

---

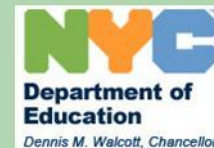
# Student-Led School Improvement: Work, Findings, and Next Steps



## STUDENT VOICE COLLABORATIVE

Children First Network 102  
New York City Department of Education

2010-2011



# STUDENT VOICE COLLABORATIVE

This school year, with hopes of generating a wave of student-led school improvement, the NYC Department of Education's Children First Network 102 launched the Student Voice Collaborative (SVC) program. SVC brings together public high school students from across the City to affect the sorts of change they wish to see in their schools and support one another along the way.

Student Voice Collaborative members conduct comprehensive studies of their schools, identify relevant challenges, and implement student-led school improvement programs in partnership with staff and students. SVC members regularly demonstrate how students can uniquely inspire change when afforded opportunities to lead – motivating students to step up and adults to make room at the table.

SVC meetings are bi-weekly in the fall and weekly in the spring, from 4:15pm-6:15pm, totaling approximately 30 sessions for the school year. The group consists of students of all grades (9-12) and all levels of prior leadership experience. SVC members are eligible to earn high school credit for conducting field work – meeting weekly with their school partner and liaison outside of class time to develop a student-led school improvement project – in addition to attending sessions.

Currently, the Student Voice Collaborative includes students from 5 of our Network high schools: Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies (BCS), Community School for Social Justice (CSSJ), Gotham Professional Arts Academy, Institute for Collaborative Education (ICE), and Vanguard High School. Each of our schools is represented by two students and a staff liaison who provides students with weekly support and guidance. All SVC participants are required to serve on a school-based student leadership group. This way, members begin their work each year in collaboration with student allies both inside and outside of their schools.

The Student Voice Collaborative aims to ensure that students realize their ability to impact lives and culture within their high schools and beyond.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

CFN 102 greatly appreciates the 10 Student Voice Collaborative members who contributed their unique perspectives, invaluable insight, and hard work to developing this report in a truly collaborative effort.

Student Voice Collaborative members are grateful to all those who have supported the SVC's work and demonstrated commitment to affecting student-led school improvement.

Thanks to the following NYC DOE, City government, and community-based organization representatives who allowed us to interview them, graciously offering their time and insight on issues that matter deeply to all of us: Doug Knecht (Executive Director for Academic Quality, NYC DOE), Elayna Konstan (Chief Executive Officer, NYC DOE Office of School and Youth Development), Connie Cuttle (Director of Professional Development, NYC DOE Office of School and Youth Development), Lois Herrera (Director of Student Support Services, NYC DOE Office of School and Youth Development), Serge St. Leger (Director of School and CBO Partnerships, NYC DOE), Leslie Cornfield (Chairperson, Mayor's Interagency Task Force on Absenteeism), Emily Pataki (Mayor's Interagency Task Force on Absenteeism), Marieke van Woerkom (Facilitator, Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility).

We equally appreciate the assistance of the hundreds of students and teachers who contributed honest, constructive, and enlightening reflections on their school experiences through our surveys and focus groups.

A special thanks to our Staff Liaisons who believed in, partnered with, and provided regular support for SVC members throughout the school year: Christine Chan (Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies), Sherry-Ann Jenkins (Community School for Social Justice), Jon-Michael Hanna (Gotham Professional Arts Academy), Shelby Mitchell (Gotham Professional Arts Academy), Imani Matthews (Institute for Collaborative Studies), Liz Sanchez (Vanguard High School), and Orlando Torres (Vanguard High School).

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the Principals of our five participating high schools for providing bold leadership and promoting student voice everyday: Alyce Barr (Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies), Scill Chan (Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies), Sue-Ann Rosch (Community School for Social Justice), Alex White (Gotham Professional Arts Academy), John Pettinato (Institute for Collaborative Studies), and Louis Delgado (Vanguard High School).

Alison Sheehan  
Network Leader

Ari Sussman  
SVC Coordinator

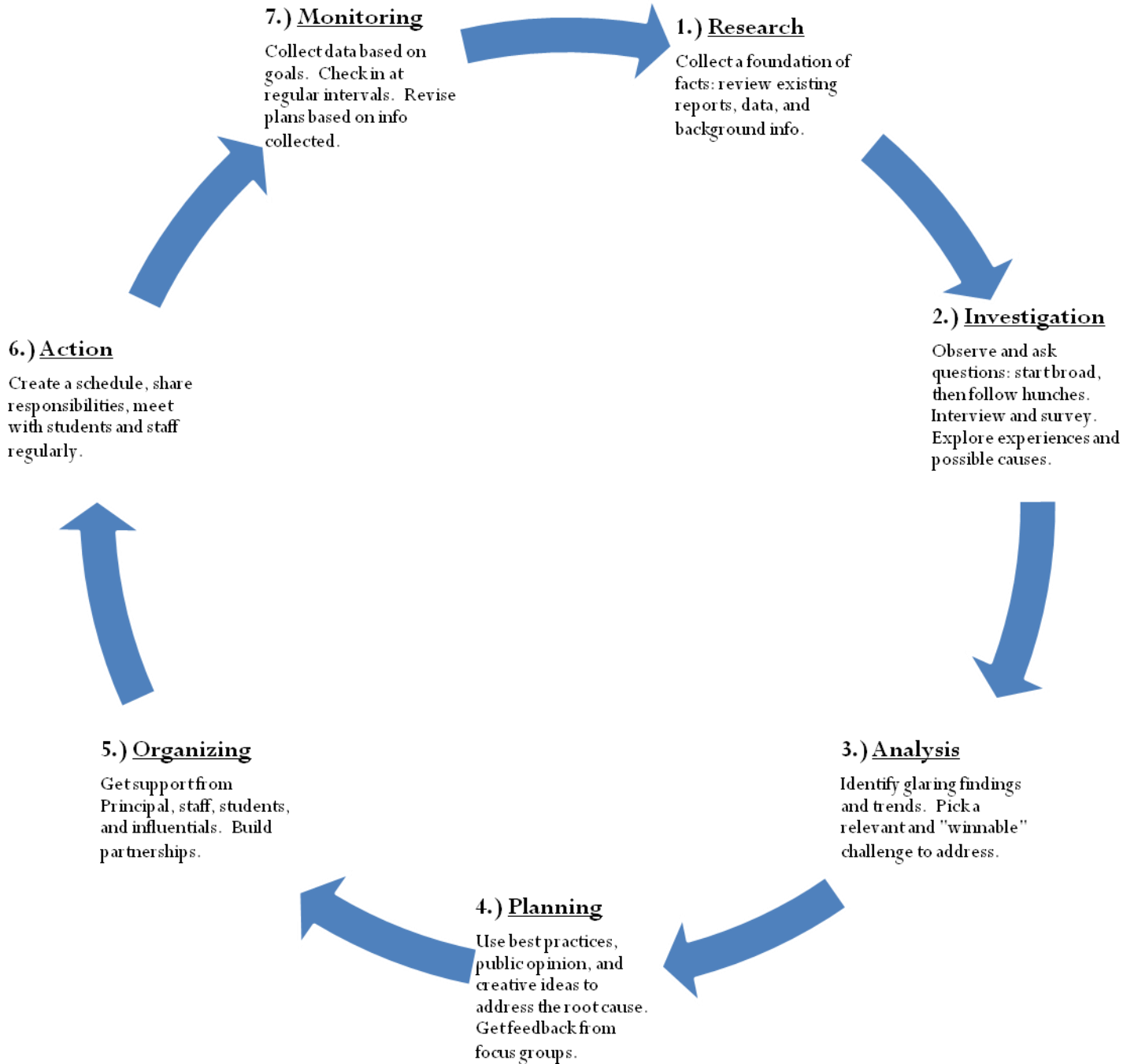
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>PROCESS</b> .....	5
<b>PROJECT SUMMARIES</b>	
Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies.....	9
Community School for Social Justice.....	14
Gotham Professional Arts Academy.....	18
Institute for Collaborative Education.....	22
Vanguard High School.....	26
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
Appendix 1: BCS Supporting Documents.....	31
Appendix 2: CSSJ Supporting Documents.....	35
Appendix 3: Gotham Supporting Documents.....	38
Appendix 4: ICE Supporting Documents.....	44
Appendix 5: Vanguard Supporting Documents.....	49

# The Inquiry Process

## Student-Led School Improvement



# THE PROCESS

---

## PURPOSE

This year the Student Voice Collaborative set out to learn more about our schools, identify important challenges, and create student-led programs to address these challenges. We wanted to show that school improvement efforts can make a bigger impact when students are behind them and lead the way. While we expected to spend most of the year researching and planning and building partnerships with students and staff, we hoped to launch small “pilot” programs to start improving the school experience for students immediately. Next year we will use the lessons we’ve learned to improve and expand the reach of our programs.

