
School Voice Report 2016

CORWIN



Developed by the Quaglia Institute for School Voice and Aspirations. In partnership with the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, Teacher Voice and Aspirations International Center, and Corwin Press



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Acknowledgements

As is the case with School Voice, this report depended on trusted collaboration. The Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations (QISA) and the Teacher Voice and Aspirations International Center (TVAIC) brought together some of the most dedicated and knowledgeable individuals in the field of education for this team effort.

Dr. Michael Corso, Chief Academic Officer of QISA, and Dr. Lisa Lande, Executive Director of TVAIC, led this effort with the skills, insights, and precision required for such a comprehensive report. A most heartfelt thank-you to both of them! I would also like to recognize three QISA colleagues, Dr. Kristine Fox, Senior Field Specialist, Deborah Young, Director of Operations, and Susan Harper, Organizational Assistant, for their insights and commitment throughout the process. Their contributions are greatly appreciated! A special acknowledgement is extended to Dr. Matthew Bundick, formerly the Director of Research at QISA and currently an assistant professor at Duquesne University, who continues to be a loyal friend and supporter of our work ... not to mention one of the best educational researchers on the planet!

When I think of these individuals, several adjectives come to mind: passionate, brilliant, professional, caring, insightful, pioneering, and dedicated. All are admirable characteristics in their own right. When these personal attributes are applied in their professional lives, coupled with their collective commitment to improving education for everyone, this team is nothing short of inspiring. I could not be filled with more pride or appreciation.

I would like to express my ongoing gratitude to Corwin Press for representing our work in the field with incredible passion and commitment. It is an incredible honor to partner with Corwin as our School Voice work expands globally. When it comes to trust and caring, Corwin is second to none in the publishing world. My deepest appreciation to Corwin for their belief in us, their commitment to collaboration, and their dedication to fostering Voice and Aspirations in schools.

Russell J. Quaglia
President, Quaglia Institute for School Voice and Aspirations

Introduction

There are countless reports about the status of schools, and the students and teachers in them. There is more data at our fingertips than we know what to do with. One might think that for this particular topic, more is better. More data means more information, and more information means more informed individuals. Well, not necessarily.

The approach in schools has become: if it breathes, we should test it, measure it, scale it, then repeat. The result? An abundance of data. The problem? Inadequate analysis and direction. Some reports are full of data, but provide little insight. Others may offer suggestions, but are simultaneously biased or point the finger of blame for identified deficiencies. Rare is the report that presents data that is meaningful, engaging, statistically reliable, and quite frankly—helpful. Any report involving school data should include thoughtful analysis of the data and practical suggestions for improving practices based on the findings.

As for our own experience, it certainly would have been easier to present voice data in the same manner we had previously, but we knew it was time to raise the bar. From the outset, we were determined to do things differently with this report. We set out to create an annual report that is comprehensive, readable, insightful, and practice-oriented; a report that would begin to set the standard in education for how reports can—and should—be written. But before we get ahead of ourselves, I want to make it clear: we do not claim this final product is perfect. We can, however, confidently claim that it reflects incredible progress from our previous reports, and we hope it serves to raise the bar for others.

We approached this report with three goals in mind:

1. Share what we are learning from the voices of students, teachers, and parents;
2. Present the data in a manner that is understandable rather than overwhelming, and provide a useful context;
3. Provide valuable suggestions—next steps that demonstrate how the information in this report can have an immediate impact in schools.

Underpinning these three goals are our core beliefs:

- Students and teachers have something to teach us.
- Students and teachers are the potential, not the problem.
- Working together is the only way to ensure that every student, educator, and parent reaches their fullest potential.

Over the course of more than three decades of working with students and educators, we have learned the value of listening to their voices. We have listened intently, and we have asked the crucial follow-up question: Why? In the process, we have learned a great deal not only about what is important to the individuals who are in schools every day, but about the importance of respect. We have learned that a process that honors the voices of others simultaneously fosters respect, creates lasting partnerships built on trust, and develops a sense of shared responsibility. With this as a foundation, every stakeholder in education will be poised to work collaboratively—whether at the school, district, state, or national level—to lead in a united way to improve our educational system. If this report does not invite—indeed, *compel* you to initiate dialogue for change, then we have fallen short of our mission.

We believe that by reading and reflecting on this report, and by implementing the various suggestions (or by implementing your own modified version, suitable to your school), you will learn a great deal about what students and teachers believe, both about themselves and their shared learning environments. We also believe you will learn a great deal about yourself. Read this report with an open heart and mind, and then take action. Pledge to truly listen to others, learn together, and lead collaboratively with students and staff. Commit to making a positive difference for your school or district.

About this Report

For more years than we care to count, we have been working to inform, reform, and transform schools. *Inform* with the data gathered from the voices of students, educators, and parents. Different from test scores to be sure, but no less valuable as a basis for driving decisions. We have gathered hundreds of thousands of surveys, conducted tens of thousands of focus groups, and participated in thousands of conversations with students and teachers in this effort. *Reform* because the data we have collected suggests the inherited, industrial model of school has not been working for a majority of students for quite some time. We are not alone in this assessment. The dropout rate in both secondary and post-secondary schools in our country is worrisome; the persistent academic achievement gap is intolerable; and the racial inequality in the discipline meted out in our schools is unacceptable, to say the least. *Transform* because what is required is not simply an improvement to current approaches. We need a radically new approach. This report represents such a new and, we hope, transformative approach for us.

In keynotes, presentations, and workshops, we have advocated that the transformative way forward lies in a *partnership* between students and teachers. We have tried to embody this by having student panels as part of our learning sessions, by having students deliver professional development with us, and by working with blended student and teacher teams as part of our School Voice Model. We are firmly convinced that the future in education is *together*—students and teachers actively listening to one another in mutual trust and respect, learning side by side in ways that promote ever deeper understanding and expansive creativity, and leading in shared responsibility to bring about each and everyone’s hopes and dreams. Yet recently we realized that, in a way, our past reports were not completely aligned with our mission.

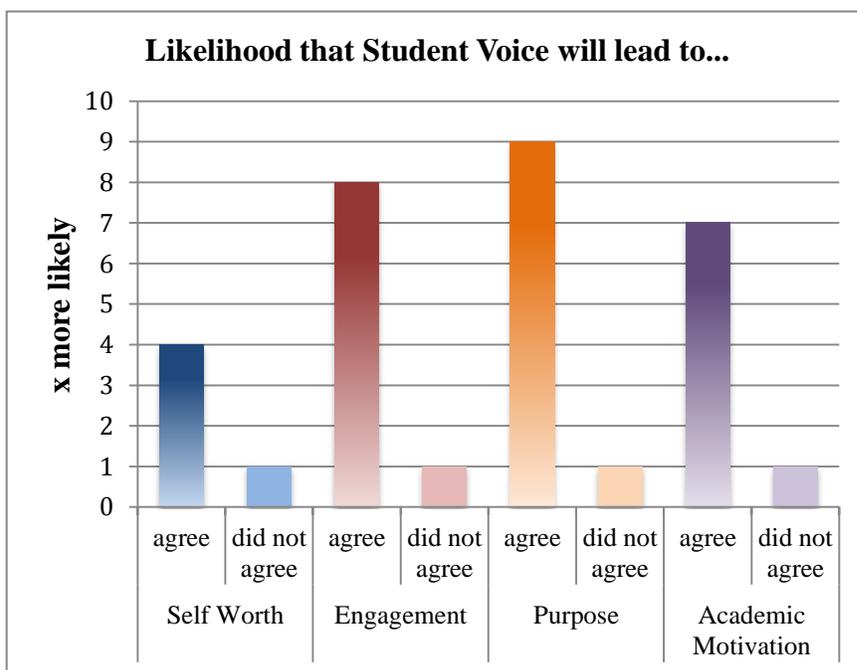
We have previously collected student voice and teacher voice data and presented the findings *separately*. We have conducted student and teacher focus groups and presented the findings *separately*. Even though we strive to foster the antithesis, our reports have co-opted the “us vs. them” mentality that infects virtually every part of our educational system. But the truth of the matter is there is no “them.” For administrators, teachers are not “them,” nor are students or their parents. For teachers, administrators are not “them,” and certainly students are not “them.” In our schools and in education overall, we need to realize the truth that there is only “us.” All learners, and all on a journey of aspirations and growth together. All playing different roles for sure, but no more “versus” one another than the quarterback, receivers and offensive line of a football team. There is opposition, but it is Ignorance and Apathy, not those we are in school with every day.

From here forward, we choose not to play that game that divides rather than unites us. From here forward, our reports will couple student and teacher voices, investigate what that dialogue has to teach us about the current state of our schools, and, from what we have learned, suggest concrete, practical strategies for combined teams of teachers and students to make a difference together. This report reflects our dream of a true partnership in listening, learning, and leading by teachers and students. The “them” paradigm is part of the problem. We invite you to be together in this with us and in a paradigm of partnership with your students as part of the solution.

Executive Summary of Findings

This report is rooted in a simple idea: in order for schools to be successful, they must **listen** to, **learn** from, and **lead** with the students and teachers who comprise the very life of the school itself. Whether schools choose to accept our view that the goal of schools should be to support each and every student’s aspirations, or not; whether schools believe as we do that the Self-Worth, Engagement, and sense of Purpose of every student and teacher is critical to their academic and professional success in school, or not; whether schools think ensuring each student’s sense of Belonging, Fun & Excitement, and Confidence to Take Action are part of the job of teaching, or not; we urge schools to consider **the voice of students and teachers** in all projects and programs moving forward.

If for no other reason than that, among the findings below, we know **students who believe they have a voice in school are 7x more likely to be academically motivated** than students who do not believe they have a voice. Student voice also leads to an increased likelihood that students will experience Self-Worth, Engagement, and Purpose in school. Similarly, **teachers who say they have a voice in their schools are twice as likely to work hard to reach their goals and 4x more likely to be excited about their future career in education** than those who do not believe they have a voice. If that is not cause enough, we are not sure what is.



During the 2015-2016 academic year, Quaglia School Voice Student Surveys were taken by 48,185 students in grades 6-12 and 12,157 students in grades 3-5. These school level surveys were administered in 249 schools in 14 states: Arizona, California, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Wyoming. iKnow My Class classroom level surveys were used by 120 teachers and given to 6,853 students in grades 6-12 in a total of 319 classes. In addition, a combined research team from the Quaglia Institute and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) conducted a qualitative mixed

methods study in order to investigate the concept of student voice in young learners from age three to grade 2. Seven schools in six different states were involved in the study, which included 170 students, 40 teachers, and seven administrators. Eighty-five parents responded to survey questions related to student voice as part of the study.

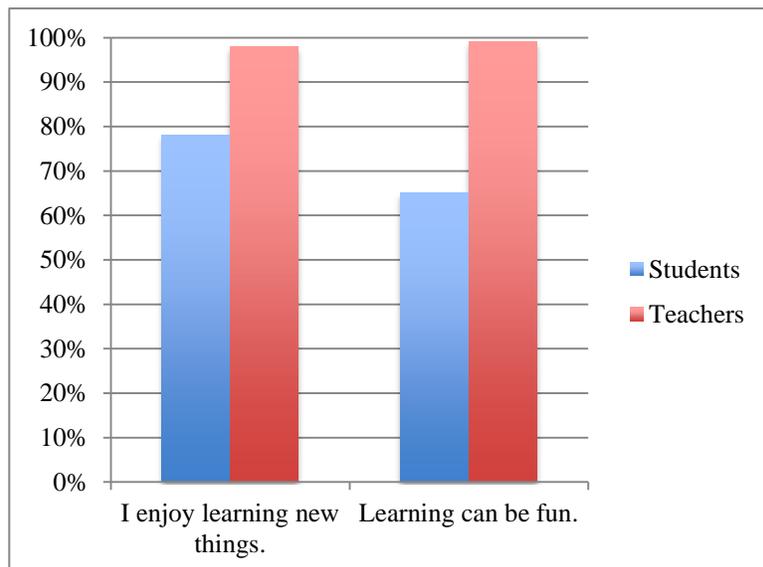
The Quaglia School Voice Teacher Survey was also administered in 13 states, all those in which the student survey was given except Arizona and Indiana. Teachers in South Carolina also took the Teacher Voice survey. There were 4,021 respondents, representing a variety of teaching experience, educational attainment, and grade levels taught.

The encouraging news is that teachers and students alike are confident in their own abilities and willing to learn and work toward their goals. Ninety-six percent (96%) of teachers and 88% of students affirm: “I believe I can be successful.” Most know that the pathway to success is through their own efforts, as 96% of teachers and 80% of students believe they work hard to reach their goals. There is also a clear desire to learn.

- Nearly all teachers (99%) and nearly two-thirds of students (65%) believe learning can be fun.
- Ninety-eight percent (98%) of teachers and 78% of students enjoy learning new things, as do 98% of parents.
- 85% of students report that getting good grades is important to them.
- On the iKnow survey, 86% of students say they come to class ready and willing to learn.

A summary assessment of the more positive survey results is that teachers and students alike are self-assured and eager to grow and learn.

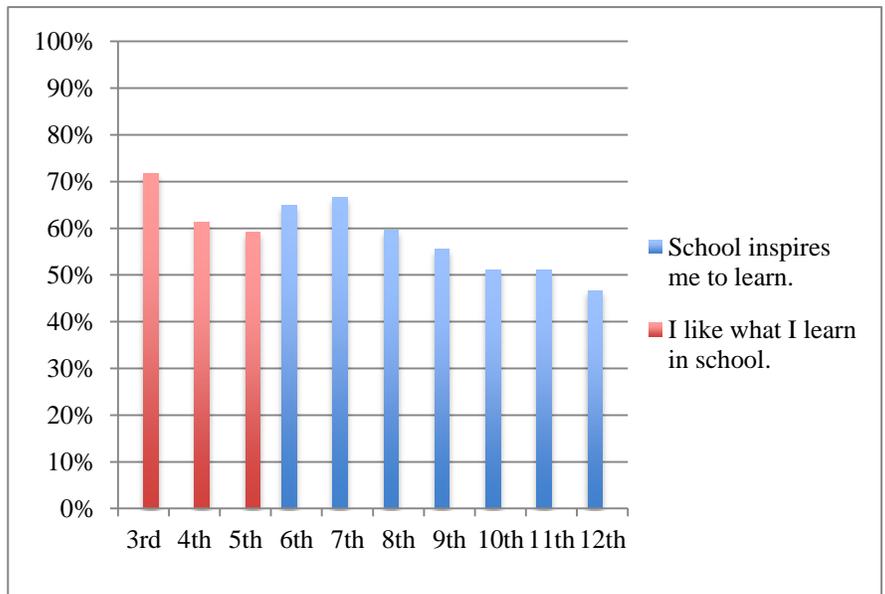
But the surveys also indicate a disconnect between that positive, inner energy reaching out in curiosity to learn and the conditions in the school environment that teachers and students encounter on a daily basis. Only two in five students



(38%) report that their classes help them understand what is happening in their everyday lives. Teacher relevance is only slightly better with 57% of teachers agreeing that meaningful professional development exists in their district. Only half (49%) of all

students enjoy being at school and even one in five (19%) teachers do not affirm that they enjoy working at school. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of students agree that “School inspires me to learn.” Perhaps most discouraging of all is that only 64% of teachers agree that their school is a dynamic and creative learning environment. A full one-third of those whose job it is to teach our children must exit (if not enter) school every day with a profound sense of disillusionment, as do those they are asked to teach. It is as if hungry people, excited to have an amazing four-star, fusion meal go to a restaurant that serves only traditional meat and potatoes fare. One can survive on such food, but it’s difficult to thrive.

The findings, however, also indicate that what school becomes for many students is not how it starts out for the youngest learners. The Age 3 to Grade 2 study found children excited to go to school and having healthy learning experiences while there. The grades 3-5 survey paints a fairly upbeat experience of school from the student point of view. Parsing the grades 6-12 survey shows that those in the middle school grades (6-8) are generally more positive about school than their high school counterparts. Some may be inclined to put this down to developmental phenomena. We know from experience and from schools that reverse downward trends in their survey results that this is not the case. There is nothing inherent in growing older that makes learning less relevant or the need to be inspired less important. Students are the potential, not the problem in our educational systems. Nor does the developmental explanation account for the apparent malaise of the adults in school. It would appear from the results in this report that the way we do school itself, not the students or the teachers or other adults in the system, but the system itself, is the culprit.



from the results in this report that the way we do school itself, not the students or the teachers or other adults in the system, but the system itself, is the culprit.

We can do better. We must do better. And together we will do better.

The Aspirations Framework

The Aspirations Framework brings coherence to the sometimes disparate efforts of schools to create a healthy teaching and learning environment. Educators know that when students and teachers have affirming relationships with one another and with peers, are engaged in their classes and the life of the school, and see a sense of purpose in their efforts, there is a positive impact on students' academic performance. However, schools tend to address school climate in a way that approaches “programitis,” while other features of school life (e.g., discipline systems, professional development) have unintended negative impacts on the school's culture that go unnoticed or ignored. The Aspirations Framework helps schools end initiative fatigue by providing a comprehensive paradigm for judging what works and what doesn't work in ways that are practical, concrete, and easy to implement.

I. One Overarching Goal: Aspirations

The first part of the Aspirations Framework sets out a simple goal—to provide each student and educator with the ability to dream and set goals for the future while being inspired in the present to reach those dreams. This is the goal of school: to help each and every person, whether adult or student, reach their full potential.

II. Three Guiding Principles

To make that happen, there are three research-supported, real-world tested Guiding Principles:

1. **Self-Worth.** In order for students and adults to have aspirations, each needs to feel accepted as a unique individual and valued for the contributions he or she makes to the collective school community. They should know that someone at school believes in them, and feel that their effort and perseverance in life and learning are recognized.
2. **Engagement.** Schools must foster a learning environment for students and adults where they can experience fun and excitement. Adults and students alike need opportunities to be creative and act upon their curiosities, while taking healthy risks, free of fears typically associated with failure or success.
3. **Purpose.** Schools, and the individuals within them, must be encouraged to reflect and act on who they are and what they want to become. Students and adults must be given opportunities to lead and share responsibility in achieving their individual and collective goals. They require others to expect their best effort and provide support as they grow in confidence to take action toward a meaningful, productive, and difference-making future.

III. 8 Conditions that Make a Difference

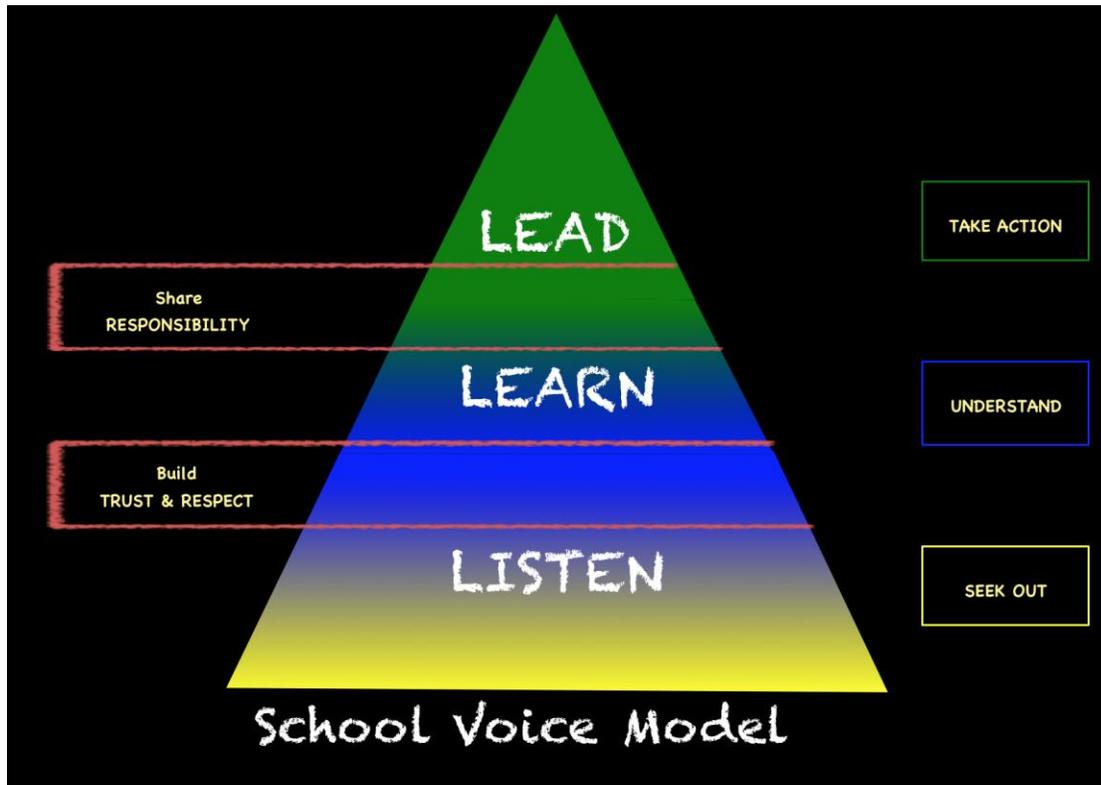
The third part of the Framework indicates how to put the 3 Guiding Principles into action within a school system. Ensuring each person's *Belonging*, *Heroes*, and *Sense of Accomplishment* nurtures Self-Worth. Being intentional about *Fun & Excitement*, *Curiosity & Creativity*, and *Spirit of Adventure* supports Engagement. Providing opportunities for *Leadership & Responsibility* and *Confidence to Take Action* develops Purpose. All members of the school community share responsibility in fostering the 8 Conditions, which make a positive difference in the lives of leaders, teachers, students, families, and the community.

