisory run campaigns on topics of students' choice
- Continue with suggestion box but keep students posted on progress surrounding their suggestions

## II. Action Plan Outline

### **1. Name Your Campaign:** What Does It Mean To Be A Young Writer?

#### **2. The BIG idea**

"What Does it Mean to be a Young Writer?" was a week-long campaign during our school's annual spirit week. Students and staff had the opportunity to define or be reminded of what it means to be a part of our Young Writers community. Student council and our principal do not want the campaign to only last a week; we want it to be a part of our school as long as our school stands. So we are extending this initiative – with additional school-wide mini campaigns led not only by Student Council and teachers, but also including others in our school community – through peer and staff support.

#### *Mini campaigns include:*

- Students/staff shout out members of our community on our shout out tree posted in hallway (acts of kindness, mediating conflicts, helping students with home/class work, etc.)
- Improving mediation standards so that they are more effective: ensuring a firm agreement that the problem will remain in the mediation and having a staff member present (when necessary)
- Student run campaigns on issues in society that matter most to students will be organized and run by students

### **3. How Campaign Will Strengthen Student Voice**

#### *Element #1: Relationship Development*

With more student-run mini campaigns developing and gaining support from staff and peers, we can increase positive and supportive relationships by having teachers and students collaborate together.

## *Element #2: Communication and Culture of Listening*

Not enough students feel “heard.” They feel like the things that our school is based on are decided by only a small portion of our school community and not the whole. This campaign will help more students speak for the things they believe and against the things they feel are wrong and open the gate of opportunity for more student involvement. This will allow peers to communicate and listen to the beliefs and opinions of others and gain respect for them.

### **4. How Will Your Campaign Learn From/Build On What Has Already Been Done to Address the Challenge?**

Peer mediations and giving students positive feedback (from teachers and peers) have not yet been very successful. So, our campaign will re-invent those ideas in a way that will work better.

- Peer mediations: create peer-mediation contracts during mediations and don’t allow peer mediations if an appropriate adult is not present
- Make student-run campaigns a part of our school culture and not an activity that only lasts a week
- Acknowledge and celebrate student improvements

### **5. What Research Tells Us Works**

- You must define respect in your school community in order to improve it (ascd.org )
- Building community begins with a vision and happens because the school leaders and the teachers intentionally design structures and activities to reach the vision (edutopia.org)
- Using respectful and appropriate language is an important benchmark to set a tone of respect and understanding (pflag.org )

### **6. Changes to Plan Based on What Research Says Works**

- We will collect student opinions on what respect means in our school and in our society because a lack of respect comes from a lack of voice.
- A lot of the structures in our school are not firm because of the many activities our school promotes. We need to prioritize and strengthen them.
- We must reinforce a language of respect through recurring activities that surround us with respect.

### **7.) Measuring Progress**

#### WHAT We’re Measuring

Respect  
Relationships  
Communication

#### HOW We’re Measuring

Interviews, Focus Groups, and Observations

### **8. Steps to LAUNCH Campaign**

- 1.) Student Council identified respect as a school wide problem
- 2.) Developed and collected data on what respect means to our students and staff and where respect is lacking
- 3.) Launched “What Does It Mean to Be a Young Writer?” mini campaign during spirit week after a few days of violence, which resulted in 20 student suspensions, to redefine what it means to be a part of our school community.
  - a. Stickers handed out to students and teachers about what it means to be a part of school community
  - b. Photos of students posted in the hallways
  - c. Created video of students discussing what it’s like to be a part of our school community
- 4.) At the end of spirit week, we interviewed several students and staff members on what they thought about the week-long mini campaign: most wanted it to continue beyond spirit week.

## 9. Steps to ORBIT the Campaign

May	<p>Organize secret lunch for most improved students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers reported their most improved students in grade team meetings</li> </ul> <p>Breakfast with principal (every other week)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Got postponed for a few weeks, but resumed</li> </ul>
June	<p>End of the year bonding trip: (TBA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decided that it should be a retreat and should take place in the summer.</li> </ul> <p>Launch of 2<sup>nd</sup> “What Does It Mean to Be a Young Writers” weekly campaign.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough time to put in place before the year ends, so it’s something we want to re-launch once school resumes in the fall.</li> <li>Create a summer time opportunity for incoming students to understand what it means to be a part of our school community.</li> </ul> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> and final student and teacher survey for feedback for next year. What can we improve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey will take place on the final week of school. Student council is creating questions from suggestion box for the survey</li> </ul>