While each SVC school has a unique community and a unique approach, we decided to follow the same general inquiry process move forward purposefully and support each other at each stage along the way. The seven steps of our inquiry process include: research, investigation, analysis, planning, organizing, action, and monitoring. They are overlapping and repeating.

## 1.) RESEARCH

We started by taking a step back and looking critically at our schools in order to identify our greatest strengths and challenges. Before conducting our own assessments, each pair of students looked over the three documents the NYC Department of Education uses to evaluate different aspects of our schools every year: the School Quality Review, the Progress Report, and the Learning Environment Survey.

The School Quality Review measures how well the school is organized to educate its students. Each school is graded based on five quality statements listed on a rubric. The statements include: instructional and organizational coherence, gather and analyze data, plan and set goals, align capacity building, and monitor and revise. Overall, and on each statement, a school can earn one of the following scores: underdeveloped, developing, proficient, or well developed. The Progress Report is basically a report card that uses quantitative data to grade schools on a scale from A to F. There are three general categories that affect a high school’s overall score. They include school environment (survey scores and attendance), student performance (graduation rates), and student progress (credit accumulation and Regents scores). The Learning Environment Survey is a long questionnaire that collects qualitative opinion data from three groups of stakeholders: students, parents and teachers. This survey asks individuals how they feel about the school environment and its leadership. It paints a picture of how the community feels about things going on and whether students, teachers, and parents are on the same page or not.

As we studied these three documents we started to record evidence of strengths and challenges into a large chart, allowing us to clearly see findings from different sources side by side. Moving forward, groups could continue using this chart to jot down information collected from different places.

## 2.) INVESTIGATION

Our next step as students was to observe our school with our own eyes, ask important questions, look closer, and dig deeper. In order to learn more about their experiences and perspectives, each school created its own surveys and administered them to a representative sample of about 30 students and 10 teachers. We started with broad questions: What are our greatest strengths? What are our greatest challenges? Then, we asked a few questions about the possible issues that emerged from looking at reports earlier: Do you think this is a problem? What effects do you see? What are some possible causes? Gathering public opinion is an important part of the process because we want

# THE PROCESS

---

everyone (especially students) to be interested and feel heard so that they want to be more involved and take on leadership roles.

After surveying, each school interviewed its Principal. Similar to our survey approach, we asked our Principals broad questions first before zoning in on possible issues. An important question for our Principals was: What are you already doing to address these challenges? Asking this question gave us some background knowledge and helped us pick up from where we are, rather than have to build solutions from scratch. We also asked our Principals what the school might do next to improve in the issue areas? Some schools conducted similar interviews with teacher (teams) as well. Throughout this stage (and the whole project), we paid attention to our own school experiences and had informal conversations with as many people as possible about theirs.

## 3.) ANALYSIS

By the end of the investigation stage, our data charts were full with information from 6-8 sources. Having all our data in one place allowed us to go back whenever we needed to find information and made analysis easier. To find our overall greatest strengths and challenges, we looked across our charts for glaring findings and trends. In addition to the main data chart, each school used two worksheets to help conduct our analysis. First, the Developing Trends Worksheet asked us to list the most significant strengths and challenges we found and provide evidence for each. Then, after each school selected an issue to address for the school year, we used the Target Challenge Worksheet to outline possible causes and solutions we heard (from students, staff, and principals) or brainstormed.

## 4.) PLANNING

Before deciding what actions to take, we collected “best practice” research from a variety of academic and educational web sites. This helped because it allowed us to read about challenges similar to ours and learn which strategies seem to work and which don’t from the experts. Then we drafted step-by-step action plans after answering the following 5 questions: 1.) What’s the Problem? 2.) What’s at the root? 3.) What’s already being done about it? 4.) What do students and teachers think we should do about it? 5.) What works? (according to best-practice research)? Finally, we conducted student focus groups to bounce our action plan ideas off of our classmates. Some of the focus groups were made up of student council members. We used their feedback to revise our plans and better address the issues at hand. Focus groups helped increase communication and engagement because we were able to hear from students what they felt would help them out the most.

## 5.) ORGANIZING

For a plan to be effective it needs support from everyone at the school. We started our organizing campaigns with our principals, since they hold the most decision-making power and have the best idea of what is possible. We drafted one-page summaries of our work and plans and shared them with our School Leadership Teams (SLT), asking for support with our next steps. It was important to get principals and school leaders on board from the beginning. Looking for student allies and volunteers, we made the same pitch to our Student Councils and focus group members. Groups then scheduled meetings with “influentials” (inside and outside of the Department of Education) to further share our work, get advice, and build key partnerships. We hope this report itself will help connect people who are interested in student-led school improvement and will lead to new relationships and opportunities.

# THE PROCESS

---

## 6.) ACTION

The actions we took were different because each school has its own unique challenge, community, and plan. Yet, each week we updated each other on our progress and learned from each other's successes and mistakes. We also checked in weekly with our staff liaisons at our schools to think through problems and get support. No matter the project, it was important for groups to stay organized and share responsibilities. We created a number of supporting documents (*see appendices*) and kept track of our results. Each school gave students and teachers roles that were important for keeping the programs running. As students, it would have been impossible to do it alone.

## 7.) MONITORING

Each group's goals decided the information that they collected to monitor progress. The monitoring process was very important because it gave groups an idea of how their project was going and if it was producing results or not. When monitoring, it is important to collect the same type of information consistently and to check in on a regular basis. Some groups monitored student progress on a weekly basis and all groups compared starting data to ending data to see how far they'd come. Each time school groups collected information or feedback, they used it to revise their plans and determine their next steps.



# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## Student-Led After School Programming

Benjamin Randazzo and Benjamin Wilson  
*Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies (BCS)*

### BACKGROUND

Our school-based student leadership group is the Student Council, which consists of students in all grades, ranging from 6 through 12. The Student Council's goal has been to create school spirit and bring some new community events. This year the Student Council planned 2 spirit weeks that were very successful and organized a BCS carnival. The Student Voice Collaborative helps our Student Council to stay on track in our efforts to strengthen our school. When we discuss our SVC work at Student Council meetings it makes students feel like there is sense of collaboration and networking going. We attend Student Council meetings during school and SVC meetings after school every Wednesday. During Student Council we update students on our SVC project and try to get support. Members of our Student Council have provided us with useful ideas for our project and have helped hand out and collect the after school surveys we designed.

### RESEARCH:

Through a wide range of research, we identified a number of strengths and challenges at our school, which helped us prioritize and focus on a specific goal.

#### *Strengths*

- **High student engagement**
  - NYC Learning Environment Survey: 7.1 out of 10
- **Maintaining healthy student relationships between students and teachers**
  - School Quality Review: "What the school does well"
- **Strong collaboration between students and teachers**
  - Teacher Surveys
- **Students feel safe around the building**
  - Learning Environment Survey: 87% of students agree
- **High graduation rate**
  - NYC Progress Report: 84.2% graduation rate

#### *Challenges*

- **Lack of extracurricular activities and sports**
  - Student survey: 14 out of 26 open responses
  - Student focus group trend
- **Discipline**
  - Learning Environment Survey: 48% of teachers believe discipline is maintained
  - Principal interview: Recognizes disruption in classes
- **Student Motivation**
  - Learning Environment Survey: 1 out of 4 students not inspired to learn
- **Teachers can be more involved in school decisions**
  - Learning Environment Survey: 65% of teachers feel invited to help make decisions for school
- **Need to improve system for benchmarking student progress so teachers can adjust goals**
  - School Quality Review: "What the school needs to improve"

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## SCHOOL CHALLENGE

We decided to focus on increasing the amount of extracurricular activities offered at BCS. We chose this as our target challenge because we hear daily complaints from students about the lack of sports and activities and this challenge was repeated during conversations with some teachers and our Principal, Alyce Barr. Some of our parents are also disappointed because they feel that their kids deserve sports, extracurricular activities, and all the perks that come with being a high school student. We believe that building more after school activities will increase student interest and involvement all around the school. Having multiple activities for students can benefit our school in other ways too. The school culture would be a lot brighter and would attract people viewing our school. Seeing a school with a lot of outlets and opportunities makes others want to be involved in the school's culture. We believe that expanding after school activities will lead to more participation among students and staff in the school community.