IV. Your School

The fourth and final part of the Framework involves (a) assessing the first three parts of the Framework in *your* school; and (b) working together in a way that leads to improvement. Do students feel valued in your school? Are teachers curious and creative? Does professional development meet their need to feel confident? Are teachers and students experiencing a sense of Purpose? The School Voice Surveys were developed to measure these factors in your school and to point the way toward actionable change.

School Voice Model

The progression of over 30 years of research and fieldwork on voice and aspirations has led to the School Voice Model, which represents a dynamic process that allows all stakeholders in the school community to develop their voice in such a way that it is heard, respected, and valued.



There are three major components to the School Voice Model: Listen, Learn, and Lead. Effectively utilizing one's voice is not just about leading, but about first listening and being willing to learn from others.

Listen. Listening is not a passive act, and is about much more than just hearing someone. Effective listening requires outreach, openness, and a genuine interest in understanding the thoughts and ideas of others, including those with opinions different from your own. To effectively utilize voice, students and adults must also master the art of listening and learning from others both within and beyond the walls of the school.

Learn. The true value in listening to the voices of others is the opportunity to learn. Key to the successful development of voice is a fundamental belief that there is something to be learned from the people around you, regardless of position, age, or any other qualifying factor. Like listening, learning is not a passive activity, but must be an

intentional and regular part of efforts to grow effective school voice. When true listening and learning occur, trust and respect are established and relationships are strengthened.

Lead. Leading is all about using what has been learned through effective listening to bring about meaningful change in partnerships with others. Having fostered positive relationships through listening and learning, the stage is set for meaningful collaboration that leads to action. When the School Voice Model is implemented, all stakeholders share in the responsibility to continually improve the school community, valuing the voices of all, and establishing a leadership model that capitalizes on the unique skills and talents of every individual represented in the collective.

A fuller articulation of the School Voice Model is available in *Principal Voice: Listen, Learn, Lead* (Corwin 2016).

School Voice Instruments

At the base of the School Voice model is the invitation to seek out and actively listen to others. To support this effort, the Quaglia Institute, in partnership with Corwin, offers a variety of survey instruments to begin or enhance a school's active listening process. We cannot emphasize enough that the surveys and their results are a *starting* place. We have seen far too many schools administer student, staff, and parent surveys as a check box—something required, but not a meaningful part of the data that informs decision making. When surveys do not move on to learning and leading together, distrust and a lack of feeling respected ensue. Pretending to listen is worse than not listening at all.

Quaglia School Voice Surveys are meant to inspire a conversation and dialogue that continues to learning, understanding, and the shared responsibility of leading positive change together. There are six instruments—four at the school level and two at the classroom level.

School Level

- Student Survey for Grades 3-5
- Student Survey for Grades 6-12
- Teacher Survey
- Parent Survey

Classroom Level

- iKnow My Class for Grades 3-5
- iKnow My Class for Grades 6-12

School level surveys measure key elements of the Aspirations Framework including the 3 Guiding Principles, the 8 Conditions, and concepts related to Voice. They provide a school with valuable insights into different perceptions of a school's learning climate and culture. iKnow My Class measures engagement as related to student perceptions of themselves in the learning process and the class overall, as well as the teacher and instruction. It is a formative assessment tool designed to empower and inspire the student-teacher partnership to make the changes necessary to deepen student engagement as a function of positive relationships, content relevance, and a teacher's pedagogical expertise.

In the main body of this report, *Students and Teachers as Partners*, we look at results from the school level surveys for students in grades 6-12 and teachers together. This is to embody the partnership of voice—the dialogue—we hope to inspire in schools. In all, 48,185 students took the Quaglia School Voice Student Survey in the 2015-2016 academic year in 14 states: Arizona, California, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts,

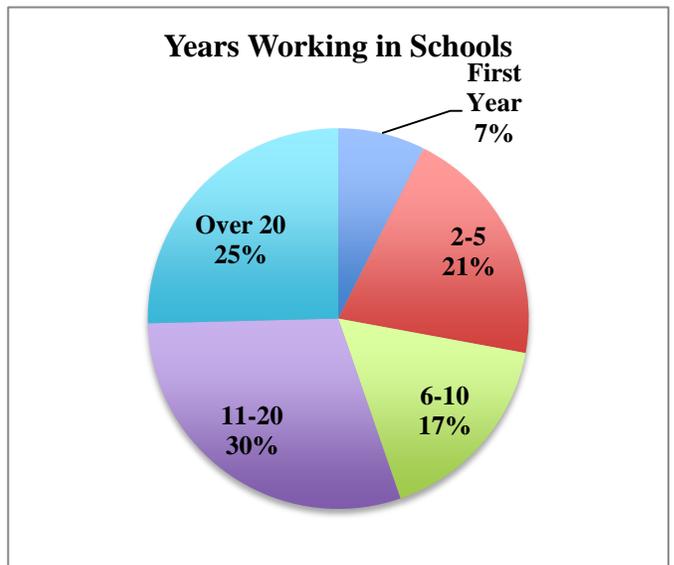
Michigan, Minnesota, Montana¹, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Wyoming. There was a 50%-50% gender breakdown. The grades were dispersed as follows: 6th grade 12%; 7th grade 14%; 8th grade 14%; 9th grade 18%; 10th grade 16%; 11th grade 14%; and 12th grade 12%. The breakdown of Racial Heritage (students were able to select more than one category) was: White 66%; Black or African American 6%; Hispanic, Latino 26%; Asian 4%; Native Hawaiian 1%; American Indian or Alaska Native 9%; Other Pacific Islander 1%; and Other 6%. Of the students surveyed 21% reported no co-curricular involvement. Eighty-two percent (82%) said they plan to attend college, 3% said they are not planning on attending college, and 15% reported being undecided.

The Quaglia School Voice Teacher Survey was administered in 13 states—all those in which the student survey was administered except Arizona and Indiana. Teachers in South Carolina also took the Teacher Voice survey. In all there were 4,021 respondents, 26% of whom were male and 74% of whom were female. Three-quarters (75%) of those taking the survey indicated that they were classroom teachers with an additional 15% indicating they were Certified Support Staff, and 10% indicating they were Support Staff. A majority of staff (55%) indicated having worked in schools for 11 years or more. Forty-nine percent reported having a Master’s degree or more, while 41% had a Bachelor’s, 3% an Associate’s, and 6% a high school diploma or equivalent. One-percent listed their highest degree attained as Doctorate.

Given a different set of questions and a Likert scale, grades 3-5 results were treated separately. There were 12,157 respondents in grades 3-5. Fifty-percent were male, 50% were female. The respondents were evenly distributed across the three grades. Nine states administered surveys: California, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, and South Carolina.

To consider teachers and students in dialogue in the classroom, we examine iKnowMyClass.

Finally, our findings on students from age 3 to grade 2, and our parent surveys (n=2287), are preliminary and tentative. The former group is QISA’s first foray into the world of voice



¹ Montana has been involved in a multi-year Quaglia School Voice effort. As a result, more Montana schools took QSV surveys than any other state represented. Montana’s demographics also impact the racial heritage profile of the aggregate (e.g., Montana has a larger population of Native Americans than the national average). The results for all surveys have been weighted to account for this. As weighted, the demographics are more representative of the country as a whole.

as it relates to the youngest learners, and the latter group has a more limited data set than the other surveys. We wish to lead the way to more robust partnerships between schools and parents/families and our data suggests that the best way to do that is through their children.

Students and Teachers as Partners

When comparing the indicators for each group of survey respondents—students and teachers—we must consider three types of comparisons:

- **Students and teachers considering the same phenomenon from their own point of view.** For example, both teachers and students are asked to respond to the statement “I am proud of my school.” Each person is considering their feelings about school pride, whether a teacher or student.
- **Students and teachers considering the same phenomenon from opposite points of view.** For example, teachers are asked to respond to the statement “I respect students,” whereas students are asked to respond to the statement “Teachers respect students.” Both are considering the respect teachers have for students from opposite sides of the experience.
- **Students and teachers considering a similar phenomenon given their different roles.** For example, teachers are asked to respond to “I feel comfortable asking questions in staff meetings,” while students are asked to respond to “I feel comfortable asking questions in class.” Both statements have to do with the comfort level of asking questions, but in different situations dependent upon role.

As we consider the point of view of students and the point of view of teachers in order to more deeply understand the status of Voice and these Conditions in schools, keep these distinctions in mind.

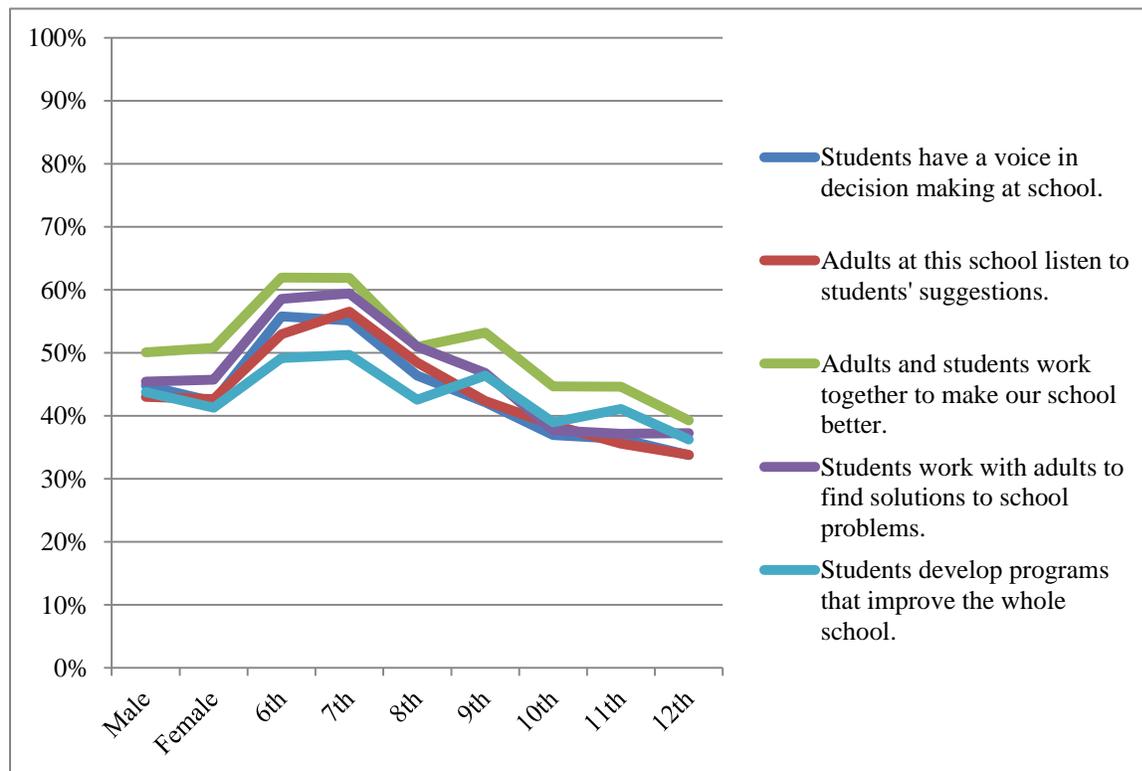
Voice

Encouraging students and teachers to have more of a voice in schools and preparing adults and administrators to be genuinely open to listening to, learning from, and leading with those voices is the key to meaningful and sustainable whole school change. As we will see in the Odds Analyses below, having a voice makes positive contributions to Self-Worth, Engagement, and Purpose. It dramatically improves academic motivation in students, and in teachers positively impacts effort and self-efficacy.

The challenge is that far too few students and teachers believe they have a voice in their school. Just forty-four percent (44%) of students believe students have a voice in decision making. And less than half (48%) of teachers agree that “I have a voice in decision making at school.” This sad similarity suggests that systems for pushing information, insights, and opinions “up” communication channels in a school are either lacking, ineffective, or unintentionally responsible for giving or deliberately designed to give voice to only a select few. In focus groups, this latter is often revealed to be an “inner

circle” when it comes to teacher voice or a traditional, typically non-representative, student leadership system (e.g., student council) when it comes to student voice.

The lack of voice among students is corroborated by the finding that only 43% of students feel adults listen to students’ suggestions. Similarly the percentage of students who believe adults and students work together to make school better (50%), find solutions to school problems (46%), and develop programs that improve the whole school (43%) all hover at the halfway point. All of these indicators also show a steady decline from 6th grade to 12th grade. It is no wonder that some students describe school in institutional terms that include “factory,” “just a number,” and “prison.”



Teachers feel slightly better about having a voice. Roughly two-thirds of teachers report a positive experience of voice when it comes to administration being open to new ideas (64%) and 66% believe setting yearly goals with their supervisor is important for their work. However, the percentage slips closer to the halfway point when perceiving that administration knows their professional goals (53%), and when feeling confidence in voicing honest concerns (57%).

Taken together, this perceived lack of student and teacher voice means that decision making runs the risk of not having sufficient depth perception to make effective decisions. School discipline policies that are made without consulting “frequent flyers”

wind up applying more adult command and control to treat the symptoms of poor student choices, never addressing root causes. Disenfranchised teachers point out everything wrong with their school to one another in the parking lot, rather than frankly bringing concerns to a forum where they believe they will receive a fair hearing. Thus, those entrusted with decision making authority make judgments based on an incomplete picture of the nature of the problem and in the absence of half of the community’s ideas as to solutions. Worst of all, those who believe they lack a voice may seek one in unhealthy ways by undermining decision-makers verbally or by “speaking” with their actions—this is true for both teachers vis-a-vis administration and students vis-a-vis teachers.

This can and must change. Surveys are a starting point for both student and teacher voice. The surveys will raise questions that are best answered in focus groups. Combined teams of teachers and students can then analyze those results and develop change projects that are implemented under the banner of “We Heard You.” By closing the feedback loop and telling the school community that this or that new policy or schedule change or renovation to curriculum came as a direct result of their voices—being transparent about the entire process from voice to choice—reinforces and deepens the sense that voice matters in your school. As the feeling of having a voice increases, ideas, solutions, and changes will begin to flow more freely, creating the synergy required to take on bigger, more difficult issues as they arise.

Staff Survey Statements	Total in Agreement	Total in Agreement	Student Survey Statements
I have a voice in decision making at school.	48%	44%	Students have a voice in decision making at school.
Building administration is open to new ideas.	64%	43%	Adults at this school listen to students' suggestions.
Building administration knows my professional goals.	53%	50%	Adults and students work together to make our school better.
I feel confident voicing my honest opinions and concerns.	57%	46%	Students work with adults to find solutions to school problems.
Setting yearly goals with my supervisor is important for my work.	66%	43%	Students develop programs that improve the whole school.

Condition 1: Belonging

The first condition that must be in place in order for strong partnerships to exist between students and teachers is that of Belonging. The Condition of Belonging is based on a belief that every participant in the educational experience is a valued member of the school community, while still maintaining their uniqueness as an individual. Students and teachers alike feel like they belong if they are accepted, safe, and respected. This is dependent on every student and teacher actively participating as responsible, contributing citizens of the school community.

Personal Safety

For a student or teacher to feel like they belong, they must first feel safe at school. Neither students nor teachers are typically motivated to contribute positively to or seek belonging in a community that does not feel welcoming or safe. Maslow's hierarchy of needs has clearly established that basic physiological needs and a sense of safety must exist before an individual can experience love and belonging, regardless of age. Feeling safe is a foundation for learning as well. We have talked to students who do not feel safe in their school and they report it being a distraction. Teachers, too, find it difficult to focus and give their best to the learning experience when it feels like threats are looming.

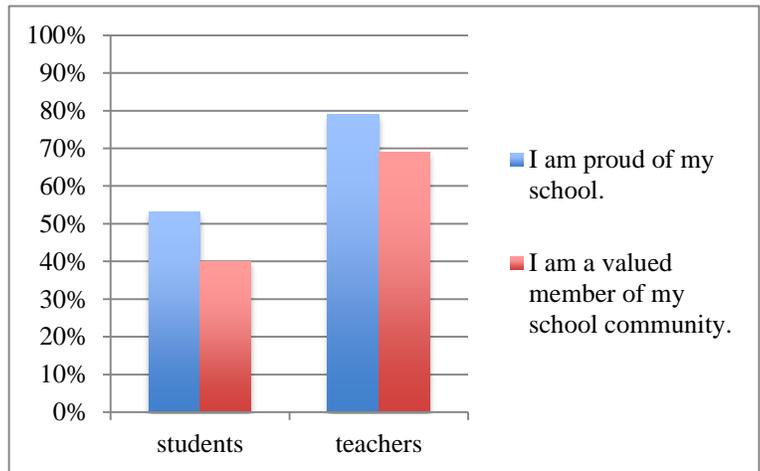
Results of the Quaglia School Voice Surveys indicate that only 64% of students and 78% of teachers report that school is a welcoming and friendly place. Clearly, there is significant room for improvement in fostering feelings of safety and belonging in schools for both students and teachers. Sadly, a school culture that does not facilitate belonging leaves too much room for bullying to thrive. Forty percent (40%) of students and 40% of teachers think that bullying is a problem at their school. Moreover, focus groups indicate that bullying is a systemic problem. That is to say, while much of the attention around bullying focuses on it as a student to student phenomenon, in a school with "a bullying problem," we frequently learn about teacher to student, teacher to teacher, and administration to teacher bullying as well. All subtly different from one another, but threatening nevertheless and often the result of an environment in which difference is seen as something threatening.

However, schools in which Belonging flourishes celebrate difference and recognize it strengthens the school community. With intentional effort and support, every student and teacher can find their place of belonging in the school community. But we are not there yet. One of every five students (22%) report that they have problems fitting in at school. And this issue of safety at school is not unique to students. Nearly three of every ten teachers (29%) report that they do not feel comfortable in the staff room. If teachers do not have a sense of safety, acceptance, and belonging in the school they will be quite challenged to cultivate such conditions for students.

School Pride

Belonging develops when students and teachers genuinely feel welcomed, respected and appreciated by others in the school community. When these behaviors occur, individuals develop an attachment to the school community and an intrinsic desire to care for and positively contribute to the school. This is often expressed through school pride. Lack of school pride is a red flag that concentrated effort must be placed on increasing sense of belonging in the school. In focus groups, pride is frequently connected to “school spirit” for students and to “morale” for teachers.

Fifty-three percent (53%) of students and 79% of teachers currently report that they are proud of their school. This is a fairly significant gap that should cause us to reflect. What are the different sources of pride for students and teachers? What different strategies might need to be used to promote pride given this difference? It is difficult to feel pride if one does not feel valued, and only 40% of students report feeling like a valued member of their school community. Teachers fare a bit better with 69% reporting they are a valued member of the school community. The relative proximity of the pride and valuation results suggests a connection. We can do better than having schools in which three of every ten teachers, and nearly six of every ten students do *not* feel valued.



Being Known

Focus groups with students and teachers reveal that feelings of being valued are often linked to a belief that one is known as an individual. This theme emerges in nearly every school: our teachers know and care about us as students, but not as individuals. Only 52% of students report that teachers make an effort to get to know them, and even less (43%) believe teachers care about their problems. Teachers do not fare much better, with only six in ten (61%) reporting that building administration makes an effort to get to know them. A possible first step in fostering a sense of belonging for students and teachers is for every member of the school community to make a focused effort in getting to know one another.