## III. Outcomes

### 1. Tracking Progress

WHAT We Measured	Snapshot #1 Date: March 24 2015	Snapshot #2 Date: April 10, 2015	Snapshot #3 Date: May 22, 2015
<p><i>The Challenge:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect</li> </ul> <p><i>Elements of Student Voice:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship development</li> <li>Communication/Listening</li> </ul>	<p><i>Students and Teachers Interviews:</i></p> <p>Many thought that the week was a <b>great opportunity to define what it means to be a young writer</b>. They felt it made the chance for everyone to work together during a week of celebration for our school community.</p>	<p><i>Focus group with principal, students and teachers:</i></p> <p>Felt that the <b>students were communicating with each other better</b>, which had controlled the violence in the school. <b>Teachers were taking students’ feedback in class more</b> thanks to having more learning- based student discussions: fishbowls, socratic seminars, etc.</p>	<p><i>Hallway observation and interviews during “Extendabitions”:</i></p> <p>Students felt that with the chance to launch their own mini- campaigns, and the stopping of peer mediations unless there is a contract involved has <b>allowed for students to feel like their voices matter</b>. Teachers said that the <b>level of disrespect in class has decreased</b> slowly and more students are feeling comfortable to speak up in class and receive help or feedback</p>

### 1.) Reflections

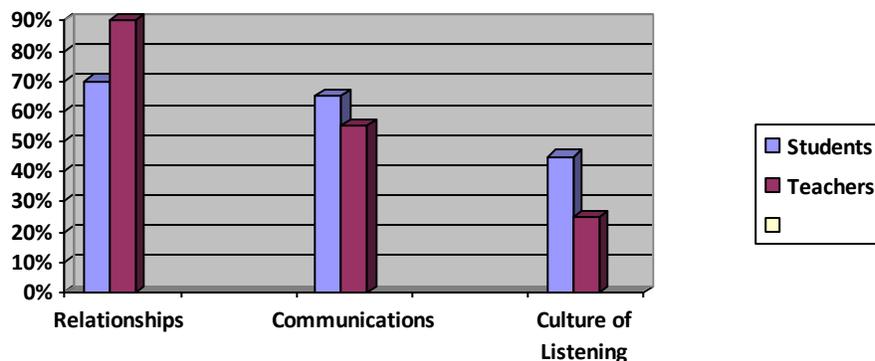
#### *What worked?*

- Breakfast/ focus group with the principal: something we want to continue
- Students developing own mini campaigns about things they believe in (ex: blood drive, basketball game for charity, young girl and boy workshops, food drives, poetry slams, etc.)
- Redefining what it meant to be a part of this school community

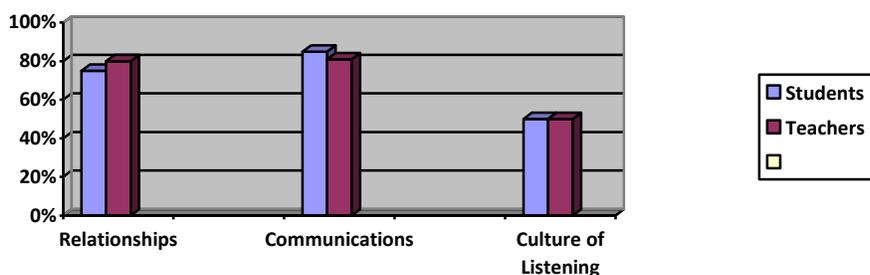
#### *What didn’t work?*

- Suggestion box & shout out tree: we didn’t report back to students on progress of their suggestions and shout outs
- Early on had to substitute in a Teachers Appreciation luncheon
- We fell behind on collecting data and giving out surveys so a lot of the data we received was on the spot

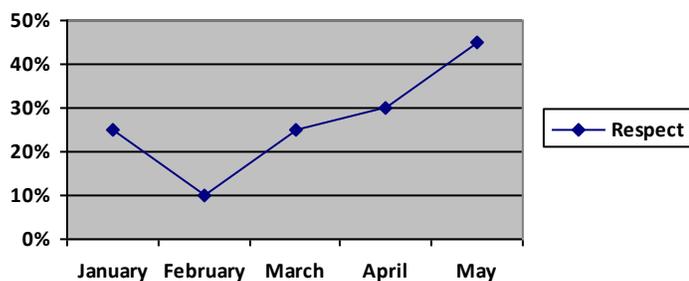
## 1<sup>st</sup> Student and Teacher Survey Results: January 2015



## 2nd Student and Teacher Survey Results: May 2015



## Respect Level: January – May 2015



### Next Steps

- *End-of-Year Survey*: Send out end of the year survey to teachers and students about what they enjoyed/ disliked, favorite classes, thoughts on advisories and new structures put in place this year.
- *Continue Defining School Over Summer*: over summer, cultivate traits of our school community with orientations, student/teacher retreats, etc. to demonstrate respect and improve vision.
- *Bring in new members of student council*: a more diverse and representative slice of our community and incorporate their ideas into our plans for the following year.