### *Principal Interview: What Was Already Being Done?*

Our Principal, Alyce Barr, informed us that outside organizations such as Outward Bound have been offering students after school opportunities. A couple popular activities offered after school at BCS include Robotics club, Yu-gi-oh club and after school drumming. Our Principal mentioned that she has been trying to form connections with other outside organizations that offer free programs for students. She suggested that we try to find sponsors to help with the costs of the more expensive clubs and activities (i.e. football and baseball). We do not have the resources so we would have to pay money to run those activities.

### *Student Focus Group*

After facilitating our student focus group we gained an understanding about how students really feel about our school and what they experience behind the scenes. To address a lack of after school opportunities, students suggested that we start up some activities so that students can be more involved in school and that teachers and adults in general can recognize students' interests. Students at first were a little confused about how a student-led activity would go down at our school. As we provided more information, students became open to the idea, and they were interested in seeing it happen.

### *Best Practice Research*

We have gathered information from different sources about how to build after school programs and we have gotten a better grasp what works and what doesn't work.

- **Interview participants and collect detailed information**  
*Public/Private Ventures, [www.ppv.org/ppv/research.asp](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/research.asp)*
- **Measure the impact of the program on participants lives**  
*Public/Private Ventures, [www.ppv.org/ppv/research.asp](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/research.asp)*
- **Develop meaningful relationships between students and teachers: When students have good relationships with teachers, change is more likely.**  
*Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, [www.sedl.org/change/school/culture.html](http://www.sedl.org/change/school/culture.html)*
- **When parents are involved in their children's education it helps them positively progress.**  
*JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/1001713>*
- **Show teens their time will not be wasted and their work will pay off and help them to succeed**  
*Wallace Foundation, <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality/quality-strategies/Pages/default.aspx>*

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## ACTION PLAN

The big idea for our action plan was to start up a handful of new student-led activities and create a system of desired programs that are run, organized, recruited, and led by students. Our action plan is based on our research and follows up on our interview with our principal. The best practice research gave us some solid ideas about what other people with our school's problem are doing. Below are the steps we took:

- 1.) Conducted a survey during advisory of grades 9-11 to gain information from students about the types of sports and activities they are most interested in. We asked students to write in the five activities they want most and we left space for them to volunteer to lead/facilitate. We made it clear on the survey that this was a separate survey created by us, not the PE department, which had conducted a survey earlier in the week.
- 2.) Analyzed survey results (content analysis), combining like responses. From there, we determined the most popular programs and created a list of club facilitator volunteers for each popular activity.
- 3.) Shared list of activities with NYC DOE Office of Youth Development to gather ideas for partnerships and resources.
- 4.) Presented the results to our principal and other school leaders to discuss thoughts and funding ideas.
- 5.) Showed teachers the survey results and attempted to find staff members to advise the activities that students expressed interest in.
- 6.) Held first meeting with student club facilitators and interested teachers where they learned their roles and responsibilities and were given an assignment to recruit and write a program description.
- 7.) Held second meeting with student club facilitators and interested teachers where we collected rosters and activity descriptions and planned to meet and kick-start new programs in September.

## MONITORING

We created a spreadsheet to keep track of students' extracurricular activity interests and record which students volunteered to lead activities. The spreadsheet allowed us to go back whenever we needed to view the data and/or contact the students who expressed interest in leading activities. We also collected feedback and ideas from students who expressed interest in facilitating activities at the two meetings we held.

## COMMUNICATION

After we conducted our survey we met with Serge St. Leger, Director of School and CBO Partnerships for the NYC DOE, to share our work and the results of our survey. We sought his help and advice because we knew he deals with these kinds of issues. Mr. St. Leger said that if we want to start larger activities like sports we will need to find sponsors to support us. He also offered to help us connect with organizations in our community. We hope to build a partnership with Mr. St. Leger and stay in touch.

We shared our project idea with staff by delivering an announcement at the school cabinet meeting which consists of our principal, assistant principal and teachers from both the middle school and high school. We also updated students on our progress at numerous Student Council meetings (which take place every Wednesday). At each of these meetings teachers and students gained interest and shared ideas for how to reach our goals. We developed further partnerships with crew (advisory) leaders when let us into their classes to conduct our survey. Passing out our student survey helped us gain awareness and interest from both students and staff as they realized that we really are trying to make a change and will respond to their ideas. As a result, we got support from students and staff members who volunteered to help facilitate clubs.

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## RESULTS

The student surveys that we conducted during the meeting for grades 9 through 11 went very well. We were able to visit all homerooms in each grade and each teacher was very understanding and cooperative. The results of our survey were very positive and critical to deciding our next steps. We gained an understanding about the interests of the student body and what kinds of activities they want at our school. We distributed about 200 surveys to students present in crew (advisory). The six most popular clubs amongst students are: Dance (22), Board Games (18), Cooking (14) Basketball Training (10), Fitness (10) and Debate (8). One problem with the results is that not all students in grades 9 through 11 took our survey. We tried to make up for this by holding a meeting to inform students of our project. A second problem was that we had trouble getting enough student club facilitators because, we probably did not give a clear enough explanation about the role and its importance. We created a spreadsheet to list possible club facilitators and participants. By next year we hope to have 18 student club facilitators for our 6 student-led activities and 1-2 teacher co-facilitators for each club. We gave student facilitators homework at our last meeting, asking them to provide a club description, a list of possible student members (with email addresses), the signature of a possible teacher co-facilitator, and a list of necessary materials. After the homework is collected we will review it, speak to the student facilitators and begin to contact the list of possible recruits that will participate.

When we collected final feedback during our meeting, student facilitators suggested that we do some more outreach to get a larger group of students and teachers willing to participate in student-led after school programming. Student facilitators feel that it is great what we are trying to do because we have a lack of interesting programs offered to students in the school community after school. Students feel that it will make them feel empowered to help facilitate a club and that they might not get this opportunity again in High School. The comments were very positive and made us feel like there was support from various people, which kept us motivated to make changes in our school.

From the process we learned that it is important to be clear and concise when informing students about plans and ideas that you want to implement within their community. It is important because students become distracted and not interested when you don't explain the purpose or get to the point. We learned it is important to let students know how they will benefit from supporting and participating in the program. The most successful strategy that we used during the process of creating our program was surveying. Using surveys helped us gain a general understanding of how people felt about what we were trying to get done and that helped us get suggestions on how we could adjust the process.

## NEXT STEPS

During the summer of 2011 we will follow-up with student facilitators about the homework they handed us in June and discuss a plan of action for the remaining part of the school year. One of our first steps will be to expand outreach by presenting during a town hall meeting and posting and handing out flyers. We will also go to all of the crews and meet with the student facilitators to clarify plans and set up a calendar of monthly facilitator meetings. It is our hope that our Principals will attend our meetings to show support. We will hold a first meeting in September to remind facilitators how the program will benefit them and all students, discuss the ideas that they have come up with over the summer, and figure out how to incorporate them for all activities being run next year. We plan to adjust our program as much as possible based on student facilitators' feedback and suggestions because we feel that their opinions matter as the go-to students for each of our clubs. We want facilitators to know that what they suggest will be put to action.

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

Our overall goal for next year is to have the top six clubs chosen by students from grades 9 through 11 running by the fall and for the participants on board now to stay on board for next year. We would like to stick with the most popular clubs and begin to implement them for the school community. We plan to start the school year off with the clubs and have them run throughout the school year. We also plan to constantly survey facilitators, teachers and students involved in our student led programming. The survey will help us once again adjust the clubs, so that they can satisfy everyone's needs involved in our program. We see the program being run by the student facilitator with teachers present only for support. We will constantly check in with student facilitators to find out how smoothly their club is being run.