Practical Suggestions

- **Learn and use names.** Although it may seem basic, learning the names of colleagues and students goes a long way. Being known by name makes us feel like we belong. However, it is not enough to just *know* the names of students and colleagues in your school; you must *use* their names on a regular basis. Adults are frequently shocked to learn that students do not believe their teachers know their names. It is possible that teachers *do* know the names of their students, and they just need to say those names out loud more often.
- **Share hopes and dreams.** In addition to knowing and using the names of teachers and students, learn the hopes and dreams of those in your school community. Ask fellow teachers and students about their interests, goals, and dreams for the future. And then be willing to share meaningful things about yourself in exchange. Sharing hopes and dreams allows us to better understand who we are as people, and facilitates a shared sense of belonging.

Staff Survey Statements	Total in Agreement	Total in Agreement	Student Survey Statements
School is a welcoming and friendly place.	78%	64%	School is a welcoming and friendly place.
I am proud of my school.	79%	53%	I am proud of my school.
I think bullying is a problem at my school.	40%	40%	I think bullying is a problem at my school.
I am a valued member of my school community.	69%	40%	I am a valued member of the school community.
I feel valued for my unique skills and talents.	72%	N/A	
I feel accepted for who I am at school.	80%	67%	I feel accepted for who I am at school.
Building administration makes an effort to get to know me.	61%	52%	Teachers make an effort to get to know me.
I feel comfortable in the staff room.	71%	22%	I have difficulty fitting in at school.
	N/A	43%	Teachers care about my problems and feelings.

Condition 2: Heroes

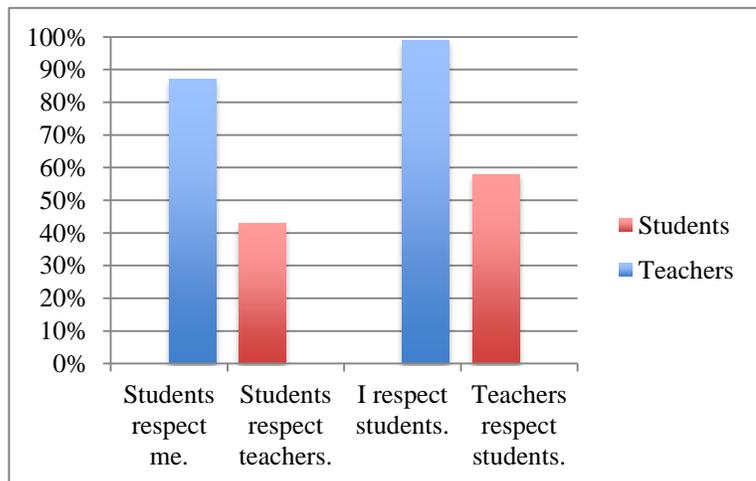
Perhaps nowhere else is the partnership between teachers and students more evident than with the Condition of Heroes. Healthy, trusting relationships between teachers and students are known to have positive benefits for student academic and personal outcomes as well as teacher morale, enthusiasm, and persistence. When students and teachers are Heroes to one another, they treat each other with respect, recognize and celebrate one another's accomplishments, and genuinely care for one another to the mutual benefit of all individually and collectively.

Heroes are our trusted guides. Mutual respect and commitment to one another are the hallmarks of a school community dedicated to personal betterment and system-wide school improvement. Too often in today's schools, adults and students become isolated from one another in a culture dominated by individual competition rather than collaborative support. The Condition of Heroes reminds us that what happens in schools is, first and foremost, a partnership.

The Respect Gap

There is no doubt that respect is reciprocal. Students respect teachers they believe respect students, while students have little respect for a teacher they believe is disrespectful to students. Similarly teachers are more inclined to respect students who are respectful towards them. But this is not a chicken or egg question. There is no doubt that in the case of respect in schools the grown-up goes first. The theme in most teacher focus groups, as well as the understanding of most students, is that teachers must consistently and relentlessly model respect—even in the face of disrespectful behavior from students. Many recognize that the only way to *teach* respect is to be respectful in the face of disrespect.

When it comes to teacher respect for students and student respect for teachers, sadly teachers and students have different points of view. While 99% of teachers agree with the statement “I respect students” just 6 out of 10 (58%) of students agree that “Teachers respect students.” As one sign of respect is listening, respect, at least from the student point of view, may be diminished by the finding that



only 43% of students agree that “Adults at this school listen to students’ suggestions.” Similarly, though 87% of teachers agree that “Students respect me,” just 43% of students agree that “Students respect teachers.” Clearly there is a respect gap that must be closed.

Teachers and students also differ in their experiences of peer respect: 69% of teachers agree “Staff respect each other,” while less than one-third (31%) of students agree “Students respect each other.” Though for both groups this sadly represents the lowest of the three respect questions, teachers seem to enjoy more respect among their peers than do students.

Care That I’m There

One of the most disheartening findings from the student survey is that over half of students in grades 6-12 (54%) do not agree with the statement “Teachers care if I am absent from school.” Focus groups with students worsen this finding because many students say the reason teachers care they are absent is that it makes more work for them as teachers. Some teachers let students know that their absence is a hassle. Teachers are receiving a different message from their students, as 85% of teachers believe that students care if they are absent from school.

There is a similar gap when teachers and students are asked whether the other cares about them personally. While 8 out of 10 teachers (81%) believe students care about them as an individual, only 53% of students can say the same about teachers. Although many students in focus groups believe that teachers care about them *as students*—their grades, their behavior in class, etc.—far fewer believe teachers care about them at a personal level—their interests, their friends and family, their co-curricular involvement, etc.

Personal Connection

While the above findings are about students’ and teachers’ general views of one another, a few more pointed statements yield more encouraging findings. Despite the gaps in care and respect outlined above, many students seem to find a healthy, if distant, connection with at least one adult in their school. Eight out of 10 teachers (80%) affirm that they know their students’ hopes and dreams. And 75% of students can identify “a teacher who is a positive role model.” Ninety-one percent (91%) of teachers, too, are able to find a positive role model among their colleagues. Despite this, far too few students (53%) believe there is a teacher they can turn to if they have a problem. So while students may regard teachers as positive role models, some seem unapproachable to them—at least when problems arise. Teachers appear to have less difficulty finding a colleague to talk to when there is a problem, as 92% affirm that they can.

Additional findings under this condition include the clear statement by students that they believe their parents care about their education. Ninety-four percent (94%) of students affirm this. The challenge for teachers is in connecting the care parents have for their child's education to the way they, as teachers, need them to care.

Practical Suggestions

- **Clearly define respect.** When tackling the respect gap in many schools, focus groups often uncover different interpretations and definitions of respect. Most teachers do not intend to be disrespectful to students and most students do not intend to be disrespectful to teachers. While “I didn’t mean to…” is not an excuse, certain behaviors are understood as disrespectful by the other when not meant as such. For example, many students experience being corrected in front of their peers as “yelling” and therefore disrespectful. Conversely, there are some teachers who consider a student calling out answers in class to be disrespectful, while in some cultures call and response is a sign of respect and engagement. Work together either as a class or as an entire school to come up with a common (and by that we mean 100% agreed upon) definition of respect. Be sure that the definition describes observable behaviors. “Being nice” is hard to see. How will we know respect when we see it? What does it sound like? Once you agree on a definition, have posters made and put them up in your classroom and around the building.
- **Improve the ratios.** Some of the gap in perception between students and teachers when it comes to respect and care is a function of the student to teacher ratio. In any given class, from a teacher’s point of view there is one teacher and twenty-five students; but from each student’s point of view there is one student and one teacher. So while it may be possible to care about students as students one to twenty-five, it is not really possible to care about them as individuals in that way. Find ways to improve the ratios. When students are working in groups, plan to spend quality time with each group (one to four or five). When assigning independent work, plan to visit with each student individually (one to one). Have lunch in the cafeteria with students as often as sanity will allow (one to three or four). Have “office hours” at the start of the day, during a planning period, or after school (one to one). This way of thinking also leads to ways in which students can be Heroes to one another. Peer tutoring, support, and study are all ways of taking the traditional class of 20 to 30 students and shrinking it down to more “get to know you,” respectable sizes.

Staff Survey Statements	Total in Agreement	Total in Agreement	Student Survey Statements
Students care if I am absent from school.	85%	46%	Teachers care if I am absent from school.
I have a colleague at school who is a positive role model for me.	91%	75%	I have a teacher who is a positive role model for me.
If I have a problem, I have a colleague with whom I can talk.	92%	53%	If I have a problem, I have a teacher with whom I can talk.
Staff respect each other.	69%	31%	Students respect each other.
Students respect me.	87%	43%	Students respect teachers.
I respect students.	99%	58%	Teachers respect students.
Students care about me as an individual.	81%	53%	Teachers care about me as an individual.
	N/A	94%	My parents care about my education.
	N/A	43%	Adults at this school listen to students' suggestions.
I know my students' hopes and dreams.	80%	N/A	

Condition 3: Sense of Accomplishment

One of the challenges posed by the inherited model of school is that our systems for recognizing success are somewhat binary—in two senses. First, most schools tend only to celebrate academic or athletic accomplishments. You are either a “nerd” or “jock” and get recognized, or you are not and don’t. If you are an accomplished ballet dancer or gamer, a skilled equestrian or excel at skateboarding, your teachers and your peers are likely to know nothing about it. There are no pep rallies for the students who put on the school play and no awards assemblies for the students who “score 100%” in getting younger siblings fed and to school on time every day. Second, even within the accepted categories the recognition is either on or off. You either made the Honor Roll or you didn’t. You either won the game or you didn’t. Binary.

The Condition of Sense of Accomplishment encourages schools to consider a much broader range for recognition and celebration. First, Sense of Accomplishment is about expanding the scope of what counts as success for both students and teachers. Look beyond academics and athletics to include the myriad talents, skills, and aptitude students and teachers have for fine and performing arts, for languages, for non-mainstream sports, and, above all, for good citizenship. Second, within each category schools must broaden the range of achievements and milestones. This amounts to praising the effort and perseverance that is the true hallmark of a successful person. When we recognize that a student has pulled a D up to a C+ we communicate the value of that effort, even if that student has not yet flipped the switch to a B in order to receive an Honor Certificate. We should continue to hold out the highest accolades for those who achieve the highest outcomes in the broad range of categories we now measure. However, we must mark the steps along the way if we want them to keep striving towards those high outcomes.

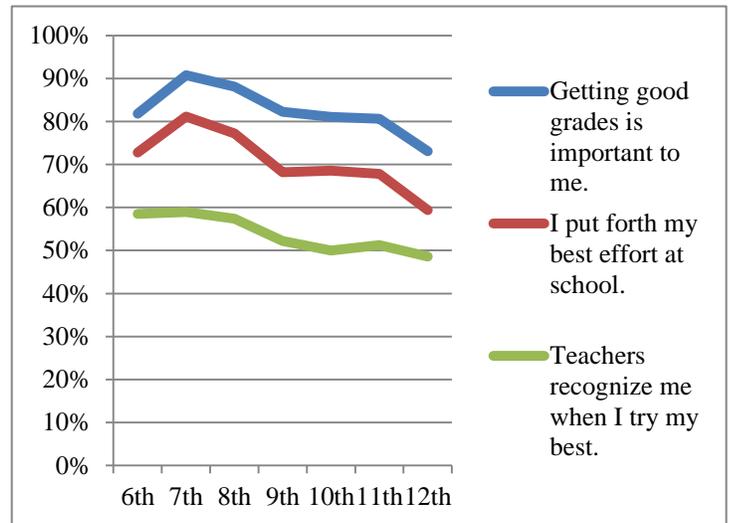
If at First You Don’t Succeed

While the literature on Grit and Growth Mindset has moved from the jump-on-the-bandwagon phase to the debate phase, it remains true that successful people are distinguished by two common characteristics. It is not IQ or academic achievement in school or any of the many other things our (biased) academic institutions hold up as needed for success. It is effort and perseverance. Whether in business or politics, whether in sports or entertainment, whether in the effort to cure a disease or get a city park cleaned up, people who achieve their goals are dogged in their pursuit of those goals. They never, never, never, never give up. While we teach students about the importance of effort in the elementary grades, and even have an effort column on elementary report cards, we seem to assume that it is no longer required as students advance. We stop paying attention to effort except perhaps in lip service (“You should work harder in school”) and focus myopically on outcomes. Yet effort is the key to positive outcomes.

Here is an interesting digression of percentages related to effort:

- 89% of students agree “Getting good grades is important to me.”
- 73% of students agree “I put forth my best effort in school.”
- 53% of students agree “Teachers recognize me when I try my best.”

The gap between these numbers is relentlessly consistent across grade levels. The longer students are in school the less they see the importance of grades, the less they put forth their best effort, and the less they feel recognized for trying their best. In addition, in each year, fewer students admit to trying their best in school than say they want good grades. And fewer report being recognized for doing their best than claim to put in their best effort. Somehow school itself is communicating the message to some students that there are other ways to get good grades than effort (in focus groups, students say you have to be “smart” to get good grades or “get along with teachers”). And that even if you put in your best effort you should not count on being recognized. The consistency of feeling unrecognized persists among the adults as only 52% of teachers affirm “I am recognized when I try my best.” If we are looking for the source of the malaise and apathy that have infected our school system we need look no further. Nearly half of all those walking into a school every day, whether adult or student, believe that no matter how hard they try, they are not likely to be recognized. While there is no doubt that learning is its own reward and that teaching as a profession is among the most rewarding occupations, little acts of recognition and celebration for a job well done, an extra mile walked, a tight deadline met can go a long way to improving spirit and morale.



Good Citizenship

In addition to being recognized for effort, Sense of Accomplishment is affected by being recognized for good citizenship. This does not refer to politics or “civic duty,” but rather to being a positive and contributing member of the school community. When we expect and then thank students for picking up a cafeteria tray they did not leave behind, when we acknowledge a kind word or helping hand, when we give students responsibilities and then express gratitude for a job well done, we nurture good citizenship and prosocial behavior. Adults need this as well, even though they do not need to be taught what it

means to be a contributing member of the learning community. Indeed that should be expected. Yet the sticky note left on a teacher's desk that says, "I saw you take extra time with that student. Thank you" or the bushel of apples left in the staff room with a card that reads, "I am so grateful for your dedication to our students," can go a long way to boosting individual or staff morale. Teaching, when done well, takes a chunk out of a person each day. It is nice when someone puts a chunk back in.

Currently, one in five teachers (20%) and one in four students (26%) report never being recognized for something positive at school. Just 57% of teachers claim "Our school celebrates the accomplishments of the staff." And while nearly all teachers (98%) agree that "I actively encourage students to practice good citizenship," just three-quarters of students (75%) agree that "I am encouraged to practice good citizenship." The message is not getting through to far too many students.

Practical Suggestions

- **It is the small things.** Teachers tell us they're not looking for big accolades or Teacher of the Year awards. Teachers want to be noticed in little ways for the little things. A best practice is when an administrator walks around with colored sticky notes leaving messages of gratitude and recognition on desktops and white boards and door jambs. This same leader can expect, having modeled this behavior, that the teaching staff do likewise with their students. Modestly, though consistently, make people feel noticed for what they are doing well. Expand the categories of recognition to effort, citizenship, and anything else you see that is positive in another's actions. Sense of Accomplishment is not about having a school-wide pizza party for a student who finally turned in homework on time. It is simply writing a note on the paper (and maybe sending a note to the parents) that you are proud of him for turning this in on time as you know that is a challenge. We get what we notice or celebrate.
- **Do a celebrations system audit.** Gather a diverse group of teachers and students and an administrator and ask: what do we celebrate in our school and why? Use newsprint to list rallies and assemblies, PA announcements, awards, banquets, etc. Who gets celebrated? Who does not? After developing a thorough understanding of what and who and how and when your school celebrates, consider how these forms of recognition might be widened and expanded. What categories are missing? What group of students might receive notice? This is not about everyone getting a "participation" trophy. That rings hollow. Find what all your students are genuinely good at and genuinely celebrate that.

Staff Survey Statements	Total in Agreement	Total in Agreement	Student Survey Statements
I actively encourage students to practice good citizenship.	98%	75%	I am encouraged to practice good citizenship at school.
I have never been recognized for something positive at school.	20%	26%	I have never been recognized for something positive at school.
	N/A	73%	I put forth my best effort at school.
Our school celebrates the accomplishments of the staff.	57%	71%	Teachers recognize students who are kind and helpful.
I am recognized when I try my best.	52%	54%	Teachers recognize me when I try my best.
	N/A	47%	Teachers let my parents know what I do well.
Professional development is an important part of my educational growth.	80%	85%	Getting good grades is important to me.
	N/A	17%	I give up when school work is difficult.
I receive constructive feedback from colleagues.	69%	N/A	

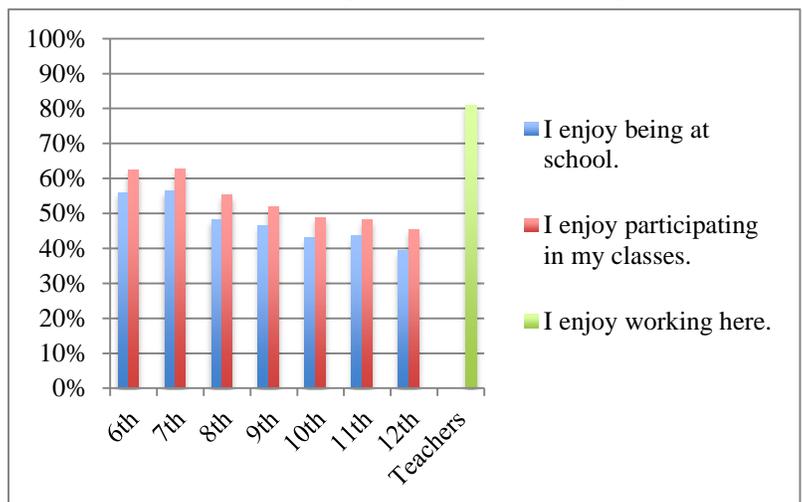
Condition 4: Fun & Excitement

Without question, we encounter a spectrum in the field from pre-K through high school AP when it comes to the role of Fun & Excitement in schools. Those who teach the youngest learners know that part of their job is to get students excited and engaged in books and math problems and various elementary science experiments. Sadly, this sense that engaging students at an emotional level plays an important role in learning seems to wane as students advance through school. We hear from middle school teachers that they need to “toughen kids up” for high school. And high school teachers sometimes have stated plainly, “It is not my job to entertain them.”

Yet everyone will admit it is difficult to learn when one is bored or apathetic. Entertainment is not the job of educators, but engagement is. Fun & Excitement is simply engagement in its affective mode. It is present when we lose track of space and time as learners. We become so fully immersed in a novel or calculation or historical event or lab experiment that our attention becomes focused and flows into a learning state, and we are upset when time spent in the activity must come to an end. Fun & Excitement is about the passion educators and their students can have when they are fully absorbed in the task at hand. In such an environment, teacher morale is high and student boredom is low.

Joy

We dream of the day when students and teachers alike are disappointed rather than jubilant to learn that school is closed due to a snow or calamity day. Think of the joy and enthusiasm of a kindergarten student engaged in learning something new. Now think of a teacher attending an irrelevant professional development session or a high school junior who hates history taking Honor’s History because she feels it is necessary to get into college. When it comes to enjoyment, we see fairly wide discrepancies in the survey results between students and teachers. Just half of all students (49%) affirm “I enjoy being at school” and only slightly more (54%) affirm “I enjoy participating in my classes.” Moreover, 43% of students claim “School is boring.” Yet 81% of teachers affirm “I enjoy working here” and 83% say “I have fun at school.” While school seems to be an enjoyable experience for most teachers, the same cannot be said of their students.

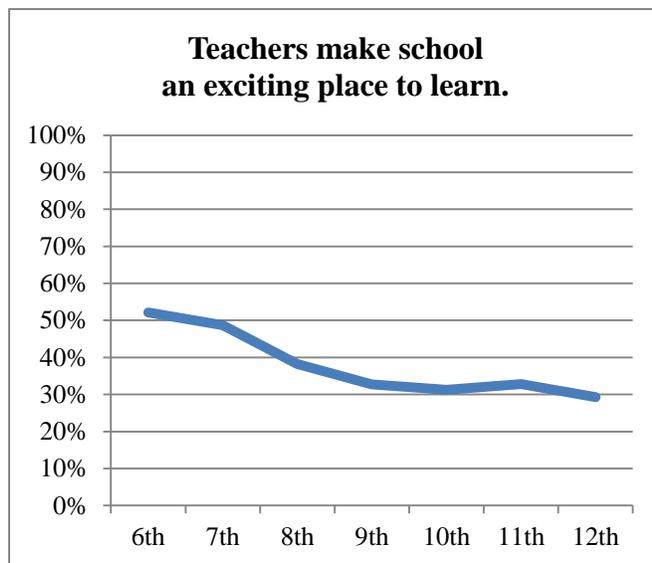


This gap between students’ and teachers’ experiences of enjoyment at school holds true whether students are male or female. There is however a significant and steady drop of 25% from grade 6 to grade 12 in both indicators. While 56% of 6th graders say they enjoy being at school and 62% say they enjoy participating in their classes, just 39% and 45% of 12th graders can say the same, respectively.

Are You Enjoying This As Much As I Am?

When teachers and students look across the desk at one another, teachers have a far rosier view of student enjoyment than students have of teacher enjoyment. Despite the findings above related to student enjoyment and boredom, 77% of teachers believe students enjoy working with teachers and 74% believe students are having fun at school. Given what students report about their own enjoyment, we have to wonder what accounts for this discrepancy. The delusion cuts both ways as just 61% of students believe that “Teachers enjoy working with students.” This regardless of the fact that eight out of ten teachers seem to enjoy their work.

Students are willing to lay the blame for disengagement on the teachers, not seeing their own participation in being engaged learners as important. Only 38% of students say, “Teachers make school an exciting place to learn.” This drops precipitously from grade 6 to grade 12. However, 86% of teachers agree that “Students make school an exciting place to work.” When it comes to making school reciprocally exciting for the other, students and teachers seem to be looking across a wide gulf.



Potential Engagement

Although some may feel it is not saying much, the highest of the Fun & Excitement results for students is “Learning can be fun” at 65%. Nearly all (99%) teachers affirm the same. Clearly, even in the face of the generally downward spin school puts on fun in learning for both students and teachers, all is not lost. The vast majority of those who spend their time in school every day believe learning can be exciting and engaging. In focus groups, both young people and adults describe lessons and professional development that held their interest, seemed relevant, and that they looked forward to continuing or getting back to. Students describe teachers whose passion for their subject matter is contagious. And teachers place high value on the pleasure of learning that has a

positive impact on their classroom practice. There is an enthusiasm to learn that can be leveraged no matter our role in school.

Practical Suggestions

- **Show and tell and ask.** Given the gap in students' perceptions of teacher enjoyment and teachers' perceptions of student enjoyment, it would make sense that the topics of fun and excitement, and their opposites, boredom and apathy, be an explicit part of the dialogue between teachers and students. Teachers misread students and students misread teachers on this score. Share what excites you about teaching. Tell your students what you find fun. Make sure you wear your passion on your sleeve. Most importantly, check in with your students about their level of engagement with what you're asking them to do and learn. Asking if they understand is obviously critical, but so is asking them— are you having fun? Do you find this interesting? Do you see the relevance? Ask them to point to specific topics or learning strategies they find more engaging than others. Help them understand that their engagement is as much in their hands as it is yours.
- **Compound interest.** Adults believe learning can be fun and so do most students. Despite 94% of teachers believing they make learning relevant to their students, this is clearly not the case from the students' point of view. "Relevance," after all, is a highly subjective term. What is relevant to a teacher may or may not be relevant to their students. In addition, relevance is multivalent. There is everyday relevance, relevance to the future, relevance to other subjects, relevance to current events, relevance to identity....the list could go on. To take advantage of the full spectrum of potential relevance, ask your students what they find interesting. Whether it's skateboarding or computer programming, find ways to connect what you are asking them to learn with their interests.

Staff Survey Statements	Total in Agreement	Total in Agreement	Student Survey Statements
I enjoy working here.	81%	49%	I enjoy being at school.
Students enjoy working with teachers.	77%	61%	Teachers enjoy working with students.
	N/A	54%	I enjoy participating in my classes.
Students have fun at school.	74%	45%	School is boring.
Students make school an exciting place to work.	86%	38%	Teachers make school an exciting place to learn.
I have fun at school.	83%	41%	Teachers have fun at school.
Learning can be fun.	99%	65%	Learning can be fun.
I make learning relevant to my students.	94%	N/A	
	N/A	50%	Adults and students work together to make our school better.

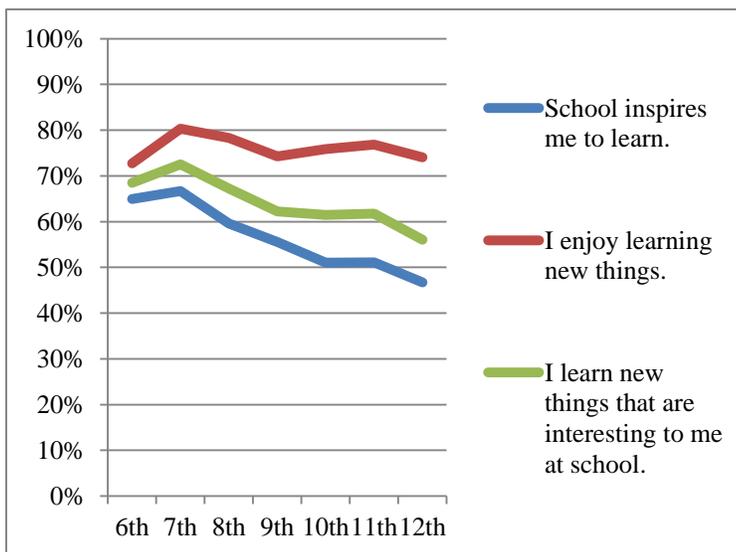
Condition 5: Curiosity & Creativity

If there is a recurrent invitation posed by the Common Core, 21st Century Learning, colleges, and business leaders, it is that the current approach to schooling needs to improve students' ability to think critically about what they learn and to creatively apply what they have learned. This seems to run counter to the standards movement and its enforcement instrument, standardized testing. This tension—to say nothing of the lean towards the standardization of testing, curricula, and inevitably, the learning that high-stakes testing instills—cannot help but have an impact on both students' and teachers' experience of curiosity and creativity in school. While innovation, entrepreneurship, flexible thinking, questioning, and the ability to challenge assumptions are lauded as important learning outcomes, too-frequent testing, scripted curricula, and pacing guides all seem to dampen approaches that would make schools creative and dynamic learning places.

New Learning

The good news is that the past several years of the often critiqued standardized approach has not diminished everyone's enjoyment in learning new things. Nearly all teachers (98%) report that they enjoy learning new things, as do 78% of students. While we may wish that student enthusiasm for new learning was as universal as teachers', we take heart in the fact that, unlike other indicators, the four out of five students who affirm enthusiasm for learning is fairly consistent from grade level to grade level.

Sadly, the same cannot be said for the indicators "I learn new things that are interesting to me at school" and "School inspires me to learn." The total in agreement for these statements about the relationship between new learning and school are 65% and 57%, respectively. Moreover, as the enjoyment in learning new things holds steady, and



"School inspires me to learn" and "I learn new things that are interesting to me at school" drop with each later grade in school, the gap between learning zeal, as well as the appeal of school, widens. Teachers, too, are impacted, as the inspiration to learn stemming from being in a school environment is far from universal (80%).

Relevance

One possible reason the hunger to learn remains high while the role of school in satisfying that hunger diminishes is a perceived lack of relevance in much of the learning that takes place in school. This seems true for both adults and students. Just 57% of teachers agree that “Meaningful professional development exists in my district.” This is affirmed in focus groups as we repeatedly hear stories of professional development that is irrelevant, planned at the last minute, closed to teacher input, and often disconnected from a teacher’s content area or pedagogical needs. In far too many districts, professional development seems to be an administrative check box that requires teachers to be signed-in, even if they are mentally checked-out.

Students fare no better. Though nearly three-quarters of students (74%) report that “My teachers present lessons in different ways,” just 38% affirm that “My classes help me understand what is happening in my everyday life.” This latter indicator also drops steadily from a high of 50% in 6th grade to a low of 29% in 12th grade. This is despite the finding we noted above that 94% of teachers believe they make learning relevant to their students. It would appear that while schools do an adequate job of using a variety of pedagogical approaches, school lessons are no more relevant for that. The future relevance of school is slightly more positive from the student point of view, with two-thirds (67%) believing that “What I learn in school will benefit my future.” This, too, drops from grade level to grade level, though one would hope that the relevance of school to the future would increase as the future outside of school draws closer. Focus group data also blunts this finding, as many students appear only to affirm the future benefit of school based on their trust in adults who tell them that school will “pay off” later.

Openness

Both curiosity and creativity require an environment that is open and expansive in order to flourish and thrive. When one experiences “narrow thinking” or “closed-mindedness,” being inquisitive and inventive becomes difficult. Curiosity and creativity benefit from encouragement, and an atmosphere in which it is safe and even expected that adult and student learners alike must wonder, question, and make “out of the box” suggestions. The genuine dialogue of the adult-student partnership that we believe makes for an effective school flourishes when all participants feel the freedom to question assumptions and push back against the *status quo*.

Roughly the same percentages of teachers (66%) and students (60%) report that “At school I am encouraged to be creative.” Similar percentages agree about their comfort level for being inquisitive. Sixty-four percent (64%) of teachers say they are comfortable asking questions in staff meetings, whereas 58% of students report they feel comfortable asking questions in class. Perhaps these results regarding encouragement in creativity on

the one hand and comfortability asking questions on the other hand stem from a perceived lack of openness in those setting the tone for this Condition. Only 64% of teachers perceive their administrators as being open to new ideas. And from the Leadership & Responsibility results (below), we know that just 47% of students believe that “Teachers are willing to learn from students.”

Practical Suggestions

- **Be a model of inquisitiveness.** Whether students are around to witness you or not, be a questioner. In class, ask open-ended rather than “guess what’s in my head” questions. Follow-up on student answers with more questions. Relentlessly invite questions. Create an atmosphere of safety and wonder in the classroom. Do not limit your questions to planned academic content. Share your curiosities about politics, the latest storyline from a popular television show, or a fashion trend. Ask about students’ personal (not private) lives. Additionally, do not be daunted by a staff meeting environment where leaders or peers place pressure, subtle or overt, to not ask questions. Follow-up on questions that are not answered. Offer to look into an issue or topic further if no answer is forthcoming.
- **Celebrate creativity.** The standardized testing regime values convergent over divergent thinking. Students are trained to identify one correct answer from among four or five offered. The truth of the matter is that in life there is typically more than one answer or solution to any given problem. In fact, many successful people are those who can see multiple solutions where most people only see one or two. Encourage, recognize, and celebrate divergent thinking. Ask students if they can think of another way to solve a problem or answer a question. When a student gives an answer that is not in the answer key, but that you recognize as meaningful and valid, use language like “That is an interesting answer and I see how you got there; the answer the book gives is ...” Value creativity, innovation, and an entrepreneurial approach.

Staff Survey Statements	Total in Agreement	Total in Agreement	Student Survey Statements
At school I am encouraged to be creative.	66%	60%	At school I am encouraged to be creative.
I enjoy learning new things.	98%	78%	I enjoy learning new things.
Our school is a dynamic and creative learning environment.	64%	74%	My teachers present lessons in different ways.
Meaningful professional development opportunities exist in my district.	57%	38%	My classes help me understand what is happening in my everyday life.
Staff work in a collaborative manner.	73%	62%	I enjoy working on projects with other students.
I feel comfortable asking questions in staff meetings.	64%	58%	I feel comfortable asking questions in class.
School inspires me to learn.	80%	57%	School inspires me to learn.
	N/A	67%	What I learn in school will benefit my future.
Building administration is open to new ideas.	64%	46%	Students work with adults to find solutions to school problems.
	N/A	65%	I learn new things that are interesting to me at school.

Condition 6: Spirit of Adventure

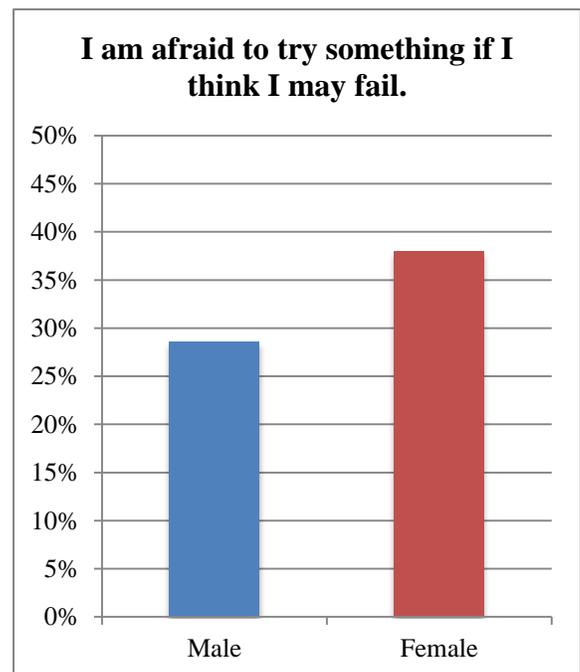
Spirit of Adventure is all about the vulnerability and healthy risk-taking that is required if a person is to truly learn and grow. Ignorance feels like a weakness, but admitting ignorance is actually necessary to learn what one does not know. Failure feels like a backward step, yet when examined, it contains a lesson that is required to be successful. Challenges sometimes feel frighteningly unattainable, yet when faced, build the strength to learn necessary skills. No risk, no reward, as the saying goes.

Failure is Not an Option

It is an expectation. When one considers the connection between risk and learning, given that the very purpose of school is to learn, it is surprising that schools have become such risk-averse places for teachers and students and that “failure” is an unspeakable word. Scripted curricula and pacing guides are designed to minimize the risk of bad teaching. Policies that create a “floor” in the grading system that prevents students from falling too far behind, while well intentioned, send the wrong message about expectations. Administrators are given far too little time to turn around so called “failing” schools or districts, creating a revolving door that systematically prevents new administrators from ever learning from previous failures. Failure is not welcome, but learning from failure is a powerful asset for teachers and educators alike.

The good news is that both teachers and students like a challenge. Ninety-four percent (94%) of teachers say “I challenge myself to do a better job every day.” And four out of five students (81%) claim “I push myself to do better academically.” Many teachers are surprised by this latter result (just as many administrators are surprised by the former). Perhaps their surprise is because teachers are tuned in to the students who are not among the 43% who say they like challenging assignments. In focus groups, we learn that students typically read “challenging” as “time consuming.” When probed, most students report enjoying and being engaged by intellectually stimulating academic work, but bristle at busywork and lengthy assignments that cut into co-curricular time.

Each person gauges his or her own capacity and judges what presents a comfort, a challenge, or a panic given those capacities. This is not to say that another person cannot challenge us beyond what we think we are capable of. In fact, teachers bear a



responsibility to challenge students in this way. At the same time, challenges must be within reach. In schools, one-third of students (33%) report that they are afraid to try something if they think they might fail. Interestingly, this is significantly higher for females. Though the percentage for teachers is much lower, still 12% are similarly paralyzed by perceived potential failure.

Et Tu, Success?

The prospect of success seems a risky business in schools, as well. Four out of ten teachers do not agree that they are excited to tell their colleagues when they do something well. What is it in the professional culture of teaching that makes teachers want to hoard success? Focus groups with teachers reveal themes of “Who does she think she is?” and schemes of competition that require teachers to keep best practices to themselves given the high stakes nature of performance reviews and standardized testing. We have even seen schools in which Teacher of the Year is not a coveted designation. Students seem no more enthused to share their success. Only 55% of students say they are excited to tell their friends if they get good grades. This, despite the fact that 86% of students say they want to do their best at school. Again we must call into question a school culture that nurtures an appropriate desire to want to do one’s best, but far less a desire to share the successful outcomes of having done one’s best. For both teachers and students, this creates a kind of “split personality” in which one actually fears the success one hopes to have.

Nets

One of the keys to healthy risk-taking is support. We hear this all the time in focus groups as teachers praise administrators who encourage experimentation and create a climate of professional safety where success and failure alike can be shared and learned from without reprisal. Students, too, appreciate teachers who turn mistakes into lessons and recognize success in ways that do not diminish other students’ sense of self-worth. When teachers model that failure is okay and a normal part of learning and growth, Spirit of Adventure thrives. The peer culture also must be supportive for both adults and students. Fear of being eye-rolled by a colleague or snickered at by fellow students is enough to keep many stuck in ignorance or confusion.

While 62% of students say that teachers help them learn from their mistakes, just 39% say students are supportive of each other. Teachers report a generally more supportive peer environment. Three-quarters of teachers agree “Staff are supportive of each other,” and a similar 70% feel “My colleagues help me learn from my mistakes.”

Practical Suggestions

- **Be daring.** The ambiguity is intentional. First, take risks yourself. Do no harm, but as much as possible push the envelope in your teaching, in your assignments, in expressing concerns to colleagues or administrators or the school board. If you are anxious about risk, give those who might be impacted by your failure—an administrator or colleagues—a heads up. Let them know what you are trying and why. Share the risks and the potential benefits. Second, dare your students. Do not settle. Why does the grade system top out with 100s and As? Whatever the expectations of those systems, expect ongoing mastery from your students. Dare C students to become A students and A students to be teachers.
- **Use “Not yet.”** The phrase “Not yet” has become popular with those seeking to instill a growth mindset. It also applies to those trying to cultivate a classroom or school environment that welcomes the learning that can come from mistakes and failure. When mistakes lead to blaming or shaming, what follows for both adults and students is hiding and covering up. This leads to a lack of information that leads to poor decision making that culminates in more mistakes. A vicious cycle. Replace blaming with responsibility that in turn leads to learning from one’s mistakes: “You have *not yet* mastered this; what are you learning?” Learning leads to dis-covering instead of covering up. Openness breeds better decision making, thus reducing mistakes in the future.

Staff Survey Statements	Total in Agreement	Total in Agreement	Student Survey Statements
I challenge myself to do a better job every day.	94%	81%	I push myself to do better academically.
Staff are supportive of each other.	75%	39%	Students are supportive of each other.
I am afraid to try something if I think I may fail.	12%	33%	I am afraid to try something if I think I may fail.
My colleagues help me learn from my mistakes.	70%	62%	Teachers help me learn from my mistakes.
I am concerned my colleagues will resent me if I am too successful.	15%	N/A	
	N/A	86%	I want to do my best at school.
I am excited to tell my colleagues when I do something well.	58%	55%	I am excited to tell my friends when I get good grades.
	N/A	43%	I like challenging assignments.
Setting yearly goals with my supervisor is important for my work.	66%	N/A	

Condition 7: Leadership & Responsibility

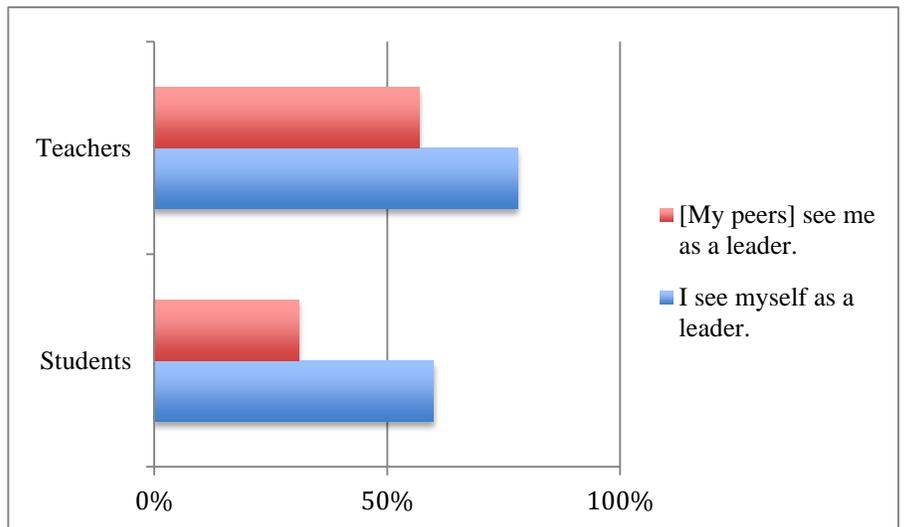
The Condition of Leadership & Responsibility is about students and teachers having the ability and opportunity to express their ideas and make decisions, and the willingness to be accountable for their actions. Our current educational era and system is obsessed with testing and accountability; factors that must be balanced, if not entirely replaced, with trust and responsibility. Teachers and students must be trusted to make decisions and be responsible for the decisions they make and the impact of those decisions on the learning environment. Being merely accountable to external forces that often have little value or meaning is neither motivating nor inspiring.