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## Peer-to-Peer Mentoring

Carolina Simono & Shamika Parham  
*Community School for Social Justice (CSSJ)*

### BACKGROUND

We are both members of our Student Council, which is made up of approximately 12 students who get together to discuss changes we feel need to be made at our school. The Student Council also plans community service activities. Recently we participated in an AIDS Walk, a Breast Cancer Walk, and a clothing drive. The main goal of Student Council is to get students engaged in school, create an even better environment for learning, and serve our community. The members of Student Council support our work with SVC as well. Every time Student Council meets (Wednesdays), we share the latest work we are doing with SVC to improve our school and students give feedback. Some Student Council members have also signed up as peer mentors as part of the program we are developing.

### RESEARCH

At the beginning of the school year, we assessed our school by looking at data and best-practice research and by conducting surveys, interviews, and focus groups. At CSSJ, we found:

#### *Strengths*

- **Teachers provide helpful one-on-one tutoring and homework help during and after school**
  - Teacher and student surveys: 22 out of 40 open responses (combined)
- **Family group (advisory) helps build meaningful connections between students and their advisors**
  - Counselor and principal interviews
- **Small class size allows students more individualized help**
  - Student and teacher surveys
  - Principal interview
- **Students, teachers, and parents have 24-hour access to student grades and assignments online**
  - School Quality Review: "What the school does well"
- **Students complete rigorous performance-based assessment tasks (PBATs) instead of Regents**
  - School Quality Review: "What the school does well"

#### *Challenges*

- **Low attendance** (especially among freshmen)
  - Principal interview
- **Very early lunch period contributes to lateness**
  - Attendance Committee interview
- **Low parent involvement**
  - Attendance Committee interview
- **Lack of resources**
  - Student survey: 13 out of 20 open responses
- **Need to differentiate lessons for students of different abilities**
  - School Quality Review: "What the school needs to improve"

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## SCHOOL CHALLENGE

The challenge we chose to address is attendance. The reason why we chose attendance is because, in addition to students and teachers, our principal shared that attendance is a tremendous issue at our school. She explained that the attendance rate is especially low for freshmen and sophomores – for serious reasons in some cases and for unacceptable reasons in other cases. The issue is extremely important because students with low attendance are a lot less likely to graduate. We believe it is best to target students showing attendance problems at the beginning of ninth grade before they develop a chronic habit of not showing up to school. It is best that we try to encourage freshmen to come to school now so that they do not end up dropping out in their junior or senior years.

### *Principal Interview: What's Already Being Done?*

Sue-Ann Rosch, our principal, said the staff already has an attendance committee, which meets every week to focus on students with poor attendance. During their meetings they select specific students with low attendance and discuss what the school is doing to help them. The committee reports back after talking with students to see what the problems are and calling home. They try to provide these students with the support they need. During our interview with Sue-Ann, we shared our idea to start a peer mentoring program to help freshmen with low attendance and she felt our idea was a good one.

### *Focus Group*

We conducted a focus group with Student Council members. Students shared that they are more likely to come to school when there are interesting and fun things going on. They suggested that if our school offered sports teams and exciting extra-curricular activities maybe more students would show up to school. Student Council members also believe that switching the lunch period from morning to afternoon would get students to arrive earlier for class. When we shared our peer mentoring program idea, students said that they think it could work.

### *Best-Practice Research*

- **Attendance rate should be used to track progress** (days present divided by total days)  
*Wisconsin Dept of Public Instruction, [http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/ssos/pdf/ayp\\_attendGrad.pdf](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/ssos/pdf/ayp_attendGrad.pdf)*
- **Students should know: Absenteeism is directly related to dropping-out of school**  
*California Dept of Education, <http://wwwstatic.kern.org/gems/schcom/SchoolAttendanceImprovementH.pdf>*
- **Students with attendance problems often develop negative social behaviors**  
*National Dropout Prevention Center, <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED485683>*
- **Keep in mind that attendance progress is slow; Many schools are struggling to increase attendance rates**  
*Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, <http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED484551>*
- **Students have a natural tendency to look up to slightly older youth**  
*Education Northwest, [http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm\\_send/169](http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/169)*
- **Mentors benefit from interacting with each other and build new relationships beyond their normal circle**  
*Education Northwest, [http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm\\_send/169](http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/169)*
- **HS mentors report improved communication skills and feeling stronger connection to community**  
*Professional School Counseling, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Increases%20in%20academic%20connectedness%20and%20self-esteem%20among%20high%20school...-a0198412428>*

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## ACTION PLAN

We decided to start a peer-to-peer mentoring program at our school to address our attendance challenge. We felt that older students would be able to influence younger students to come to school more often and make better decisions. Below are the action steps we took together:

- 1.) Met with school Social Worker and SVC Staff Liaison, Sherry Ann Jenkins and asked her to help us coordinate peer-to-peer mentoring program.
- 2.) Looked at cumulative attendance and identified 8 freshmen (mentees) in the 60-80% range. These are “at-risk” students who we felt would be more likely to turn things around than students with lower attendance.
- 3.) Recruited 8 juniors who are established leaders to serve as mentors.
- 4.) Held an introductory meeting where we paired freshmen mentees with junior mentors and shared the details of the program and our expectations. We chose juniors to be mentors because they will return next year to continue providing support.
- 5.) We created a spreadsheet to track the attendance of our mentees throughout the program (we recorded attendance every week) as well as a check-in sheet for mentors to use with mentees (with spaces each week for attendance and signatures).
- 6.) Held check-ins every Friday, following these steps:
  - Collected weekly attendance in the morning from AP, Jaime Guzman.
  - Flagged down mentors during family group (advisory) and shared weekly attendance.
  - Then mentors flagged down mentees in family group to talk about life, look at attendance, and sign the check-in sheet. Mentors got to know mentees and encouraged them to come to school.
  - Sherry-Ann gave support to mentors/mentees when needed and helped organize some group meetings.
- 7.) At the end of the program we held a pizza/ice cream party and ceremony and the students that participated received certificates.

## MONITORING

In order to monitor attendance in an organized manner we decided to collect attendance data for all mentees on a single spreadsheet. We recorded data every week at the same time. Every Friday when we filled out the spreadsheet, we shared weekly attendance data with mentors who entered the attendance on their own check-in sheets. The check-in sheets included the following information: yearly attendance rate, total absences, and weekly absences. All along the "attendance tracker" helped each mentor see whether or not his/her mentee's attendance was improving. Once the program ended we interviewed the students who showed the greatest progress. We also gave out mentors and mentees a survey to see what worked and didn't work for them during the program. After we reviewed the surveys, we brainstormed ideas and ways we could improve the mentoring program for next year.

## COMMUNICATION

When we first introduced the mentoring program idea to our Principal she thought it was a very valuable and beneficial idea. She felt that this program would help improve the attendance in our school especially among the freshmen. After getting her approval, our staff Liaison agreed to help facilitate the mentoring program. We held 2 meetings to introduce the program to students. The first meeting was for potential 11th grade mentors and the second meeting was for 9th grade mentees. We shared our expectations with both groups as well as the details about how the program works and the type of results we hoped to see at the end. We explained the possible benefits for everyone involved and discussed that participants would receive awards. At one point in the school year we met



## PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

with Leslie Cornfeld, Chairperson for the Mayor's Interagency Task Force on Absenteeism, at City Hall. She shared what her committee is doing at the city-wide level to address attendance, including recorded celebrity wake-up calls and a mentoring program with adult mentors. Considering that we are also developing a mentoring program we hope to work and learn with the Task Force next school year.

### RESULTS

After analyzing our data we noticed that 3 out of 8 mentees' attendance increased. While the average change in attendance over the 8-week program was -0.1%, we have to keep in mind that student attendance usually decreases in general toward the end of the school year (especially for students with chronic attendance issues). So, the results are somewhat hopeful. The greatest attendance decrease by a mentee was -5.2% and the greatest attendance increase by a mentee was 5.7%.

After reviewing the mentees survey we learned that most of the mentees liked when their mentors encouraged them to come to school. Some of the mentees felt that the only thing that didn't work was that they didn't see their mentors enough. They recommended that they should get more time to talk with their mentors. We learned that kids come to school more when they feel like they are being encouraged by their peers and mentors. We noticed that the kids who got to spend more time with their mentors were those who went to school more often. Mentees generally thought the program was helpful and said they would like to be enrolled again next year. Mentees felt like good mentors can encourage them to come to school when no one else can. Overall, mentees reported good relationships with their mentors. We learned from interviewing mentees who did best, that they had mentors who talked to them regularly (even outside of "check-ins") and talked about more than school.

After looking back on the process of starting a peer-mentoring program we learned that kids come to school when they feel like others notice and care when they are not there. The biggest challenge we faced was getting mentees to start coming to school because some of them had gotten so used to their routine of not coming to school that it was hard to get them out of that bad habit. One strategy that seemed successful was rewarding mentees and mentors with parties and awards.

### NEXT STEPS

Our overall goal next year is to have a more successful program. We want to improve at least 60% of our mentees' attendance. We will start by applying suggestions from mentees and mentors to the mentoring program next year. One next step will be to recruit new mentors and mentees to join the program. From the beginning, we think we should better define what a mentor/mentee check-in entails. We need to do a better job of making sure all mentors check in with their mentees every Friday and train them to constantly encourage their mentees and talk to beyond check-ins about more than school. We realize that we need to start the mentoring program at the very beginning of the school year with incoming freshman and continuing sophomore mentees who still need help before they get into bad routines. We plan to get started during the summer bridge program by reviewing the 8<sup>th</sup> grade attendance of incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders, identifying possible mentees, and introducing ourselves to them. We would like to expand our program next year to 15 mentees and 15 mentors.

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## Fairness Circle

Millicent Broomfield & Aren Holder  
*Gotham Professional Arts Academy*

### BACKGROUND

Millicent is a member of Real Talk, a group of young women who get together to talk about the real-life situations they face every day in NYC. We discuss how we deal with the experiences and conflicts we encounter and give each other advice. In addition, we build mentor relationships in which seniors, who are partnered with freshmen, make sure their partners are doing well academically and staying on the right path. Aren is a member of Student Committee, which aims to improve issues students see and build awareness, school spirit, and school culture. Sophomores and juniors work together to raise funds to support each class in its senior year.

As SVC reps, we hope to spark change in our school by showing ambition, taking on leadership roles, and working to overcome the challenges we see. We also try to connect our work with SVC to our work with our student leadership groups at school. From time to time, we share updates from SVC and ask for feedback and ideas. We have made sure that the members of our groups are aware of our Fairness Committee's "grand opening" this school year and hope to involve them as much as possible in facilitating workshops, defining our core values, and serving on Fairness Committees.

### RESEARCH

In the past couple of months, we conducted a great deal of research using different resources. The information summarized below helped us figure out where to focus our attention and how to take next steps toward our goals.

#### *Strengths*

- **High academic expectations:** “Students need to work hard for good grades.”
  - Learning Environment Survey: 8 out of 10
- **High student engagement**
  - NYC Progress Report: 7.5 out of 10
- **School culture is consistent and collaborative**
  - School Quality Review: “What the school does well”
- **Teachers play a meaningful role in setting goals and making decisions**
  - Learning Environment Survey: 100% of teachers agree
- **Teachers treat students with respect**
  - NYC School Survey: 7 out of 10 (students); 8.7 out of 10 (parents)

#### *Challenges*

- **Safety**
  - Student-made survey: 17 out of 30 open responses
- **Lack of after school activities**
  - Student-made survey: 17 out of 30 open responses
- **Limited range of readability-leveled materials available for ELA instruction**
  - School Quality Review: “What the school needs to improve”
- **Students too often just look out for themselves**
  - Learning Environment Survey: 3.9 out of 10
- **Discipline**
  - Learning Environment Survey: 3 out of 10 teachers feel it is not maintained

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## SCHOOL CHALLENGE

Data, student surveys, teacher interviews, student focus groups, and our Principal interview all point to safety as our greatest challenge. Students, teachers, and administrators agree that there are safety challenges both inside and around our school community. We decided to start addressing safety inside our school instead of outside because we have more control over what goes on inside our school. We believe that improving safety is vital to our school community because it will allow students to feel more comfortable and do better. Safety is important to the elementary school students we share the school with too.

### *Principal Interview: What's Already Being Done?*

Our Principal, Alex White, shared that currently students who commit serious offenses are suspended. He supported the idea of starting a Fairness Circle and suggested we have students take part in shaping our core values during advisory activities to allow them to define what the school is about and feel more connected.

### *Focus Group*

After we explained how it works, students also agreed that starting a Fairness Circle and defining our core values would make a difference. Students in our focus group also thought peer mediation and detention would help solve issues. On a different note, student focus group members also thought we need to do a better job of keeping people out of the school who shouldn't be there.

### *Best-Practice Research*

- **Restorative justice should ideally be used to prevent or address conflict before it escalates.**  
State of Illinois, <http://www.icjia.state.il.us/public/pdf/BARJ/SCHOOL%20BARJ%20GUIDEBOOK.pdf>
- **Do not rely on (social) control.**  
*In Motion Magazine*, <http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/pedro31.html#Anchor-Humanizing-35882>
- **Hold clear and positive expectations for behavior.**  
*School safety and Violence; Dishion & Kavanagh, 2003*
- **Establish measurable goals in collaboration with students, families, and community members.** *George Washington University*,  
<http://gwired.gwu.edu/hamfish/merlin-cgi/p/downloadFile/d/20707/n/off/other/1/name/preventionpdf/>

## ACTION PLAN

We have decided to start a Fairness Circle at our School to involve students in solving problems and improve safety and school culture. What is Fairness Circle? Good question! Fairness Circle is a group of both teachers and students that comes together to resolve a conflict that is presented to them by two people. These cases are decided by the panel and the two parties together. We think Fairness Circle will be an effective way to improve relationships – between students and between students and staff members. Hopefully we won't have to see too many cases, but Fairness Circle will always be available as an option for resolving conflicts.

Below are the steps we took this school year to develop a Fairness Circle:

- 1.) Visited Humanities Prep High School, where Jeannie, the Dean, showed us how a fairness committee is run. While we were there, we observed students taking part in the fairness process.
- 2.) Got approval from our Principal, Alex White, and Dean, Isaac Mills, to start a Fairness Circle
- 3.) Created important documents for facilitating Fairness, including a process description and resolution form.

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

- 4.) Advertised the Fairness Circle – posted flyers in hallways explaining what it is and how to set one up
- 5.) Recruited and trained students and staff as facilitators
- 6.) Conducted a school-wide advisory lesson which asked students to discuss core values, gave examples, and define them.
- 7.) Conducted a few practice Fairness sessions, where students heard cases, went through the steps of an actual Fairness Circle, and offered resolutions.
- 8.) Debriefed with Alex and Isaac about the success of the Fairness practice runs.
- 9.) Conducted our first real Fairness Circle and surveyed participants about how it went.

### MONITORING

We monitored how well the Fairness Circle worked by conducting a post-fairness survey of participants and using a resolution form to see how well students and teachers followed through on decisions. Those who felt they were disrespected can tell us if things have improved or not. We will use feedback and suggestions to improve the Fairness Circle.

### COMMUNICATION

We initially shared our project with our Principal during an interview and with students during a focus group. During our focus group we asked students about the problems they see, what the school needs, and if fairness is something that would help. We also discussed Fairness Committee in our student leadership groups (Girl Talk and Student Committee) and collected ideas for how to make the program work well. To spread the word about what Fairness is and how to bring someone to Fairness, we distributed flyers across our school. We also met with Elayna Konstan, Chief Executive Officer, and Connie Cuttle, Director of Professional Development (in the Office of School and Youth Development) at the NYC DOE main office to discuss our idea for starting a fairness circle. They taught us about how restorative circles have been used and we realized that while Fairness Committees might only involve a handful of students, Fairness Circles can involve anyone in the community. We hope to continue working with Ms. Konstan and Ms. Cuttle as we develop our program.

### RESULTS

Through our advisory lesson, we were able to raise awareness of our school's three core values: Respect (for individuals, advisories, community, and creative products), City as Classroom, and Professionalism. The lesson also resulted in students identifying important examples of core value violations. Here are the most popular examples of violations for each core value: Respect (destroying artwork, fighting, bullying), City as Classroom (being loud and disruptive, disrespectful, skipping community service), and Professionalism (dressing inappropriately, speaking inappropriately, using electronics).