In order to achieve greater balance between accountability and responsibility, teachers and students must be willing to take action as leaders in the classroom, school, and community. Too often the term “leader” is reserved for those with official titles such as captain of the football team, president of student council, or department chair. The Condition of Leadership & Responsibility invites, and expects, *all* members of the school community to express their ideas, share in decision making, and participate in actions that will benefit the school as a whole.

Do You See What I See?

Leadership is so much more than being “the person in charge.” True leadership includes a wide variety of skills such as developing vision, listening and learning from what is shared, working effectively with a team, and sharing responsibility by taking action with others. Leadership in schools can often be confused with extroversion or being vocal. Often those who speak up or express themselves most clearly are seen as “leaders.” While being an effective communicator is an important leadership skill to develop, history is filled with effective leaders who led by quiet example and not just rhetoric.

A gap exists for both teachers and students between individuals that report seeing themselves as a leader (60% of students and 78% of teachers) and their belief that colleagues and other students see them as a leader (31% of students and 57% of teachers). One possible explanation for the teacher gap is that only 56% of teachers believe building administration is willing to learn from them. Students also often



tell us that they do not believe teachers are willing to learn from them. It may be difficult for one to imagine others viewing them as a leader if there is not a belief that those with official titles think they have anything of value to share. In student focus groups, we often hear students say, “I have great ideas but no one will listen to me.” We have heard students articulate better schedules, better lunch flow lines, and better grading policies than those currently in place. The good news in these statistics and themes is that a significant percentage of teachers and students already see themselves as leaders; something to be built upon as a school seeks to grow leadership qualities in *all* members of the school community.

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions

Schools that effectively foster the Condition of Leadership & Responsibility place a great deal of trust in the individuals within the system. Teaching, modeling, and supporting good decision making for teachers and students is an important part of the learning experience. This includes recognizing individuals for decisions that result in success, and supporting teachers and students when poor decisions are made, or a decision deemed good at the time does not result in the desired outcome.

Shared decision making is a concept that has been discussed at length in the last few years, but which many are still struggling to truly implement. Survey results indicate that students and teachers agree there is much room for growth in this area of educational partnership. Less than half (44% of students and 48% of teachers) state they have a voice in decision making at their school. In fact, only 43% of students and 73% of teachers report even knowing the goals their school is working on this year. It is near impossible to be a part of meaningful decision making if one is not even aware of current school goals.

An alarming gap also exists between teacher and student beliefs around decision making in the classroom. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of teachers report encouraging students to make decisions, yet only 60% of students believe teachers encourage them to make decisions. Further, 82% of teachers say they actively seek out student opinions and ideas, but far fewer students (47%) report that teachers are willing to learn from them. Interestingly, nearly six out of ten of students (58%) consider themselves to be good decision makers. In focus groups, students tell us they want increased opportunities to make decisions at school and in life, but they are also in need of support as they grow in the areas of leadership and responsibility.

Practical Suggestions

- **Explicitly teach leadership skills.** Developing leadership skills should be a regular part of teacher professional development and the learning environment that students experience throughout the school. Leadership is not something that should just be cultivated in those that appear to have a natural gift or interest in leading, but for every member of the school community. Administration should model effective leadership for teachers, share lessons learned and promising leadership practices, and support teachers in spreading their own wings to lead in a variety of ways. Teachers should provide the same modeling, sharing, and support for their students in developing and exercising leadership skills. Leaders rarely develop by accident, but rather as a result of investment and help from others. *Every* member of the school community is deserving of an opportunity to be encouraged and supported in becoming a leader.
- **Grow decision makers.** Just as leadership skills must be explicitly developed, so must the ability to be an effective decision maker. A good starting point is for administration and teachers to be transparent about their own decision making practices. This will build trust and demonstrate to colleagues and students what effective decision making looks like in practice. Model how to celebrate and replicate positive results, and how to accept consequences, adjust, and move forward when desired outcomes are not met as a result of particular decisions. Most importantly, empower teachers and students with *real* opportunities to make decisions that impact the school and learning environment.

Staff Survey Statements	Total in Agreement	Total in Agreement	Student Survey Statements
I see myself as a leader.	78%	60%	I see myself as a leader.
My colleagues see me as a leader.	57%	31%	Other students see me as a leader.
I have a voice in decision making at school.	48%	44%	Students have a voice in decision making at school.
I know the goals my school is working on this year.	73%	43%	I know the goals my school is working on this year.
I encourage students to make decisions.	97%	60%	Teachers encourage students to make decisions.
I actively seek out student opinions and ideas.	82%	47%	Teachers are willing to learn from students.
	N/A	58%	I am a good decision maker.
Building administration is willing to learn from staff.	56%	N/A	

Condition 8: Confidence to Take Action

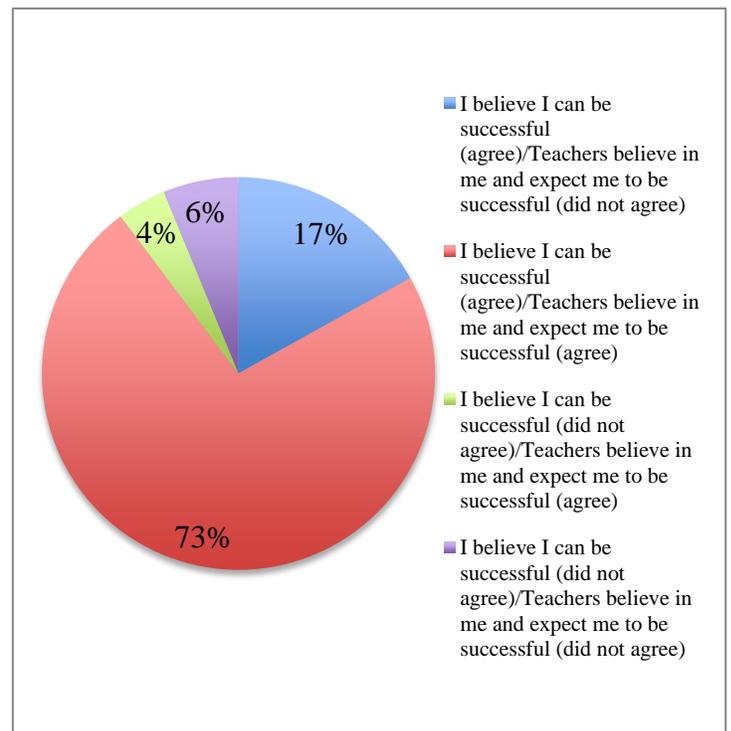
The eighth and culminating Condition, Confidence to Take Action, is observed when teachers and students believe in themselves and take action to achieve their goals. Individuals that display confidence to take action behave with intention, are highly committed to their pursuits, and have the ability to think beyond themselves. They have a positive outlook on the future and are intrinsically motivated to make a difference.

While individuals must ultimately take action on their own accord, this Condition is greatly influenced by the expectations and support of others. Administrators must have high expectations for every teacher, and also provide personalized support to those they lead. The professional peer environment also should be one of high expectation and support. Likewise, teachers must have high expectations for every student and provide personalized support to those they teach. Schools can build Confidence to Take Action by believing that all students and teachers can be successful, encouraging independent thinking, and providing support as individuals take action within the classroom, school, and community.

Self Efficacy

Teachers and students must have a strong belief in themselves, their ability to be successful, and their capacity to make a difference in the world around them. This belief in one's self is cultivated through a balance of high expectation and support appropriately matched with the skill and ability of each individual. Students, as well as adults, will live up to or down to the expectations set for them, but we also must be cautious not to set expectations so high that they are unattainable. Confidence to Take Action appears as the final Condition because, in many ways, the strong relationships built in the effort to nurture Self-Worth and the commitments engendered by Engagement are prerequisites. Thus, teacher support plays a critical role in students developing a strong belief in self.

Yet 88% of students affirm belief in themselves, while only 73% of students report their teachers believe in them and expect them to be successful, a set of statistics we find unacceptable. Further analyses of these two indicators reveal that 17% of students have a



higher expectation of their own success than they believe their teachers have of their success. Six percent (6%) of students neither believe in their success nor believe their teachers expect their success. And 4% of students affirm that teachers believe in them even though they do not believe in themselves. One hundred percent of students deserve to have a teacher that believes in them, and makes sure they *know* it. Teachers deserve the same belief from their administrators.

While there is always room for improvement, results in the area of Confidence to Take Action are among the highest on the Quaglia School Voice Surveys. Ninety-six percent (96%) of teachers and nearly nine out of ten students (88%) believe they can be successful. While these numbers are high, it is still of concern that one in every ten students does not believe he can be successful. Teachers have a similarly high belief that they can make a difference in the world (93%); however, students are less sure about their ability to make a difference (66%). This latter result is an indication that there are many students who do not think their own expected success will make a difference in the world.

Dreaming and Doing

We define aspirations as the ability to dream and set goals for the future while being inspired in the present to reach those dreams. Teachers and students should be excited about their future and dream big about all they can and will accomplish. They must also be skilled at setting short-term and long-term goals, taking action, and measuring their progress along the way.

When thinking about the future, 76% of students report they are excited about what lies ahead, and 70% of teachers state they are excited about their future careers in education. Despite the relative size of these numbers compared to other results, we are highly concerned for the two in ten students and three in ten teachers who are *not* excited about the future. While there may be many factors contributing to this malaise, we must ask what it is about the traditional structures of school that contribute to a loss of enthusiasm for one's future prospects. All members of the school community need opportunities from time to time to free their mind from the endless busyness and simply dream about the future.

It is equally important to then determine what one will do to make those dreams come true. Teachers and students should be part of goal setting at the school level, and also individually. Individuals must not only focus on their own personal dreams and goals, but also connect their efforts to the world around them. Ninety-five percent (95%) of teachers think it is important to set high goals and that they work hard to reach those goals. Students report lower efforts related to goals, as 78% think it is important to set high

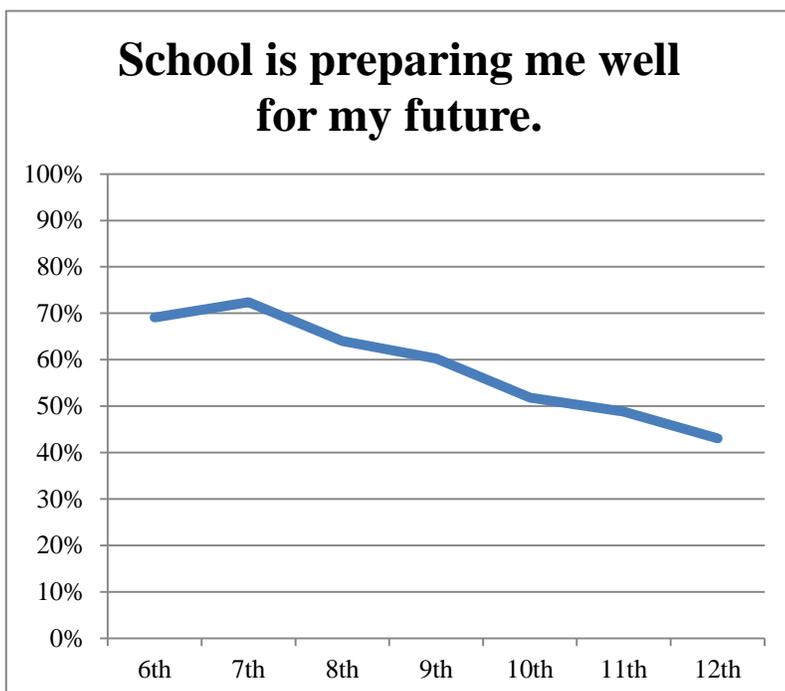
goals and 80% state they work hard to reach their goals. Without a strong foundation in goal setting, achieving one's fullest potential is difficult.

Aspire High

When teachers and students dream big and are willing to take action, they are well on their way to reaching their aspirations. Teachers and students should aspire high in thinking about the kind of person they will become, their future education, and the impact they will have on their school, community, and world beyond. Seventy-three percent (73%) of students report knowing the kind of person they want to become, and 82% believe that going to college is important for their future. The same percentage of teachers (82%) believes that continuing their education is important for their future. Teachers and leaders should support and guide those that do not yet see their own potential, or recognize the role that continued learning can have on their future.

There is also significant room for growth in better connecting the classroom learning experience with the real world students experience and will encounter in their future. Only 58% of students believe that school is preparing them well for the future. Alarming, this steadily declines from 6th grade to 12th grade with nearly six out ten (57%) high school seniors unable to agree that school is preparing them well for the future they are about to face. Perhaps this can be accounted for by the lack of participation students feel in actually being involved in shaping what school could be for them. Fewer than half (43%) of students surveyed report having opportunities to develop programs that improve the whole school. Similarly, teachers frequently tell us that they are left out of key discussions and decisions about school improvement efforts. Rather, they are directed to make changes they don't understand, don't agree with, and that often seem disconnected from actual classroom experience. The good news is that we also

consistently hear individuals communicate a strong desire to be a part of improving their school. Teachers and students alike are willing to be a part of positive change if official school leaders are willing to give them an opportunity. If we want teachers and students to aspire high—to dream big and take action—we must provide ample venues for meaningful involvement,



develop school-wide confidence to take action, and provide support for each individual to achieve her aspirations.

As stated in the beginning of this report, the goal of school is to foster the conditions necessary to help each and every teacher and student reach their full potential. This culminates with individuals having the confidence to take action and make their dreams become reality.

Practical Suggestions

- **Believe.** Truly believe that all, and we mean *all*, students and teachers can be successful. Identify members of the school community that don't yet believe in their own potential, and support them in developing self efficacy and finding success in and beyond the school. Actively let students and colleagues know that you believe in them and are willing to support their efforts to achieve their aspirations.
- **Model and facilitate Dreaming and Doing.** Be an Aspirations role model by sharing your dreams and the actions you are taking to achieve your goals with colleagues and students. Share successes and challenges you have experienced on your journey and lessons learned from your efforts to dream and do. Provide time within the school schedule for teachers and students to intentionally focus on both dreaming about the future and setting goals in the present. Stretch individuals to aspire high, and provide support as teachers and students take action to achieve their fullest potential.

Staff Survey Statements	Total in Agreement	Total in Agreement	Student Survey Statements
I believe I can be successful.	96%	88%	I believe I can be successful.
I believe I can make a difference in this world.	93%	66%	I believe I can make a difference in this world.
I work hard to reach my goals.	96%	80%	I work hard to reach my goals.
I am excited about my future career in education.	70%	76%	I am excited about my future.
Continuing my education is important for my future.	82%	82%	Going to college is important for my future.
I think it is important to set high goals.	96%	78%	I think it is important to set high goals.
	N/A	73%	Teachers believe in me and expect me to be successful.
	N/A	73%	I know the kind of person I want to become.
	N/A	58%	School is preparing me well for my future.
	N/A	43%	Students develop programs that improve the whole school.

Communication

Underpinning the ability of a school to successfully embrace and embed the 8 Conditions is the professional staff's ability to communicate effectively with one another and with their students and their students' families. Relationships between leaders, teachers, students, and families are dependent on cultivating and maintaining trust through open, honest, and supportive communication. One should not assume that because teachers spend all day talking to students that they are automatically excellent communicators with adults as well. A different skill set is needed to effectively communicate with leaders, colleagues, and parents. Unfortunately, we frequently hear from educators about their struggles to maintain open communication channels, meaningfully collaborate, and positively problem-solve challenging situations with colleagues and leaders in their schools. We believe that improving communication between adults in schools will inherently lead to stronger implementation of the 8 Conditions, a more positive learning experience for all members of the school community, and increased academic motivation for students.

Communication 101

While some might be naturally comfortable communicating with people of all ages, others need support on how to communicate with peers, supervisors, and the families of those they teach and lead. Alarming, less than half (47%) of teachers report that effective communication occurs in their school. Teachers and leaders are in desperate need of pre-service and in-service training that specifically addresses the intricacies of communication that will allow them to be bold, brave, and professional in expressing their honest opinions and concerns. Additionally, communication must allow for balanced conversations that value all voices in the school community, celebrate and build upon current successes, and address problems through a solution-oriented mindset. This can only occur when a safe and trusting environment exists in the building.

Interestingly, teachers report being more comfortable communicating with parents than their colleagues. In comparison with the percentage of teachers who report they communicate effectively in their building, a much higher 81% of teachers state they communicate effectively with parents. While this is relatively higher than the results for internal communication, it means that one in every five teachers is also in need of additional support to improve upon their outward communication skills with parents and families.

Lead Me, but Learn and Listen, Too

Administrators clearly serve a critical role in creating a school environment where the 8 Conditions can thrive. The way in which administration communicates has a significant

impact on their ability to lead, and on the willingness of others to follow. It is not enough for principals and other administrators to simply “manage” a school, they must have a consistent presence throughout the building, regularly engaging and interacting with teachers and students.

Fifty-three percent (53%) of teachers believe that building administration knows their professional goals, something that may be improved if visibility and accessibility were to increase. Currently, 74% of teachers report that building administration is visible in their school, and 75% believe administrators are accessible to them. Leaders must not only be visible and accessible to those in the school community, they must also model effective communication and engage with teachers and students in a way that values the voices of those they lead.

The lowest percentage in this area on the Quaglia Teacher Voice Survey indicates that only 42% of teachers believe central office understands the unique culture of their school. The fact that more than half of teachers surveyed perceive a significant disconnect between their schools and central office indicates there is room for increased communication and interaction. Teachers frequently say in focus groups that administrators who have been away from the classroom for five years or more no longer adequately understand the challenges and, therefore, the job of teaching. The result is distrust between administrators and staff. This can be reversed by encouraging positive connections between central office and schools, to ensure each respects the other as a professional capable of doing the job they were hired to do. This then impacts the culture of the district as a whole, the way decisions and policies are made, and the ability of the school system to help all members reach their fullest potential.

In conclusion, we circle back to the School Voice Model at the heart of this work. We must remember to first listen with an authentic intent to learn from the voices of others, and then lead by taking action with others to cultivate self-worth, increase engagement, and achieve with purpose as a school community.

Practical Suggestions

- **Embrace a “we” mindset.** It can be easy to adopt an “us” vs. “them” mindset between teachers and administration (and students as well). This type of thinking does not promote positive school culture and is ultimately harmful to the learning experience provided to students. When fragmented, a school is not able to reach its full potential. There is no “them.” There are only all of us on the same team, with the same mission, sharing a common vision, albeit playing different roles. Schools must think and act like one team, always keeping what is good for the entire school community as the focus.

- **Engage in honest dialogue and partnership.** All members of the school community must be willing to engage in honest dialogue in an environment of collegial respect and trust. Administrators must not only have an “open door” policy for people to come *in*, but leaders must also go *out* that open door in order to be visible and active in the daily happenings of the school. When concerns arise, teachers must be willing to professionally address issues directly with colleagues and administration, rather than grumble behind closed doors with a few confidants. A spirit of partnership and collective concern for the continual improvement of the school community must guide dialogue and resulting action.

Staff Survey Statements	Total in Agreement
Central office understands the unique culture of our school.	42%
We communicate effectively in our building.	47%
Building administration is visible in our school.	74%
Building administration knows my professional goals.	53%
Building administration is accessible to me.	75%
I communicate effectively with parents.	81%

Student Voice Odds Analyses

In order to better understand the significance and practical implications of the Quaglia School Voice Surveys, the Quaglia Institute examines the data using a logistic regression analysis. Logistic regression (sometimes referred to as “odds analysis”) is a statistical tool used for predicting the outcome of a dependent variable, based on one or more predictor (independent) variables. Logistic regression measures the strength of the relationship between predictor variables and a single outcome variable. In these logistic regressions, we control for gender, grade, and school. Thus, the results represent a general understanding of the impact of the predictor variables on the outcome variables. For the purposes of this analysis, survey statements were grouped into six variables determined by statistical tests of scale reliability² and aligned to the Aspirations Framework. These variables are Self-Worth, Engagement, Purpose, Teacher Support, Student Voice, and Academic Motivation. Two analyses were conducted: in the first, Academic Motivation was used as the outcome variable and all other variables were used as predictor variables. In the second analysis, Voice was used as a predictor variable with Self-Worth, Engagement, and Purpose used as outcome variables.

The purpose of conducting these odds analyses is to determine to what degree each predictor variable influences the outcome variable—that is, which of these predictor variables is most strongly related to students’ perceptions of their own academic motivation, in the case of the first analysis; and to what extent student voice impacts students’ sense of Self-Worth, Engagement, and Purpose, in the second.

Non Academic Means to Academic Ends

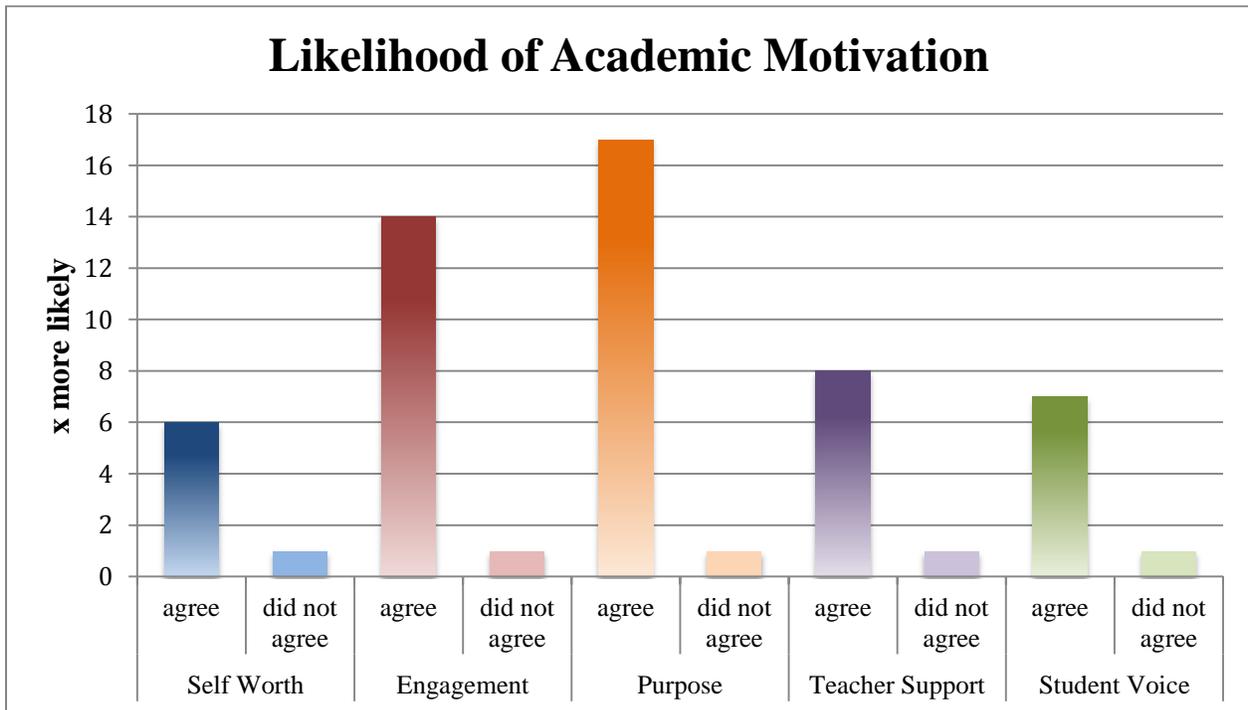
One serious limitation in the present system is the belief that the only means to academic ends are themselves academic. Thus, schools cancel recess to have students do more reading (ignoring research that suggests movement and play actually improve academic outcomes). They shorten or eliminate specials (i.e., physical education, art, music, etc.) in order to make more time for math. They implement writing across the curriculum to improve writing.

There are, in fact, nonacademic means to academic ends. A love of reading brings with it an increase in reading volume and subsequently, especially under the direction of a teacher, increased reading skill. Students who perceive the everyday applicability of math become more engaged in math and so develop better math skills. Students who find a purpose in writing beyond assessments write more frequently and with greater enthusiasm.

² Reliability tests allow for creation of scale variables based on the internal consistency of the items therein. That is, each predictor variable is made up of a number of survey statements found to be strongly inter-correlated.

The first odds analysis yielded the following results:

- Students who agree with statements related to Self-Worth are 6x more likely to say they are academically motivated than students who do not agree with the Self-Worth statements.
- Students who agree with statements related to Engagement are 14x more likely to say they are academically motivated than students who do not agree with the Engagement statements.
- Students who agree with statements related to Purpose are 17x more likely to say they are academically motivated than students who do not agree with the Purpose statements.
- Students who agree with statements related to Teacher Support are 8x more likely to say they are academically motivated than students who do not agree with the Teacher Support statements.
- Students who agree with statements related to Student Voice surveys are 7x more likely to say they are academically motivated than students who do not agree with the Student Voice statements.



In the second analysis, students who affirmed that they have a voice in school were:

- 4x more likely to experience Self-Worth in school
- 8x more likely to experience Engagement in school
- 9x more likely to experience a sense of Purpose in school

than students who did not affirm having a voice.

Clearly, for educators wishing to improve the academic motivation of their students as a means to improve their academic performance, the 3 Guiding Principles of the Aspirations Framework, along with Teacher Support and Student Voice, can have an enormous impact. By ensuring the Self-Worth, Engagement, and Purpose of every student, and by providing them with supportive teachers and a voice in decision making, schools can move the needle on their students' desires to get good grades, to want to do their best at school, and to put forth their best effort every day.

Teacher Voice Odds Analyses

There are many possibilities for odds analyses given the statements on the Teacher Voice survey. For the purposes of this report, the primary interest is in the relationship between statements that at face value are connected to Teacher Voice, Teacher Aspirations (i.e., goal setting and the effort to achieve those goals), and Teacher Support of Student Voice. The following statements were utilized for this analysis:

Teacher Voice

- I feel valued for my unique skills and talents.
- I am a valued member of my school community.
- I feel confident voicing my honest opinions and concerns.
- At school I am encouraged to be creative.
- Building administration is open to new ideas.
- I feel comfortable asking questions in staff meetings.
- I see myself as a leader.
- My colleagues see me as a leader.
- I have a voice in decision making at school.
- Building administration is willing to learn from staff.

Teacher Aspirations

- I work hard to reach my goals.
- I believe I can make a difference in this world.
- I know the goals my school is working on this year.
- I am excited about my future career in education.
- Setting yearly goals with my supervisor is important for my work.

Teacher Support of Student Voice

- I actively seek out student opinions and ideas.
- I encourage students to make decisions.

Using the individual statements associated with Teacher Voice as the predictor variables and the individual statements associated with Teacher Aspirations and Teacher Support of Student Voice as the outcome variables (controlling for school and all demographic indicators), the following results emerged:

Are X times more likely to agree that...

<i>Teachers who agree that...</i>	I work hard to reach my goals.	I believe I can make a difference in this world.	I know the goals my school is working on this year.	I am excited about my future career in education.	Setting yearly goals with my supervisor is important for my work.
I feel valued for my unique skills and talents.	2x	3x	3x	4x	3x
I am a valued member of my school community.	3x	5x	3x	4x	2x
I feel confident voicing my honest opinions and concerns.	2x	4x	3x	4x	3x
At school I am encouraged to be creative.	2x	3x	3x	5x	3x
Building administration is open to new ideas.	2x	3x	4x	3x	3x
I feel comfortable asking questions in staff meetings.	2x	3x	3x	3x	2x
I see myself as a leader.	3x	5x	2x	2x	2x
My colleagues see me as a leader.	3x	5x	2x	2x	2x
I have a voice in decision making at school.	2x	4x	4x	4x	3x
Building administration is willing to learn from staff.	3x	3x	4x	3x	3x

We learned from the impact analyses that there are indeed variables that yield positive impacts on teacher beliefs and behaviors. As evidenced by the table above, when teachers feel valued, are confident in expressing their honest opinions, and/or are given a voice in decision making, they are two to five times more likely to believe they can make a difference in the world, express excitement about their future career in education, value setting goals, and work hard to achieve those goals. Encouraging creativity also has a significant impact (five times greater) on one’s excitement about their future as a teacher.

A number of factors related to leadership also have an impact on teacher survey outcomes. Self perceptions of the ability to lead and how leadership skills are viewed by others have an impact on teachers, particularly in their belief that they can make a difference in the world. And when building administration is open to new ideas and/or willing to learn from staff, teachers are two to four times more likely to value setting goals, to work hard to reach their goals, and to have positive feelings about their ability to make a difference as a teacher.

Administrative Practice

Within the Quaglia School Voice Teacher Survey, beliefs about building administration have the greatest impact upon self-perceived teacher value in the school community. When building administration is visible, accessible, knows the professional goals of staff,

is open to new ideas, and is willing to learn from staff, teachers believe they are more valued and express greater confidence in voicing their honest opinions and concerns. These types of building administration practices also result in teachers reporting greater levels of comfort asking questions in staff meetings and increased encouragement to be creative in the learning environment.

Most significantly, when building administration is open to new ideas, teachers are 14 times more likely to report they have a voice in decision making within the school community. A similar impact (12 times) results from building administration being viewed as willing to learn from staff. In focus groups, teachers frequently express appreciation for administrators who have a style of leadership that values the expertise of those they lead. Adversely, teachers struggle with leaders perceived as “having all the answers” or leading with a “my way or the highway” mentality. Every teacher possesses unique skills, talent and knowledge that can greatly benefit the school community. Administrators have an incredible opportunity to demonstrate value for the teachers they lead through openness to new ideas and a willingness to learn from and with staff.

Are X times more likely to agree that...

<i>Teachers who agree that...</i>	I feel valued for my unique skills and talents.	I am a valued member of my school community.	I feel confident voicing my honest opinions and concerns.	At school I am encouraged to be creative.	I feel comfortable asking questions in staff meetings.	I have a voice in decision making at school.
Building administration makes and effort to get to know me.	7x	7x	6x	6x	5x	8x
Building administration is visible in my school.	4x	3x	4x	4x	4x	5x
Building administration knows my professional goals.	4x	5x	4x	4x	3x	5x
Building administration is accessible to me.	7x	6x	6x	5x	6x	9x
Building administration is open to new ideas.	8x	6x	7x	7x	6x	14x
Building administration is willing to learn from staff.	8x	7x	7x	7x	6x	12x

Grades 3-5 Student Voice

The Quaglia School Voice Survey for students in grades 3-5 is our earliest opportunity to experience the voice of students in this form. As outlined below, younger learners from age three to grade two respond well in focus groups, but they do not survey well. In field tests, we have found that when taking a survey, younger students have concerns about hurting their teacher's feelings. Additionally, they are sometimes more interested in creating patterns in the answers or in connecting the dots that are the bubble responses. Even so, providing students with opportunities to use their voice at a young age is critical to their developing an ability to express their voice effectively later. We have met far too many middle and high school students who seemed already co-opted by systems that never provided opportunities for them to consider themselves decision-makers in school. Choices about what to learn and how to learn, determining classroom rules and what should happen if someone doesn't follow them, and participating in school related decisions about the cafeteria, hallway flow, recess, and the like are all essential for young students to develop Self-Worth, Engagement, and Purpose.

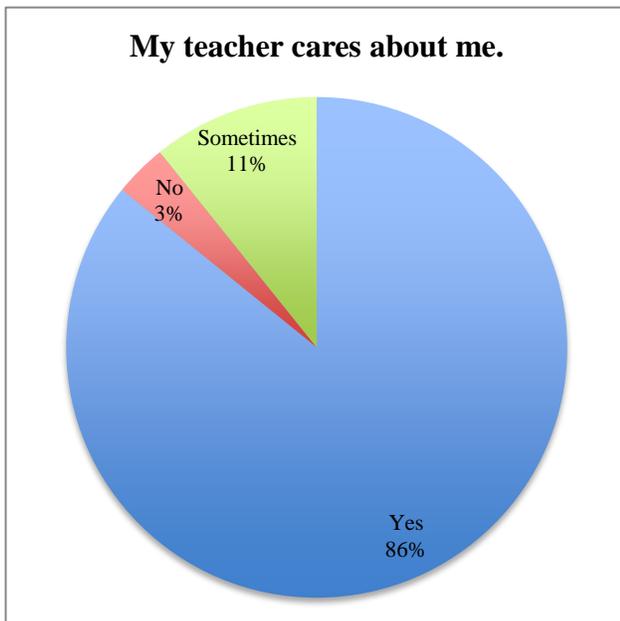
Although QISA has collected data for many years on students in grades 3-5, this report is the first aggregate analysis conducted for national publication. There were 12,157 respondents in grades 3-5. Fifty-percent were male and 50% were female. The respondents were evenly distributed across the three grades. Nine states administered surveys: California, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, and South Carolina. The three point Likert scale in the grades 3-5 survey includes: "Yes," "No," and "Sometimes." These analyses are based on the percentages of students who answered "Yes." While "Sometimes" provides a certain indication of a positive experience by a student who answered that way, it is not the full affirmation of the ideals the 8 Conditions call for. We are not so naive as to think every child can have a positive experience of school every day, but we do strive toward that ideal.

Self-Worth

Students feel generally positive about their experiences of Belonging, Heroes, and Sense of Accomplishment at these grade levels. Nearly three-quarters of students (73%) say they like their school. While we want to find out why school is not working for the other one-fourth of students, this represents a solid foundation of those who do like school on which to build. A similar number of students (76%) affirm that the principal knows their name. Although challenging in larger schools, we cannot overestimate the importance of knowing and using student names. One elementary student told us in a focus group that she liked her present school much better than her previous school (she had transferred). When we asked her why, she said "Because the principal here knows my name. I was in

my old school for four years and the principal never knew my name.” An elementary school principal’s relationship with the students he or she serves may be one to two hundred or more. However, from the student’s point of view, the relationship is one to one³. We need to see relationships through the eyes of students and act accordingly.

The majority of students also feel cared for and respected by their teachers. Eighty-seven percent (87%) agree that “My teacher cares about me” and eight out of ten (81%) agree that “Teachers respect students.” Seven out of ten students also affirm that their teachers recognize them when they are kind and helpful (69%) and when they put forth their best effort (72%). Regarding peer relationships, 82% of students report that they have friends that they can be with at lunch. Again, we want to work toward a day when 100% of students believe their teachers care about and respect them and have friends they can interact with.



While four out of five students report having friends and positive interactions with teachers, only 65% of students are able to respond “Yes” to “Other students like me,” and only half (51%) feel important in their classrooms. These results show there is room for improvement in the peer culture, highlighted by the fact that 62% of students believe bullying is a problem in their school. Focus groups with students in grades 3-5 sometimes indicate a concern about bullying because adults have spent so much time focusing on the topic. At times, students also express a

lack of understanding of bullying as distinct from other antisocial behaviors. While this does not minimize the need to eliminate bullying from all schools, it points out the critical importance of following up the survey with focus groups.

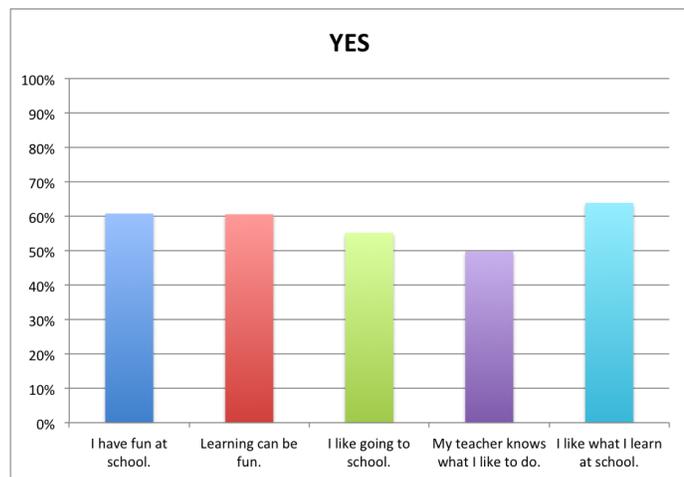
Younger students report working hard at school. Only 8% say they give up when school work gets difficult. And 82% and 93%, respectively, affirm that they give their best effort and want good grades. This positive behavior is not limited to academics, as seven out of ten students (70%) selected “Yes” when asked “I help other students at my school.” This positive academic and social behavior is to be commended. School should continue to pour the foundation for experiences in which effort and perseverance are known by students to be determining factors in successful outcomes of all kinds—academic,

³ We are grateful to Steve York, a long time Montana educator, for this insight.

personal, and social. It is never too early to disabuse students of the notion that somehow success in school is about being “smart” or “good”—fixed characteristics. Rather, through hard work, diligence, and kindness all students can achieve positive results.

Engagement

It is encouraging to note that four out of every five third through fifth graders affirm that the things they learn at school are important to them (80%) and that they like learning new things in their classes (79%). Despite this enthusiasm, students do not report being engaged at the same levels. This may be the beginning of student disillusionment with school previously noted. While only 12% of students say “Yes,” school is boring, 36% say it is “Sometimes” boring. Sixty-one percent (61%) of students agree that they have fun at school, but only 52% believe teachers have fun. And just over half (55%) unequivocally report that they like going to school, with 1 in 10 (10%) weighing in with “No” on that statement. We wonder if the roots of these issues are related to the fact that only half of students (50%) agree that “My teacher knows what I like to do.” Absent an experience of knowing students’ interests, teachers may be challenged to personalize learning in a way that is engaging for all students. We wonder if the curriculum materials and pacing guides many teachers are required to use take account of what individual students “like to do.”



Of equal concern are responses related to the way students interact in the learning environment. Just 53% of students say they feel comfortable asking questions in class, and the same number (53%) report they only raise their hand if they are sure of the answer, despite the fact that 85% of students affirm that teachers help them learn from their mistakes. Educators recognize that uncovering gaps in learning, especially in younger students, is critical to their academic success. As much as possible, all fear of revealing what one does not yet know must be removed from the learning environment. The goal of any given classroom interaction must be to learn, not to be “right” or to win the teacher’s approval.

Purpose

Students in early elementary grades know the importance of setting goals—including the goal of going to college—as well as working hard in school. Seventy-three percent (73%)

affirm that they know how to set goals for themselves. And even at this young age, nearly 9 out of 10 students (88%) say they want to go to college. These students also seem willing to put their effort where their dreams are: 83% say “Yes” to “I work hard in school.”

As we will see in the study on Early Learners (covered later in this report), educators need to do a better job of teaching young students that they are leaders. The messaging early on needs to be that every student is a leader, every student is capable of being a good decision-maker, and leadership is not simply a function of a particular role or job description. Just 45% of students in grades 3-5 affirm that they see themselves as a leader. Other indicators in the area of Leadership & Responsibility are similarly low:

- 29% Other students listen to my ideas.
- 44% I am a good decision maker.
- 40% Teachers learn from students.
- 43% Students help make classroom rules.

These statements themselves point a way toward solutions. Schools should encourage a classroom atmosphere where teachers are clearly willing to learn from their students and expect students to learn from and influence one another. Teachers should invite students to help develop classroom rules and the consequences for not adhering to those rules. Given that 94% of students already affirm the importance of following rules, this will create even more ownership over the way the classroom functions, with the added benefit of students seeing themselves as decision makers and leaders.

It comes as no surprise that students in grades 3-5 generally feel positively about their school experience. However, there is much room for improving upon practices that will increase the self-worth of students, increase their engagement in learning, and especially develop their sense of purpose as leaders and decision makers in their own lives.

Early Learner Voice

As increased attention and funding are placed on early childhood education, a consideration of not only the cognitive development of our youngest students, but also the development of their experiences with and understanding of having a voice is paramount. Student voice impacts the quality and meaningfulness of learning experiences; yet student voice for learners from age 3 to grade 2 in research and practice is uncharted territory. As educators and researchers continue to recognize the long-term impact of early childhood education and skill development, there remains a need to listen to the insights and experiences of those beginning their formal educational journeys.

While there is much research into and support for student voice in upper elementary through high school and postsecondary education, students in preschool through grade 2 are often thought too young to either have a voice or to understand voice as a concept that includes self-efficacy, decision making, and influence on their experiences. The Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) partnered during the fall of 2015 to better understand the teaching and learning needs of students age 3 to grade 2 related to student voice. To accomplish this goal, focus groups were held with 170 students from seven different schools. The schools represented varied student populations from public, private, charter, urban, and suburban settings including schools with close to 100% free and reduced lunch rates. Locations included Ohio, Idaho, New York, New Hampshire, Maine, and Oklahoma. In addition, 40 teachers, seven administrators, and 85 parents responded to survey questions related to student voice.