The Fairness circle we conducted was amazing and challenging. The circle agreed to a resolution and a student was assigned to monitor afterwards. Reflect back on our first Fairness Circle case, we learned that panelists need to do a better job of seeing from different perspectives at all times so everyone feels understood. The biggest challenge we faced was that the student brought to fairness came in with an attitude and was not willing to participate fully, which made the case tough. We tried our best to explain to her how important the Fairness Circle is but her attitude continued at first. The student brought to fairness opened up a little after one student facilitator told her that "this might be tough but we must work through it together...let's try to put attitudes aside and find a solution. We are here to help, and this teacher wants the best for you." We learned from the experience that if someone is not "giving in" it is best make a connection, express support, and focus on finding a solution.

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## NEXT STEPS

In mid-June we plan to run a training session for students interested in becoming facilitators in 2010-2011. Next year we would like to dedicate a block and a classroom to doing Fairness Circles (possibly advisory) with the approval of our Dean (Issac Mills), Social Worker (Shelby Mitchell), and Principal (Alex White). We want the entire school to participate including the ninth graders. We will also conduct our core value lesson again in the fall, including new ninth graders to make sure that their voices are included as well. We will make an effort to connect the core values more closely to the Fairness Circle so students know that Fairness Circles are called when community members violate the core values in different ways. We will hold a meeting in to find students interested see who is interested in becoming facilitators. We will advertise the core values by updating and distributing flyers. We want to be role models for the grades below and set positive examples to keep the community "running". Everyone will be expected to serve on the Fairness circle. We hope to make service mandatory like when the court calls people for Jury. Next year we would like to create a better system for submitting Fairness Circle requests, having students fill out request sheets that will be held by our Social Worker, Shelby.

In our trainings we will teach facilitators that when students who are brought to fairness have an attitude, we need to relate to them and support them and focus on solutions. This strategy seems to work. An overall goal for next year is to increase awareness of Gotham's core values, improve relationships and safety for students and staff, and solve conflicts more fairly. We plan to turn our pilot into a full program by increasing the number of fairness circles from one to between 10 and 20 (one or two a month). Shelby and Isaac will help coordinate Fairness with Aren and a new partner to take Millie's place. Together we will need to save all of our records and resolutions on file so everything is organized and we can go back to it. We will have to create a schedule of when student and staff facilitators are available to help facilitate fairness circles. We plan to collect and respond to all the feedback we get from Fairness Circle participants.

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## Student-Staff Feedback Cycles

Haley Burke and Ian Javier  
Institute for Collaborative Education (ICE)

### BACKGROUND

We are both members of the Principal Leadership Team (PLT), a student group that addresses school issues at I.C.E. The PLT also supports Youth Empowering Youth (YEY), a leadership/empowerment group made up of sixth grade girls. Both groups are intended to make sure the I.C.E. staff and administration makes decisions with student opinions in mind and both groups set an example for students at I.C.E. We share our work with SVC at PLT meetings from time to time to get different opinions. We also share what we're doing with PLT at SVC meetings. The members of PLT support our SVC project by providing helpful input.

### RESEARCH

In the beginning of the program, we conducted an assessment of our school through data collection, student/staff surveys, teacher interviews, and student focus groups. Below is a summary of what we found:

#### *Strengths*

- **Assess our students through meaningful and rigorous project work** (exempt from Regents)
  - School Quality Review: "What the school does well"
- **Teacher Collaboration and Inquiry**
  - School Quality Review: "What the school does well"
- **Opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education**
  - Learning Environment Survey: 93% of parents agree
- **Teachers create own curriculum, which makes learning more interesting and hands-on**
  - Student and teacher surveys
- **High Academic Expectations**
  - NYC Progress Report: 95.7th percentile compared to similar schools

#### *Challenges*

- **Low Attendance**
  - NYC Progress Report: 46<sup>th</sup> percentile compared to similar schools
- **Abuse of the "honor system"**
  - Student/teacher surveys
- **Unclear Consequences**
  - Student/teacher surveys
- **Limited Course Variety Offered**
  - Learning Environment Survey: 6.8 out of 10 rating by students and parents
- **Low rate of credit earning in 3rd year of school**
  - NYC Progress Report: 15.9<sup>th</sup> percentile compared to similar schools

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## SCHOOL CHALLENGE

After reviewing all of the data we collected, we decided to address the gap in student-staff communication and expectations because both students and staff agree that there is room for improvement. We feel that addressing this issue will help students and teachers understand each other and work together better. It will make expectations clear, strengthen the community, and create an even more family-like feel. This will make attending I.C.E. and working at I.C.E. more pleasant for students and teachers. We want students and teachers to have fair expectations and respect for each other – what all successful relationships are based off of.

### *Principal Interview: What's Already Being Done?*

We learned from our Principal, John Pettinato, that the population at I.C.E. has changed a lot since the school started in 1994. As the school has attracted more advanced students, the school has struggled to challenge them more and to provide enough enrichment. Resources used to seem plentiful to the kids, but students are now asking for more resources and academic courses. Teachers also have to deal with the challenge of breaking down and scaffolding material for students who struggle.

When we brought up the issue of expectations and respect, John agreed that sometimes students disrespect teachers. But he explained that when kids do something wrong, it is usually because of something else happening in their lives. Some schools follow the rule “3 times and you're out,” but John does not believe in this. Instead, he wants to focus on kids’ strengths and push them to do better. He admits that this method is more difficult than punishing kids and students and teachers who disagree with the philosophy sometimes complain. It is hard to deal with disrespectful kids and some students and teachers want the “troubled kids” gone, but it’s about more than just kicking kids out. He demands all the teachers be more patient with kids. We agree that to make expectations and communication clearer, students and teachers both need to be more patient and listen to one another.

### *Best-Practice Research*

- **When students take part in bridging student and teacher perspectives, they see teachers as more human and develop positive relations with them.**  
*McGill Journal of Education*,  
[www.fifeschools.com/.../StudentVoiceinSchoolReformReframingStudent-TeacherRelationships.pdf](http://www.fifeschools.com/.../StudentVoiceinSchoolReformReframingStudent-TeacherRelationships.pdf)
- **Provide teachers and students with strategies for knowing how to deal with unacceptable behavior and assisting with managing the classroom.**  
*Teacher Matters*, <http://www.teachermatters.com/>
- **Teachers should check their expectations: research establishes that teacher expectations play a significant role in determining how well students learn.**  
*University of Oregon*, <http://eric.uoregon.edu/publications/digests/digest116.html>
- **Collegial relationships facilitate change because interaction is the basis for learning.**  
*Southwest Education Development Laboratory*, <http://www.sedl.org/change/school/culture.html>
- **Keep students informed of plans and efforts: plans cannot be carried out successfully when students are not committed to cooperate and do not know what to do or how to do it.**  
*Southwest Education Development Laboratory*, <http://www.sedl.org/change/school/culture.html>

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## ACTION PLAN

We believe that the best way to address the communication gap and make expectations and consequences more clear is to conduct student-staff “feedback cycles.” Below are the steps we took to turn our plan into action:

- 1.) Introduced idea of “feedback cycles” (asking for student perspectives on an issue, asking for teacher perspectives, looking for gaps, and trying to bridge them) in town meeting.
- 2.) We conducted our first advisory lesson – starting broadly by asking students for their expectations for teachers and teachers for their expectations for students). Teachers recorded discussions on note sheets.
- 3.) Analyzed advisory lesson #1 results and created a chart highlighting biggest expectation gaps.
- 4.) Presented advisory lesson #1 findings and main ideas to PLT and in town meeting.
- 5.) Conducted advisory lesson #2 using two main ideas from the first lesson as prompts: a.) defining respect and b.) how to deal when expectations aren’t met
- 6.) Analyzed advisory lesson #2 results and created a summary chart
- 7.) Brainstormed actions based on lesson #2 results
- 8.) Shared results and possible actions with PLT and town meeting and decided how we are going to start off next year.

## MONITORING

We gathered opinions and found out whether our “feedback cycles” were making a difference through our focus groups with PLT and YEY, Town Hall presentations, and advisory lesson discussions. During our last feedback cycle we not only asked focus questions but also asked students how they feel about the cycle and whether they think it has the potential to improve communication between students and staff. Members of the PLT gave us good insight on how to improve our surveys. Also the feedback given to us by students and teachers during advisory discussions made a huge difference. We understand that it was sometimes inconvenient for students and teachers to participate and dedicate an advisory period to our lessons, but we think they were important and really do appreciate the school's involvement. The participation and help that we got really speaks to the strong community that us as "ICEcians" take pride in.