During focus group sessions, students were eager to share their ideas and opinions on a range of topics. Several older students indicated the focus groups were the first time they had an opportunity to express their ideas unrelated to a teacher's question. In general, the preliminary study found:

- Students age 3 to grade 2 expressed similar thoughts and experiences with voice and leadership: voice relates to answering questions and leadership connects to following rules.
- The overriding theme for almost all students was their passion and desire to ask questions. Students craved opportunities to ask for clarifications, understandings, and examples. *"I love asking questions and just want to ask more."*
- Students in K through 2nd grade expressed an interest in being heard and having others listen to their ideas, but they weren't sure why this mattered for learning.
- The project initially included 3rd graders. However, 3rd graders' experiences, understanding, and judgments of voice (both positive and negative) were distinct

from younger learners. This is consistent with what is known about cognitive development of children. In particular, 3rd graders expressed the importance of being heard. Their examples of voice indicated that when they have a voice, they are more engaged in school. *“I think it’s fun to share my ideas and opinions in class.”*

Relationships Matter

One sentiment was abundantly clear—young learners love their teachers. While students shared a desire to learn about everything, their reasons for going to school were primarily related to their personal encounters with teachers. Students care what teachers think of them, ponder what teachers deem right and wrong behavior, and crave positive acknowledgement from their teachers.

Following the Rules

Students from age 3 through grade 2 defined leadership and voice as doing what others tell you to do. Students shared that a leader follows the rules, does her work, and raises her hand. Voice is understood to mean answering when you are called upon. Likewise, student leaders are those who follow rules, raise hands, and are predominantly quiet. There was little connection to student leaders making decisions or sharing opinions. Younger learners do not understand the word “opinion.” Students in grade 2 view leadership more as a position than an action. They believe peers define leaders and leaders are given more voice opportunities than non-leaders.

Balancing Freedom and Restraint

Overall, teachers and principals supported fostering the concept of student voice for younger learners. However, educators struggled with the balance between voice and self-regulation. Voice and decision making were primarily viewed outside of academic contexts. Examples of voice from teachers included: *“Small experiences and activities such as what color crayon to choose or what game to play.”* The preliminary study found that this challenge to allow more choice within a content area or more time and freedom for students to express their thoughts is in part influenced by new standards for early education, an increasing push for testing and measurable academic outcomes at earlier ages, and the rise of policies that lead to reduced recess and play time.

Despite uncertainty about how to support voice and maintain required curriculum pacing, teachers articulated a desire for giving students voice and decision making opportunities. Small group learning activities (center time) were seen as a positive opportunity for choice and voice. Students and teachers overwhelmingly referred to center time as a learning experience that provides flexibility and decision making. Students were able to

articulate the types of decisions they must make during center time. The positive experience of this specific pedagogical strategy was, however, limited. Teachers expressed a desire for more resources, ideas, and support related to voice and decision making.

Love of Learning

Parents' responses overwhelmingly indicated a basic desire that their children love learning in the early grades. A successful learning experience from a parental point of view is one where students come home enthusiastic and excited to share what happened at school. *"I just want my child to love learning."* We need to be cautious that in our obsession with ensuring students obtain reading and math skills as early as possible, we are not unintentionally diminishing their growing love of these subjects. When recess is eliminated to fit in more reading, or when writing is used as a punishment (we have seen both of these strategies used), we are thereby setting up optimal conditions for students to lose the love of learning.

Conclusions

As educators and policymakers strive to create dynamic and meaningful learning experiences for young learners, the role of student voice and decision making in shaping their experiences is a vital concern. Schools must consider what specific voice and decision making skills students need to learn and experience from age 3 to grade 2 in order to set the foundation for confident, expressive, and meaningful learning through graduation. These considerations are as critical as, and are in fact related to, positive experiences with core subjects such as reading and mathematics.

This study confirms QISA's current belief that grade 3 is the optimal time for student voice to be adequately understood by young learners such that their thoughts can be measured on surveys. By grade 3 students have sufficient experiences with voice, leadership, and decision making, whereas the early learners in grade 2 and below have a rudimentary understanding and fewer opportunities related to voice. Even so, young learners want to be heard. They view asking questions as the primary venue for being heard. Given the reality of time and numbers of students in a classroom, young learners should be given opportunities beyond asking questions to express their ideas, opinions, and concerns. These efforts, however, must be embedded within everything that teachers and students already do. For example, teaching voice vocabulary can be purposefully woven into current vocabulary development. Instead of providing students with two choices for a classroom activity, expand to three or four choices. Developing student voice is not an add-on; it is an integral part of the daily learning environment.

iKnow My Class

The iKnow My Class Survey was designed as a formative assessment tool for teachers, giving voice to students' perceptions of various aspects of their individual classes and themselves. During the 2015-2016 school year, 120 teachers administered the grades 6-12 iKnow My Class Survey in a total of 319 classes. There were a total of 368 administrations (several classes took the survey more than once). Of these, the 50 statement version was administered 207 times, and the shorter 20 statement version was administered 161 times. For the purposes of the analyses below, only the 20 statements that are common to both versions were used (n= 6,853).

Interpretation must take into account the fact that teachers often give the survey twice to the same class. Used as a formative assessment tool, most teachers administer the survey to establish a baseline, discuss the results with their students (as recommended), make pedagogical adjustments, and then survey again to see if the changes to their practice had an impact on student engagement as measured by the survey. Thus, the results below, which represent an aggregate of all instances of the survey during the 2015-2016 school year, can be understood as portraying the average level of student engagement in the classes of those teachers inclined to ask for feedback from students during the school year. There is undoubtedly a bias in these results given that teachers so inclined are likely to be already using many of the practices that support student engagement. We have no way of knowing whether teachers who have not administered iKnow are any more or less engaging than those who did.

The conceptual framework on which the survey was built is known as the "Student Engagement Core Model." This model posits that there are three primary factors in every learning environment or situation that give rise to student engagement: the student, the teacher, and the content. In any given classroom, the student is there to gather, discover, process, understand, and integrate—ultimately, to learn—the information conveyed by the course. The teacher shares, presents, guides, instructs, and/or facilitates this knowledge to that end; he or she needs to not only know content, but have the skills to provide that content in a format that is understandable to the students he or she is teaching. The content represents the information that is to be learned (and, at times, discovered) by both the students and the teacher; whether it is physics or fly fishing, some form of "content" exists in every controlled learning environment. At the heart of the Student Engagement Core Model is how the connections among these three factors promote student engagement. There are four basic intersections:

Student–Teacher (Relationship)

This references the connection that exists between the teacher and students in the classroom. It is foundational for engagement. Students tell us repeatedly in focus groups that they learn best from teachers they believe care about and respect them and other students. In the best-case scenario, relationships are based on trust and mutual respect. Each party cares about the other, enjoys interacting with the other, and is sensitive to the specific needs of the other. A teacher can positively influence his or her relationship with students by inspiring and expecting students to do their best, treating students' ideas with respect, learning about students' aspirations, and being open to learning from students.

There is good news here in that nearly eight out of ten students (79%) whose teachers invited them to take an iKnow survey report that their teacher develops positive relationships with students. This has academic consequences, as those same students report being comfortable asking questions in class (79%) and comfortable asking the teacher for individual help (81%). Moreover, 89% of students agree that their teacher expects them to be successful. These are encouraging results—at least among those teachers who cared enough to ask for feedback from their students in this form.

Still, even these teachers have room to grow. Just two-thirds (66%) of the students who took iKnow believe their teacher cares if they are absent. And just over one-third (36%) believe the teacher knows their hopes and dreams. We believe this result is an indictment not of teachers but of a system of education that postulates vague and “blanket” goals such as college and career readiness. While this may be expedient, it is not an effective way to engage every student. Taking the time to find out what goals students have set for themselves, and then working those aspirations into one's teaching and curriculum, can go a long way toward not only building better relationships with students but also improving their engagement and academic outcomes.

Student–Content (Relevance)

For students to be engaged in their learning, they need to have some level of interest in the subject matter. However, students' particular interests are not always within a teacher's sphere of direct influence. What a teacher does have some control over is the degree to which students understand why they are learning what they are learning—that is, the relevance of the content. Relevance includes how the content connects to other subjects and current events, how the content applies to students' everyday lives, and how it might affect their future and aspirations. A greater understanding of the relevance of the class content should manifest itself in a greater interest in learning.

Seventy-two percent (72%) of students report that they explore issues, events, and problems from different perspectives. This is a positive pedagogical approach that widens

the spectrum of what is being learned so as to create a greater likelihood of relevance given students' myriad interests. Two out of every three students (66%) indicate that they relate what they are learning to current events. Recall that iKnow was given by far more than just social studies teachers who may address current events directly as a matter of course. By agreeing with the statement: "In this class we discuss issues that are interesting to me," 63% of students report that there is a direct connection between the class content and their interests.

Teacher–Content (Expertise)

For teachers to be successful, they need to show a level of expertise not only in pedagogical strategies, but also in knowledge of their subject area(s). While high school and middle school teachers may not be expected to know everything in a particular field, they must be confident enough in their grasp of the subject matter to be able to guide learning and instruction. In particular, we have learned in focus groups the paradoxical truth that the more confident teachers are in their expertise, the more comfortable they are admitting that they do not know something.

Eighty percent of students (80%) believe their teachers are doing an adequate job as pedagogues, agreeing with the statement: "The teacher presents lessons in ways I understand." Yet that leaves one in five students seemingly uncomprehending. Three-quarters of students (75%) affirm that their teachers provide useful and timely feedback on their learning. Clearly this formative feedback is a key to positive academic outcomes. While it is encouraging that a majority of students (72%) report that grades on assignments, tests, and/or quizzes represent what they know, this leaves a considerable portion of students in any given class who believe their knowledge on a particular subject is not being adequately assessed (or are indicating they do not adequately prepare!). Finally, just over three out of five students (62%) believe that homework in their classes helps them understand the subject better. We do hear from many students in focus groups who see a distinction between homework that aids their understanding and homework that is mere busywork.

Student–Teacher–Content (Meaningful Engagement)

According to the Student Engagement Core Model, meaningful engagement is most likely to arise when there is an environment with strong, positive student–teacher relationships; when students are interested in and committed to learning the subject matter because it is in some way relevant to them; and when teachers are well-versed in the content so as to maintain the rigor of the material and provide relevant challenges to the students.

As a barometer of engagement, the vast majority of students (86%) say they come to class ready and willing to learn. A similar percentage of students say they put forth their best effort in the class surveyed. Seven out of ten (70%) students agree that “This class challenges my thinking.” These are positive results. Though we always hope 100% of students are ready and willing to learn, put forth their best effort, and find their classes challenging, teachers who administered iKnow should take solace in the fact that most students feel engaged by the work they are doing in their classes.

Parent Voice

The Quaglia Parent Voice Survey provides parents and families an opportunity to share their perspectives and insights regarding their experiences with their child's school. It should be noted that collecting parent voice via surveys is notoriously challenging. Since the survey is anonymous, there is no way to know who completes the survey. Parent surveys are either completed at home or at a school event, whereas student and teacher surveys are administered at school ensuring nearly 100% participation. In spite of this challenge, 2,287 parents completed the Quaglia Parent Voice Survey and another 88 early learner parents responded to an online survey in the age 3 - grade 2 exploratory study. This preliminary data from both parent surveys points to several trends.

Education Matters

Parents believe that education matters. They want their children to be successful and engaged at school. According to the results of the Quaglia Parent Survey, 97% of parents agreed that "It is important to me that my child gets good grades." Students echoed this sentiment. In response to the statement "My parents care about my education," 94% of students agreed. Although teachers and students may interpret parental care differently, the fact that parents do indeed care and that their children believe they care should be the starting point for increasing parental and family engagement in schools.

Parents of preschool age children shared their desires for their children to be excited and love learning. In response to the question "What are your school goals for your children?" almost every parent mentioned enjoying learning. Interestingly enough, during focus group sessions with the early learners themselves, the students expressed a desire to learn skills such as reading and math.

Square Peg, Round Hole

Another similarity in the student and parent data relates to "fitting in" or belonging at school. Over one-fifth (22%) of parents agreed with the statement, "My child has difficulty fitting in at school." Students expressed that they have difficulty being accepted and being liked. On the grades 3-5 student survey, 46% agreed "Others students like me," and on the grades 6-12 student survey, 68% agreed with the statement, "I feel accepted for who I am at school." The desire to belong is felt by both students and parents.

Students and parents of early learners did not express any concerns over the children fitting in or feeling welcomed. In fact, both parents and students overwhelmingly shared how much their teachers love the children for who they are.

Parent Evenings and Involvement

Traditionally, parent involvement includes parent conferences and school events. Although attendance at parent evenings tends to wane as students enter high school, 82% of parents agreed that “Parent evenings/meetings are worth attending.” However, the future of parent evenings will require more robust and organized parental involvement policies. Many states mandate, and now ESSA mandates, organized parental involvement through school community councils or parent and family engagement policies. Currently, 69% of parents agree that “My input and opinions are valued at my child’s school.” As schools move to establish robust engagement strategies, educators must develop systems and structures to ensure that parental voice is valued and utilized to inform decisions.

Voice and Vision: Next Steps

While an exhaustive articulation of next steps is beyond the scope of any report, we would be remiss if we did not offer suggestions about how to proceed should you choose to see your school through the eyes of your students, teachers, and parents. (There are additional resources available at quagliainstitute.org and svsurveys.corwin.com.)

The purpose of this report is to share with you the current state of schools as seen through the eyes of students, teachers, and parents, and to provide you with information and resources to help get you started making a difference at *your* school.

In order to maximize Voice survey results to positively impact a school, a district, and, most importantly, the leaders, teachers, students, and parents within the system, QISA recommends conducting focus groups and developing a plan for sharing the results from surveys and focus groups.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are an opportunity to color in the black and white information gathered from the surveys. Often surveys raise more questions than they answer. Focus groups can help provide answers. The goal of focus groups is to produce meaningful conversations about the concerns raised in the survey. When analyzing the results of focus groups, look for *patterns* in the conversations. What themes emerged, both positive and negative? What particular perspectives were evident? Did males answer differently than females? Did 11th graders have a different point of view on a particular issue than 9th graders? Use the information gathered during focus groups, in conjunction with the Quaglia School Voice Survey results, to inform your next steps. For more information on Focus Groups, download *Conducting Quaglia Student Voice Focus Groups*⁴.

Sharing Voice Data

QISA believes it is essential to “close the feedback loop” by sharing survey and focus group results with all whom the data represents. Student data should be shared with students and teachers. Parent data may be shared with parents, teachers, and students. QISA recommends that teacher data should be shared only with teachers, unless a context for understanding is in place (e.g., when comparing and contrasting teacher and student results).

The following is a list of suggested practices when planning to share results from Voice Surveys and focus groups with students, teachers, and parents:

⁴ This document can be downloaded for free at <http://quagliainstitute.org/qisva/library/view.do?id=300>

- Model openness regarding the data. Be explicit that you believe everyone has something to learn, practices to celebrate, and areas for potential growth.
- Ask everyone to be aware of his or her own biases. One set of biases may seek to dismiss the data. Administrators often find some of the teacher data challenging and teachers may find the student results difficult to accept. Another bias is for people to latch on to a particular data point in support of a pet cause or agenda. In the early going, keep the interpretations broad.
- Consider first sharing data results with a Leadership Team and preparing them to be involved in sharing data with the full staff. This should include student leaders when sharing the student data.
- Promote transparency: make all data accessible to those who took the survey. In the cause of focus and given time constraints, allow the Leadership Team to be a part of an initial analysis and identifying what to share. Data points related to your school's mission or other goals may take priority for sharing.
- Indicate that the data is a snapshot of perceptions at a particular point in time. Avoid judgments, and instead turn to wonderings—what do you additionally want to know, what would desired improvements look like in your school, and what actions would it take to get there?
- Consider connections when sharing data. A best practice when sharing Quaglia School Voice data is to avoid presenting it in isolation from other potentially related data. Student survey results may be compared to student management data and/or attendance data (e.g., is there a connection in your school between student engagement and discipline concerns or attendance?). Teacher survey results may be compared to teacher attendance or teacher evaluation data.
- Begin a process of considering how results will inform decisions moving forward. When sharing survey data, it is important to develop a plan to utilize the data. Everyone's time will feel wasted if the results are simply reported with no proposed effort to make the change the results invite.
- Invite a diverse group of interested participants to join a team that will take next steps.
- Follow through—what happens next is critical! Turning the data into meaningful actions is essential.
- Close the feedback loop entirely by communicating to the staff, students, and parents the actions taken as a result of this process.

Concluding Thoughts

The results are in, but the work has just begun. This study provides something to be learned from all perspectives—teachers, support staff members, students, school leaders, district officers, parents, and policymakers. And there is a great deal to be acted upon. Students, teachers, and parents have shared their voice. We are all entrusted with the honorable task of learning from it, and improving education because of it. Anything short of that is unacceptable.

The challenge is determining the next best step from your perspective. The suggestions and ideas provided herein are just a starting point. Your task is to use the ideas as a springboard—initial steps to get you started on developing and personalizing your own strategies. Throughout the process, always remember that students and teachers have something to teach us. While we have been listening to and learning from them for over thirty years, it is continuously a novel experience, not only because the world continues to change, but because there is always a new perspective to learn from.

This particular report represents our findings and reflections on data from our most recent academic year. At the same time, it is reflective of a familiar theme expressed by students and teachers over the past three decades: I MATTER! Unfortunately, schools have had a pattern of “listening lots, but hearing nothing.” It is (well past!) time to change course and let students and teachers know their voices are heard, and they matter.

Schools must foster each individual’s self-worth, ensure that everyone is meaningfully engaged in the teaching and learning process, and—most importantly—support the hopes and dreams of everyone in the school. It all starts with honoring and responding to Voice. Our research shows that when students in grades 6-12 have a voice, they are seven times more likely to be motivated to learn. When teachers have a voice in decision making at school, they are two times more likely to work hard to reach their goals, and four times more likely to believe they can make a difference in the world, than those who do not have a voice.

The tools and data for understanding our students, teachers, and schools—beyond anyone’s expectations—are at hand, in abundance. And while more is not better, *more meaningful* is. It is time to disrupt the data rich and analysis poor approach. It is time to understand, reflect, and take action by fostering respect, trust, and responsibility. The question is, who is going to take the lead? Who will break through the barriers that inhibit our students and teachers from reaching their fullest potential? Who will ensure that all stakeholders in our educational system are being heard, learned from, and valued? It’s the same answer to all three questions: YOU!

While the journey overall is the antithesis of a solo endeavor, you have the power to take the initiative—to listen, learn, and lead, *with the people around you*; to start the journey to a brighter future for all students and staff. Rest assured that wonderful surprises are just waiting to happen, and all the hopes and dreams we have for the students and the dedicated staff in our schools are well within our reach. Join us in fostering School Voice, and make a positive difference in your school.

If we can provide assistance at any point in your journey, we would love to hear from you! Messages can be sent via the Contact Us option on our website: QuagliaInstitute.org.