## COMMUNICATION

After sharing with our Principal, we originally presented our idea for staff-student feedback cycles to two student focus groups: YEY and PLT. With both groups we hoped to learn more from students about whether they agreed that there is an expectations gap at ICE and, if so, where and how they experience it. Once students agreed that the challenge exists and described it, we worked with our Staff Liaison, Imani Matthews, to develop a feedback cycle process. We then went back to PLT to share the details. Once they approved our approach we met with Marieke van Woerkom, a Facilitator at Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility who helps schools develop their advisory systems. She gave us some good ideas for engaging the school and improving our cycles. Marieke also shared some good resources for understanding behavior and making expectations clear. After we communicated with all the important people and groups, we put the feedback cycles into play at ICE.

## RESULTS

The results of our first student-staff feedback cycle revealed two important gaps of communication between students and teachers: 1.) not knowing how to deal with a situation when expectations are not met and 2.) not wanting to respect those who we feel are not respecting us. From our second feedback cycle, we learned that some common examples of misunderstanding between students and teacher include false accusations and failing to follow rules. We



## PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

also heard some important ideas for bridging expectations including: advisory activities to teach students and teachers how to communicate more clearly and a fairness committee. Students and staff also suggested that we share the importance of communicating at Town Hall meetings. One strategy we have found works during our project is raising the problems that we see and hear about before the entire school.

In response to our final teacher survey, some suggested that we schedule student-staff feedback cycles once or twice a month in advance to diminish the chaos that comes from trying to conduct lessons with little notice. Teachers also suggested: we refrain from doing cycles during hectic times of year, present more at town meeting, be more prepared and organized with handing out and collecting feedback cycles and make surveys 15 minutes instead of the whole period. In doing our project we realized that while ICE has a wonderful and warm learning environment, there is room to improve communication and align expectations and every single person needs to be behind this change.

### NEXT STEPS

Next year we plan to continue dialogue through feedback cycles, turning it from a two-time pilot into a full program and regular part of the first town meeting and following advisory of every month. We will send out an email to all teachers a week before asking them to conduct advisory focus groups. This will prepare teachers to be ready. We will also attempt to get more students to help lead conversations and make announcements. After each advisory focus group we would like to present our findings to the school and try to have a school wide discussion during town meeting with the help of the town meeting hosts. We plan to let students and staff know that they can come to us to share issues related to student-staff communication and expectations and we will address their concerns through our cycles.

But, next year, we would like to do more than just talk about expectations and communication. We would also like to take action and develop monthly activities, with the help of outside experts (like Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility) to teach students and teachers how to better communicate needs and expectations and practice together. We will present this idea to our PLT and hope to work with them more closely. We want to get more support from the staff at ICE and find a teacher to accompany us in our program.

When we conducted our end of year survey people suggested that we hold focus groups during town meeting so we could have the whole group participate together. Another suggestion was having each student fill out a survey sheet on his/her own before having discussions so everyone is more involved. Last but not least, many people said that to help solve issues students and teachers come across with each other we should explore starting a fairness group with the help of schools who already have a similar group in place. As we move ahead, we hope to promote four guidelines that we believe in when it comes to communication: mutual respect, attentive listening, let go and move on, and no put downs/only put-ups.

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

## Student Voice Facilitators and Instructional Planning

Jeremy Lopez and Manuel Delacruz

*Vanguard High School*

### BACKGROUND

We are members of our Student Leadership Team (SLT), which is a group of students that tries to improve Vanguard's school environment. The SLT is made up of 2 representatives from each advisory. The goal of the group is to help students organize, research, and start up projects. SVC supports SLT by helping us pick a main goal and start up an important project. We report our progress and results to the SLT at our meetings every week. Throughout the year SLT members have offered their help when it comes to anything being done with SVC. They are behind what we are trying to do and provide us with helpful feedback on our ideas.

### RESEARCH

#### *Strengths*

- **Quality academic support**
  - Student Survey: 13 out of 30 open-ended responses
- **Comprehensive electronic data system for tracking student progress and monitoring performance**
  - School Quality Review: "What the school does well"
- **Students feel welcome**
  - Learning environment survey: 92% of students agree
- **Strong relationships with high levels of mutual respect**
  - School Quality Review: "What the school does well"
- **High academic expectations**
  - Learning Environment Survey: 8.1 out of 10

#### *Challenges*

- **Not enough class variety to keep students interested**
  - NYC School Survey: 35% of students agree
- **Low graduation rate**
  - NYC Progress Report: 57.4% graduation rate (29th percentile compared to similar schools)
- **Boys in particular need to be further engaged**
  - School Quality Review:
- **Low student motivation and commitment**
  - Student Surveys: 10 out of 30 open responses
- **Need to strengthen goal setting for individual students so they are aware of next learning steps**
  - School Quality Review: "What the school needs to improve"

### SCHOOL CHALLENGE

After conducting our school assessment, we decided to address low student motivation. Students and teachers agree that while we have a good environment and work well as a community, classes could be more engaging for students. We feel that it is very important to address student engagement because when students are not engaged they do not

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

feel motivated enough to do work in class. In order to address the issue we had to find out what Vanguard was already doing to help our students. For this we interviewed our Principal, Luis Delgado, held a student focus group, and read a collection of best-practice research:

## *Principal Interview: What's Already Being Done?*

Vanguard is already trying different methods to help engage students more in classes and get more student voice into the school. One of the ways Vanguard tries to support students is by having social workers available to speak with them and help them as much as they can with any problems students might be going through. This helps because students cannot be completely engaged in class if they are worrying about things at home or outside of school that may be bothering them. Also teachers at Vanguard care very much for students and often change their lesson plans to better meet student needs and interests. Finally, Vanguard started a partnership this year with Fordham University. A number of Vanguard teachers served as mentors for Fordham student teachers. Occasionally the whole group met to plan and debrief lessons together. Like our work, the focus of the partnership has been to study and improve student engagement.

## *Focus Group*

From our conference with fellow students we found that students think that a way to get students more motivated and active in classrooms is to get them to work more closely with teachers. Students agree that partnerships with teachers are one of the strongest ways to get students engaged. They also thought that if students were a part of lesson planning it might help them better see what goes into teaching and engaging students.

## *Best-Practice Research*

- **Before a decision can be made in a school you must first get everyone's opinion on the subject so that it is accepted by all.**  
*Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, <http://www.sedl.org/change/school/culture.html>*
- **Having a way to track all your work throughout the process is key to improving and expanding.**  
*Public/Private Ventures, <http://www.ppv.org/ppv/research.asp#Section1>*
- **A good program starts with a clear picture of what you want to get out of it.**  
*Wallace Foundation, <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality/quality-strategies/Pages/default.aspx>*
- **Consulting with different teachers and students offers new ideas for how to do things better.**  
*Public/Private Ventures, <http://www.ppv.org/ppv/research.asp#Section1>*
- **Explaining the benefits of participating gives participants the motivation to do the work.**  
*Wallace Foundation, <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality/quality-strategies/Pages/default.aspx>*

## ACTION PLAN

To improve engagement, we decided we would try to incorporate student voice into class lessons as our student focus group suggested. There is no better way to make classes interesting for students than to have them help plan them. Allowing students' opinions into the lesson planning conversation would give Vanguard teachers and Fordham student teachers a chance to learn from students' viewpoints. It would also give Vanguard students an opportunity to see into the lesson planning processes, allowing them to better understand how things work and how to design lessons that are easier for their classmates to understand.

Rather than trying to conduct a project in every classroom, we started a "pilot" program in two classrooms – one humanities class (teacher: Orlando Torres, student teacher: Bryan Cary) and one math class (teacher: Ronit Eisig,

# PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

student teacher: Marcy Abrams). In each class, we looked for a student leader to play the role of the “Student Voice Facilitator” whose job it would be to collect student opinions and share them with teachers during planning (for humanities: Belen Gomez, for math: Kevon Moore O’Neal). Since Vanguard already had a partnership with Fordham University, we chose to experiment in classes with Fordham student teachers so students, Fordham student teachers, and Vanguard teachers could all learn from one another.