Or you can follow us and share your thoughts and comments via twitter:

Dr. Quaglia: @DrRussQ

Quaglia Institute: @QISAtweets

Teacher Voice and Aspirations International Center: @TVoiceMatters

**Appendix A:
Quaglia School Voice Grade 6-12 Student Survey**

Belonging	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
School is a welcoming and friendly place.	64%	67%	62%	68%	72%	64%	62%	61%	62%	58%
I feel accepted for who I am at school.	67%	73%	61%	67%	71%	66%	65%	66%	65%	63%
Teachers make an effort to get to know me.	52%	55%	50%	63%	61%	53%	50%	46%	48%	48%
I have difficulty fitting in at school.	22%	21%	23%	23%	22%	22%	22%	22%	21%	19%
Teachers care about my problems and feelings.	43%	43%	43%	53%	53%	44%	41%	35%	41%	38%
I am proud of my school.	53%	53%	52%	62%	65%	53%	50%	47%	46%	42%
I am a valued member of my school community.	40%	41%	38%	47%	47%	42%	37%	37%	35%	37%
I think bullying is a problem at my school.	40%	37%	43%	44%	45%	41%	37%	37%	35%	30%
Heroes	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Students respect teachers.	43%	47%	40%	50%	49%	42%	37%	41%	40%	40%
My parents care about my education.	94%	94%	93%	87%	96%	94%	93%	91%	91%	82%
I have a teacher who is a positive role model for me.	75%	72%	79%	71%	78%	75%	70%	71%	80%	73%
Teachers care about me as an individual.	53%	54%	52%	59%	58%	55%	48%	48%	53%	51%
Teachers care if I am absent from school.	46%	46%	45%	52%	50%	46%	43%	40%	45%	45%
If I have a problem, I have a teacher with whom I can talk.	53%	51%	55%	55%	58%	52%	49%	47%	56%	52%
Teachers respect students.	58%	58%	58%	64%	68%	60%	58%	52%	55%	50%
Students respect each other.	31%	35%	27%	36%	36%	33%	31%	30%	30%	29%
Adults at this school listen to students' suggestions.	43%	43%	43%	53%	57%	48%	42%	39%	36%	34%
Sense of Accomplishment	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
I am encouraged to practice good citizenship at school.	75%	75%	76%	77%	82%	75%	71%	71%	73%	65%
Teachers recognize students who are kind and helpful.	71%	71%	71%	73%	77%	72%	68%	67%	68%	64%
I have never been recognized for something positive at school.	26%	27%	26%	25%	26%	26%	29%	26%	25%	23%
I give up when schoolwork is difficult.	17%	17%	18%	12%	17%	17%	20%	20%	22%	17%
Teachers recognize me when I try my best.	53%	53%	53%	59%	59%	57%	52%	50%	51%	49%
Teachers let my parents know what I do well.	47%	48%	46%	64%	62%	53%	45%	39%	38%	34%
I put forth my best effort at school.	73%	70%	76%	73%	81%	77%	68%	69%	68%	59%
Getting good grades is important to me.	85%	82%	88%	82%	91%	88%	82%	81%	81%	73%

Fun & Excitement	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
I enjoy being at school.	49%	49%	48%	56%	56%	48%	47%	43%	44%	39%
Teachers enjoy working with students.	61%	62%	60%	65%	68%	61%	59%	58%	58%	56%
Teachers make school an exciting place to learn.	38%	40%	36%	52%	49%	38%	33%	31%	33%	29%
School is boring.	43%	45%	40%	25%	34%	43%	46%	50%	49%	47%
I enjoy participating in my classes.	54%	55%	53%	62%	63%	55%	52%	49%	48%	45%
Teachers have fun at school.	41%	42%	39%	50%	47%	42%	39%	35%	39%	37%
Learning can be fun.	65%	64%	66%	64%	67%	63%	60%	64%	66%	60%
Adults and students work together to make our school better.	50%	50%	51%	62%	62%	51%	53%	45%	45%	39%
Curiosity & Creativity	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
I feel comfortable asking questions in class.	58%	63%	53%	59%	59%	57%	56%	56%	58%	58%
My teachers present lessons in different ways.	74%	73%	74%	77%	81%	77%	71%	69%	67%	61%
At school I am encouraged to be creative.	60%	59%	61%	69%	71%	63%	58%	56%	54%	48%
I enjoy working on projects with other students.	62%	65%	59%	68%	70%	68%	60%	55%	57%	48%
My classes help me understand what is happening in my everyday life.	38%	40%	37%	50%	51%	44%	37%	30%	30%	29%
School inspires me to learn.	57%	56%	58%	65%	67%	60%	56%	51%	51%	47%
I enjoy learning new things.	78%	79%	78%	73%	80%	78%	74%	76%	77%	74%
I learn new things that are interesting to me at school.	65%	65%	65%	68%	73%	67%	62%	61%	62%	56%
What I learn in school will benefit my future.	67%	67%	68%	73%	80%	72%	66%	61%	59%	54%
Students work with adults to find solutions to school problems.	46%	45%	46%	59%	59%	51%	47%	38%	37%	37%
Spirit of Adventure	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
I like challenging assignments.	43%	43%	43%	45%	44%	42%	39%	42%	45%	41%
I push myself to do better academically.	81%	78%	84%	78%	87%	81%	78%	79%	79%	71%
Students are supportive of each other.	39%	42%	37%	45%	45%	42%	37%	38%	40%	37%
I am afraid to try something if I think I may fail.	33%	29%	38%	30%	35%	35%	37%	33%	33%	26%
Teachers help me learn from my mistakes.	62%	63%	60%	69%	74%	66%	61%	54%	54%	51%
I want to do my best at school.	86%	83%	89%	82%	92%	88%	84%	84%	83%	75%
I am excited to tell my friends when I get good grades.	55%	50%	59%	56%	62%	61%	54%	50%	53%	44%

Leadership & Responsibility	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Students have a voice in decision making at school.	44%	45%	42%	56%	55%	46%	42%	37%	36%	34%
I see myself as a leader.	60%	61%	60%	58%	61%	62%	55%	61%	63%	60%
Other students see me as a leader.	31%	32%	30%	31%	30%	33%	29%	31%	34%	35%
Teachers encourage students to make decisions.	60%	61%	59%	63%	66%	61%	58%	57%	57%	52%
Teachers are willing to learn from students.	47%	47%	46%	56%	58%	49%	44%	42%	41%	40%
I am a good decision maker.	58%	59%	56%	57%	58%	58%	55%	58%	59%	55%
I know the goals my school is working on this year.	43%	43%	43%	52%	51%	48%	43%	39%	38%	35%
Confidence to Take Action	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
I believe I can be successful.	88%	89%	87%	82%	90%	88%	85%	88%	87%	82%
I believe I can make a difference in this world.	66%	66%	67%	63%	68%	67%	63%	65%	66%	64%
Teachers believe in me and expect me to be successful.	73%	73%	74%	73%	80%	76%	72%	69%	70%	67%
Going to college is important for my future.	82%	79%	86%	78%	87%	86%	79%	79%	78%	71%
I work hard to reach my goals.	80%	78%	82%	78%	85%	80%	76%	77%	77%	72%
I am excited about my future.	76%	75%	78%	75%	81%	78%	73%	74%	74%	69%
I think it is important to set high goals.	78%	76%	80%	74%	82%	79%	76%	74%	77%	72%
I know the kind of person I want to become.	73%	71%	74%	68%	75%	74%	69%	71%	72%	69%
School is preparing me well for my future.	58%	57%	59%	69%	72%	64%	60%	52%	49%	43%
Students develop programs that improve the whole school.	43%	44%	41%	49%	50%	43%	46%	39%	41%	36%
Student Voice	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Students have a voice in decision making at school.	44%	45%	42%	56%	55%	46%	42%	37%	36%	34%
Adults at this school listen to students' suggestions.	43%	43%	43%	53%	57%	48%	42%	39%	36%	34%
Adults and students work together to make our school better.	50%	50%	51%	62%	62%	51%	53%	45%	45%	39%
Students work with adults to find solutions to school problems.	46%	45%	46%	59%	59%	51%	47%	38%	37%	37%
Students develop programs that improve the whole school.	43%	44%	41%	49%	50%	43%	46%	39%	41%	36%

**Appendix B:
Quaglia School Voice Teacher Survey**

Belonging	Total in Agreement
I feel valued for my unique skills and talents.	72%
School is a welcoming and friendly place.	78%
I am proud of my school.	79%
I think bullying is a problem at my school.	40%
I feel comfortable in the staff room.	71%
Building administration makes an effort to get to know me.	61%
I feel accepted for who I am at school.	80%
I am a valued member of my school community.	69%
Heroes	Total in Agreement
Students care if I am absent from school.	85%
I have a colleague at school who is a positive role model for me.	91%
If I have a problem, I have a colleague with whom I can talk.	92%
Staff respect each other.	69%
Students respect me.	87%
I respect students.	99%
Students care about me as an individual.	81%
I know my students' hopes and dreams.	80%
Sense of Accomplishment	Total in Agreement
I have never been recognized for something positive at school.	20%
I actively encourage students to practice good citizenship.	98%
I receive constructive feedback from colleagues.	69%
Our school celebrates the accomplishments of the staff.	57%
I am recognized when I try my best.	52%
Professional development is an important part of my educational growth.	80%

Fun & Excitement	Total in Agreement
I enjoy working here.	81%
I make learning relevant to my students.	94%
Students enjoy working with teachers.	77%
Students have fun at school.	74%
Students make school an exciting place to work.	86%
I have fun at school.	83%
Learning can be fun.	99%
Curiosity & Creativity	Total in Agreement
School inspires me to learn.	80%
At school I am encouraged to be creative.	66%
Building administration is open to new ideas.	64%
I enjoy learning new things.	98%
Our school is a dynamic and creative learning environment.	64%
Staff work in a collaborative manner.	73%
Meaningful professional development opportunities exist in my district.	57%
I feel comfortable asking questions in staff meetings.	64%
Spirit of Adventure	Total in Agreement
Setting yearly goals with my supervisor is important for my work.	66%
I challenge myself to do my job better every day.	94%
Staff are supportive of each other.	75%
I am afraid to try something if I think I might fail.	12%
My colleagues help me learn from my mistakes.	70%
I am concerned my colleagues will resent me if I am too successful.	15%
I am excited to tell my colleagues when I do something well.	58%

Leadership & Responsibility	Total in Agreement
I see myself as a leader.	78%
My colleagues see me as a leader.	57%
I have a voice in decision making at school.	48%
I know the goals my school is working on this year.	73%
I actively seek out student opinions and ideas.	82%
I encourage students to make decisions.	97%
Building administration is willing to learn from staff.	56%
Confidence to Take Action	Total in Agreement
I believe I can be successful.	96%
I believe I can make a difference in this world.	93%
I feel confident voicing my honest opinions and concerns.	57%
I work hard to reach my goals.	96%
I am excited about my future career in education.	70%
Continuing my education is important for my future.	82%
I think it is important to set high goals.	96%
Communication	Total in Agreement
Central office understands the unique culture of our school.	42%
We communicate effectively in our building.	47%
Building administration is visible in our school.	74%
Building administration knows my professional goals.	53%
Building administration is accessible to me.	75%
I communicate effectively with parents.	81%

**Appendix C:
Quaglia School Voice Grade 3-5 Student Survey**

Belonging	Yes	No	Sometimes	Gender		Grade		
				Male	Female	3rd	4th	5th
I like my school.	73%	3%	23%	68%	78%	78%	72%	70%
Other students like me.	65%	6%	29%	64%	66%	66%	62%	67%
I feel important in my classroom.	51%	15%	34%	51%	51%	57%	48%	48%
The principal knows my name.	76%	14%	10%	81%	71%	76%	75%	76%
Other students are kind to me.	47%	7%	46%	48%	46%	48%	44%	49%
I have friends I can be with at lunch.	82%	6%	12%	83%	82%	82%	82%	84%
I think bullying is a problem at my school.	62%	16%	21%	63%	61%	70%	64%	52%
Heroes	Yes	No	Sometimes	Gender		Grade		
				Male	Female	3rd	4th	5th
If I am upset, I can tell my teacher why.	54%	16%	30%	52%	56%	64%	50%	47%
If I have a problem, I have an adult at school I can talk to.	68%	13%	19%	66%	71%	72%	67%	65%
My teacher cares about me.	87%	3%	10%	84%	89%	89%	85%	85%
Students help each other at my school.	53%	3%	44%	53%	53%	60%	52%	48%
Students respect each other.	43%	6%	51%	45%	41%	53%	41%	34%
Students respect teachers.	42%	3%	54%	45%	39%	47%	42%	37%
Teachers care if I am absent from school.	66%	12%	22%	64%	67%	66%	67%	64%
Teachers respect students.	81%	3%	16%	79%	83%	83%	81%	78%
Sense of Accomplishment	Yes	No	Sometimes	Gender		Grade		
				Male	Female	3rd	4th	5th
Getting good grades is important to me.	93%	1%	5%	91%	95%	94%	93%	94%
I give my best effort at school.	82%	2%	16%	77%	86%	83%	82%	79%
I give up when schoolwork is difficult.	8%	73%	19%	9%	7%	8%	8%	8%
I help other students at my school.	70%	3%	27%	65%	75%	74%	70%	65%
My teacher hangs up my work in the classroom or hallway.	46%	17%	37%	44%	48%	53%	44%	39%
My teacher tells my parents when I do well in school.	69%	8%	22%	65%	73%	74%	69%	66%
My teachers recognize me when I am kind and helpful.	69%	6%	25%	67%	71%	74%	67%	66%
Teachers recognize me when I try my best.	72%	6%	22%	72%	73%	76%	71%	70%

Fun & Excitement	Yes	No	Sometimes	Gender		Grade		
				Male	Female	3rd	4th	5th
I have fun at school.	61%	5%	34%	57%	64%	70%	59%	52%
I like going to school.	55%	10%	34%	51%	60%	63%	52%	50%
Learning can be fun.	61%	6%	33%	58%	63%	69%	58%	53%
School is boring.	12%	52%	36%	16%	8%	11%	12%	14%
Teachers have fun at school.	52%	4%	44%	51%	53%	54%	51%	51%
Curiosity & Creativity	Yes	No	Sometimes	Gender		Grade		
				Male	Female	3rd	4th	5th
I enjoy working on projects with other students.	71%	5%	24%	70%	72%	74%	71%	68%
I feel comfortable asking questions in class.	53%	11%	36%	55%	50%	55%	52%	50%
I like to learn new things in my classes.	79%	3%	18%	77%	81%	83%	79%	74%
I like what I learn at school.	64%	4%	32%	61%	67%	71%	62%	58%
My teacher knows what I like to do.	50%	22%	28%	51%	49%	51%	49%	50%
My teacher listens to my ideas.	69%	5%	26%	66%	71%	70%	67%	69%
Spirit of Adventure	Yes	No	Sometimes	Gender		Grade		
				Male	Female	3rd	4th	5th
I am excited to tell my friends when I get good grades.	58%	18%	24%	54%	62%	61%	57%	56%
I only raise my hand if I am sure of the answer.	53%	14%	33%	52%	53%	61%	52%	45%
My teacher helps me learn from my mistakes.	85%	2%	12%	84%	86%	86%	85%	85%
My teacher thinks I am smart.	85%	3%	13%	83%	87%	87%	84%	84%
The things I learn in school are important to me.	80%	3%	17%	77%	83%	83%	79%	77%

Leadership & Responsibility	Yes	No	Sometimes	Gender		Grade		
				Male	Female	3rd	4th	5th
I am a good decision maker.	44%	11%	45%	42%	46%	47%	43%	42%
I see myself as a leader.	45%	18%	37%	41%	48%	45%	44%	44%
It is important to follow rules.	94%	1%	5%	92%	96%	96%	94%	91%
Other students listen to my ideas.	29%	16%	55%	30%	28%	31%	29%	28%
Students help make classroom rules.	43%	26%	32%	43%	43%	46%	40%	41%
Teachers learn from students.	40%	14%	46%	38%	41%	39%	39%	40%
Confidence to Take Action	Yes	No	Sometimes	Gender		Grade		
				Male	Female	3rd	4th	5th
I know how to set goals for myself.	73%	7%	20%	73%	74%	71%	76%	74%
I think I am smart.	74%	5%	21%	74%	73%	79%	73%	70%
I want to go to college.	88%	5%	6%	88%	89%	87%	88%	91%
I work hard in school.	83%	1%	15%	80%	87%	86%	84%	80%
My teacher helps me reach my goals.	80%	4%	16%	78%	81%	81%	80%	79%

**Appendix D:
Quaglia School Voice Parent Survey**

Belonging	Total in Agreement
I feel welcome in my child's school.	89%
My child has difficulty fitting in at school.	22%
Teachers care about my child's problems and feelings.	72%
I am proud of my child's school.	84%
I feel comfortable going to parent-teacher conferences.	88%
My child puts forth his/her best effort at school.	87%
My input and opinions are valued at my child's school.	69%
My child is a valued member of his/her school community.	82%
Heroes	Total in Agreement
My child has a teacher who is a positive role model.	86%
I am a positive role model for my child.	99%
Teachers care if my child is absent from school.	79%
If my child has a problem, there is a teacher he/she can talk to.	80%
If I have a problem with my child's school, someone at school is available to help me.	82%
I care about my child's education.	99%
Teachers let me know what my child does well in school.	77%
Sense of Accomplishment	Total in Agreement
My child is encouraged to practice good citizenship at school.	91%
Teachers recognize my child when he/she is kind and helpful.	84%
I recognize my child when he/she gets good grades at school.	98%
My child gives up when schoolwork is difficult.	18%
I recognize my child when he/she does his/her best in school.	98%
Effort is just as important as getting good grades.	95%
It is important to me that my child gets good grades.	97%

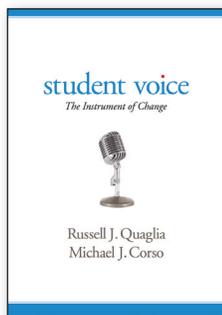
Fun & Excitement	Total in Agreement
My child enjoys being at school.	82%
Teachers enjoy working with my child.	86%
Teachers at my child's school make it exciting to learn.	73%
I think it is important for my child to go to college.	95%
I was bored in school as a student.	20%
Learning can be fun.	98%
Parent evenings/meetings are worth attending.	82%
Curiosity & Creativity	Total in Agreement
My child feels comfortable asking questions in class.	77%
My child's classes help him/her understand what is happening in his/her everyday life.	75%
When I was in school, my classes helped me understand what was happening in my everyday life.	68%
My child is bored in school.	21%
I enjoy learning new things.	98%
My child learns things that are interesting to him/her at school.	88%
School inspires my child to learn.	75%
What my child learns in school will benefit his/her future.	93%
What I learned in school benefits me today.	88%
Spirit of Adventure	Total in Agreement
I push my child to do better academically.	97%
My child is afraid to try something if he/she thinks he/she will fail.	33%
I am afraid to try something if I think I may fail.	19%
My child enjoys learning new things.	96%
My child wants to do his/her best at school.	94%
My child likes challenging assignments.	69%
My child is excited to tell me when he/she gets good grades.	95%
I am excited to tell my friends when my child does well in school.	88%

Leadership & Responsibility	Total in Agreement
I see my child as a leader.	82%
Teachers encourage my child to make decisions.	81%
I encourage my child to make decisions.	99%
Teachers help my child learn from mistakes.	75%
I am a good decision maker.	92%
I know the goals my child's school is working on this year.	72%
Confidence to Take Action	Total in Agreement
My child sets high goals.	85%
I believe my child can be successful.	99%
School is preparing my child well for the future.	86%
My child knows the kind of person he/she wants to become.	82%
I believe my child can make a difference in this world.	98%
My child is a good decision maker.	84%
I believe I can make a difference in this world.	93%
Teachers believe in my child and expect him/her to be successful.	87%
School prepared me well for my future.	78%
My child works hard to reach his/her goals.	88%
I work hard to reach my goals.	96%
My child is excited about his/her future.	91%

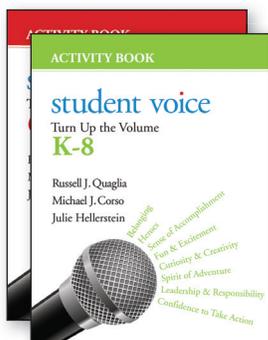
**Appendix E:
iKnow My Class Survey**

Classroom Level Statements	Total in Agreement
I am encouraged to use my imagination.	77%
I feel comfortable asking questions in class.	80%
I feel comfortable asking my teacher for individual help about the things we are learning.	82%
I come to class ready and willing to learn.	86%
I put forth my best effort in class.	87%
I have personal goals for my learning in this class.	77%
It is helpful for me to work with other students.	77%
I am confident in my ability to learn what is being taught.	86%
I explore issues, events, and problems from different perspectives.	72%
This class challenges my thinking.	71%
The homework in this class helps me understand the subject better.	62%
My grades on assignments, tests, and/or quizzes represent what I know.	72%
In this class, we discuss issues that are interesting to me.	63%
The teacher cares if I am absent from class.	67%
The teacher knows my hopes and dreams.	36%
The teacher presents lessons in ways I understand.	80%
The teacher develops positive relationships with students.	80%
The teacher expects me to be successful.	89%
The teacher relates our learning to current events.	66%
The teacher provides useful and timely feedback on my learning.	75%

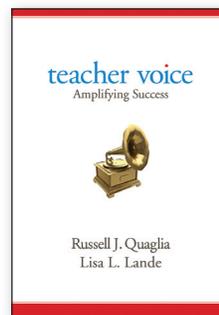
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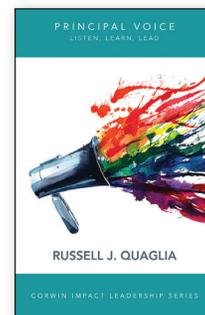
Student Voice
Russell J. Quaglia,
Michael J. Corso



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Russell J. Quaglia, Michael J. Corso, Julie Hellerstein



Teacher Voice
Russell J. Quaglia,
Lisa L. Lande



Principal Voice
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Relevant, research-based, and inspiring, these eCourses show how the power of listening—to your students—can support academic achievement and meaningful change throughout your school.



Introduction to Student Voice



Student Voice: Engagement & Leadership



Student Voice: Self Worth



Student Voice: Purpose

School Voice Surveys

For over 30 years, Dr. Russell Quaglia and his team at the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations have been collecting information about what education stakeholders think, believe, and feel about their schools. The data from these surveys has shown time and time again that certain conditions must be present in the school for students to reach their fullest potential.



Student Voice



iKnow My Class



Teacher Voice



Parent Voice



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