Below are the steps we took to conduct our pilot program:

- 1.) Got support from Fordham University teaching program for our project.
- 2.) Found two Fordham student teachers and two Vanguard teachers interested in participating and had them sign contracts we created with our expectations for them
- 3.) Looked through student rosters for the two classes we chose with Vanguard teachers and picked potential Student Voice Facilitators who are leaders in class and get respect from classmates. Had the two students who accepted sign the same contract.
- 4.) Met with each set of participants (student, Fordham student teacher, and Vanguard teacher) and shared a generic student feedback sheet and calendar of cycles for collecting and incorporating student voice.
- 5.) Student Voice Facilitators and teachers adapted the feedback sheets to include specific questions about what exactly was going on in class. Surveys were 3-7 questions (5-point scale, multiple choice, and fill-in).
- 6.) During the weekly cycle, there were four steps: the Student Voice Facilitators hands out a survey and collects feedback; the Student Voice Facilitator analyzes the feedback and identifies the “big ideas;” the Student Voice Facilitator meets with the teachers and shares; and the teachers incorporate student feedback into lessons and share what they’ve heard and done with the class.

## MONITORING

We chose to monitor student opinions about this program using feedback sheets, which were given out to students weekly by Student Voice Facilitators. The feedback sheet is constantly changing to adapt to what is going on in the classroom. The class learning goals stay the same, but the engagement strategies change and the survey measures which strategies do the best job of keeping students interested and on track to meet learning goals. We also conducted pre- and post-program surveys for Fordham and Vanguard teachers to see whether student engagement and performance improved throughout the course of the pilot program. We monitor progress by checking in with our Student Voice Facilitators every week as well.

## COMMUNICATION

We first shared our student-led project idea with the Student Leadership Team (SLT). Our goal was to gain support from the students. We also spoke with Mark Klarman, a veteran teacher who is Vanguard's liaison to the Fordham program. Through Mark we were able to pass our ideas to the leader of Fordham's program as well as to other Fordham student teachers. We also brought the idea to our Principal, Louis Delgado, who supported us all the way. After our program was approved, we asked two Vanguard students – Belen Gomez and Kavon \_\_\_\_\_ – to serve as Student Voice Facilitators and they agreed. Every week Student Voice Facilitators and teachers communicated findings and plans with their classes. Finally, in mid-May, we met with Doug Knecht, Executive Director for Academic Quality at the NYC DOE, to share our work and to hear his thoughts. He left us with two good recommendations: to invite disengaged students to sit in on teachers’ planning meetings when possible and to have students develop a list of what they consider the most engaging strategies/activities. We hope to stay in touch and

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

work with him Doug his Knowledge Sharing team next school year to teach and learn from other schools interested in this work.

### RESULTS

The results of each survey taken in class were analyzed and used to help improve class engagement. The Student Voice Facilitator and the Fordham student teacher shared results and how the teachers planned to respond. While teachers stuck with their curriculum and lesson plans, they did make small changes in the classroom. Over the 6-week pilot, student engagement scores improved, but only slightly. A couple activities that students found consistently more engaging include: book circle (reading and discussing aloud) and circulating through stations.

Through the final survey, teachers shared the belief that engagement increased only slightly from the beginning of the program to the end, though they believed the program should be improved and conducted for a longer period to see how effective it could be. Teachers also recognized that surveys became repetitive over time and students started to feel they were more of a hassle than helpful. Yet, even still, teachers see the project as a way to make sure students' needs and interests are met (even though it's hard to satisfy everyone). They also see the project as an opportunity to teach research skills. Finally, teachers offered a couple recommendations through their feedback including: having an archiving system for data collected each cycle and removing students who don't take the survey seriously from data analysis.

We found that while students gave very broad answers to questions during conversations, gave more precise answers to survey questions. So, surveying was an effective strategy. One challenge we faced all along was finding class time to hand out the weekly surveys. This was because teachers planned lessons in advance and felt crunched for time so surveys were hard to squeeze in. We realize that surveys have to be completed in class because when we allowed students to take them home many students forgot or lost the survey. Another effective strategy was designing the surveys to have more multiple choice questions and fewer short answer questions so they are easier to complete and less time consuming.

### NEXT STEPS

The first thing we plan to do is to use the feedback we collected from teachers and students to make the program better. To make them more meaningful and less tiresome and repetitive, we plan to hand out feedback sheets every few weeks instead of every week. We will start the program in the first semester to establish a routine early and give teachers time to make more significant changes to their planning. We will present our program to students and new Fordham student teachers and recruit interested participants a few weeks into the fall semester. We hope to offer Student Voice Facilitators course credit (or at least extra credit) next year.

Next year we hope to turn our pilot into a larger program by increasing from two classes with Student Voice Facilitators to five. In as many cases as possible we would like to have two Student Voice Facilitators in the same classroom working together – one to create, edit, and hand out surveys and another to attend weekly planning meetings. We would like to get more disengaged students to attend teachers' planning meetings so they feel more valued and invested. We will continue to encourage Student Voice Facilitators to design surveys that are short and to the point with more multiple choice and fewer fill-in questions. We plan to archive all of our survey results and records next year to better organize our findings.

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

---

We would like to hold monthly Student Voice Facilitator meetings to share successes, challenges, and most-engaging practices. After each of these meetings we would like to meet with the School Leadership Team to share and spread the best engaging practices. To keep the students in the loop, we plan to share project updates with the Student Leadership Team every few cycles.

# APPENDIX 1: BCS Supporting Documents

---

## Student-Led Activities Survey:

Make your voice heard!

After asking students about our school's needs, we have found that one of the biggest issues we face is a lack of extracurricular activities and sports. The point of this survey is to better understand exactly which activities BCS students want most. With the survey results we will go ahead and try to start up the most popular activities with the help of our staff.

*Below, list any activities/clubs that you would like to see offered after school at BCS:*

*Check box if you would like  
to help lead/organize club?*

_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (*please print clearly*): \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 1: BCS Supporting Documents

---

### Results of Student-Led Activities Survey

<b>Clubs/Activities</b>	<b># Votes</b>
Dance Club	23
Cooking club	15
Chess Club	12
Fitness/Workout	11
Basketball Training (Boys)	10
Debate Team	9
Board/Card Games	8
Cheerleading	8
Drama Club	6
Video Game Club	6



# APPENDIX 1: BCS Supporting Documents

---

## Checklist for Student-Led Club Facilitators

*This must be done by Friday, June 3, 2011. Please submit to Christine/Noelle's mailbox in room 516!*

- Description of your club/activity
- Propose day, time, and location for your activity
- Staff Co-Facilitator (find a staff member who will “advise” or co-lead your group)
- Recruit 10 students and gather their contact information
- Materials you will need to run your club/activity

### 1. Description of your club/activity

---

---

---

---

---

### 2. Propose a day, time, and location for your activity:

Day of the Week:    M    Tu    W    Th    F

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: Room \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Get a staff member to co-lead your group! Get their signature!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX 1: BCS Supporting Documents

---

4. Recruit 10 students with their names and emails.

NAME	EMAIL

5. Materials you will need to run your club/activity

---

---

---

---

## APPENDIX 2: CSSJ Supporting Documents

---

### Mentor Check-In Log

Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentee: \_\_\_\_\_

Check-In Date	Yearly Attendance Rate	Absences Year Total	Absences Last Week	Student Signatures
4/1/11				
4/8/11				
4/15/11				
4/22/11				
4/29/11				
5/6/11				
5/13/11				
5/20/11				
5/27/11				

Notes:

---

---

## APPENDIX 2: CSSJ Supporting Documents

---



---

### Attendance Tracker

	<i>4/1/11</i>	<i>4/8/11</i>	<i>4/15/11</i>	<i>5/10/11</i>	<i>5/17/11</i>	
<b>Mentee</b>	<b>Yearly %</b>	<b>Yearly %</b>	<b>Yearly %</b>	<b>Yearly %</b>	<b>Yearly %</b>	<b>TOTAL CHANGE</b>
Student 1	80.5	78.9	78.9	77.3	75.3	-5.2
Student 2	78.8	78.9	78.2	75.9	75.3	-3.5
Student 3	52.5	54.5	56.4	57.4	57.5	5
Student 4	70.3	70.7	71.4	70.9	71.2	0.9
Student 5	68.6	70.7	70.7	70.2	68.5	-0.1
Student 6	75.4	75.6	75.2	74.5	73.3	-2.1
Student 7	76.3	75.6	75.9	73	74.7	-1.6
Student 8	65.5	65.4	67.7	66.7	71.2	5.7
						-0.1125

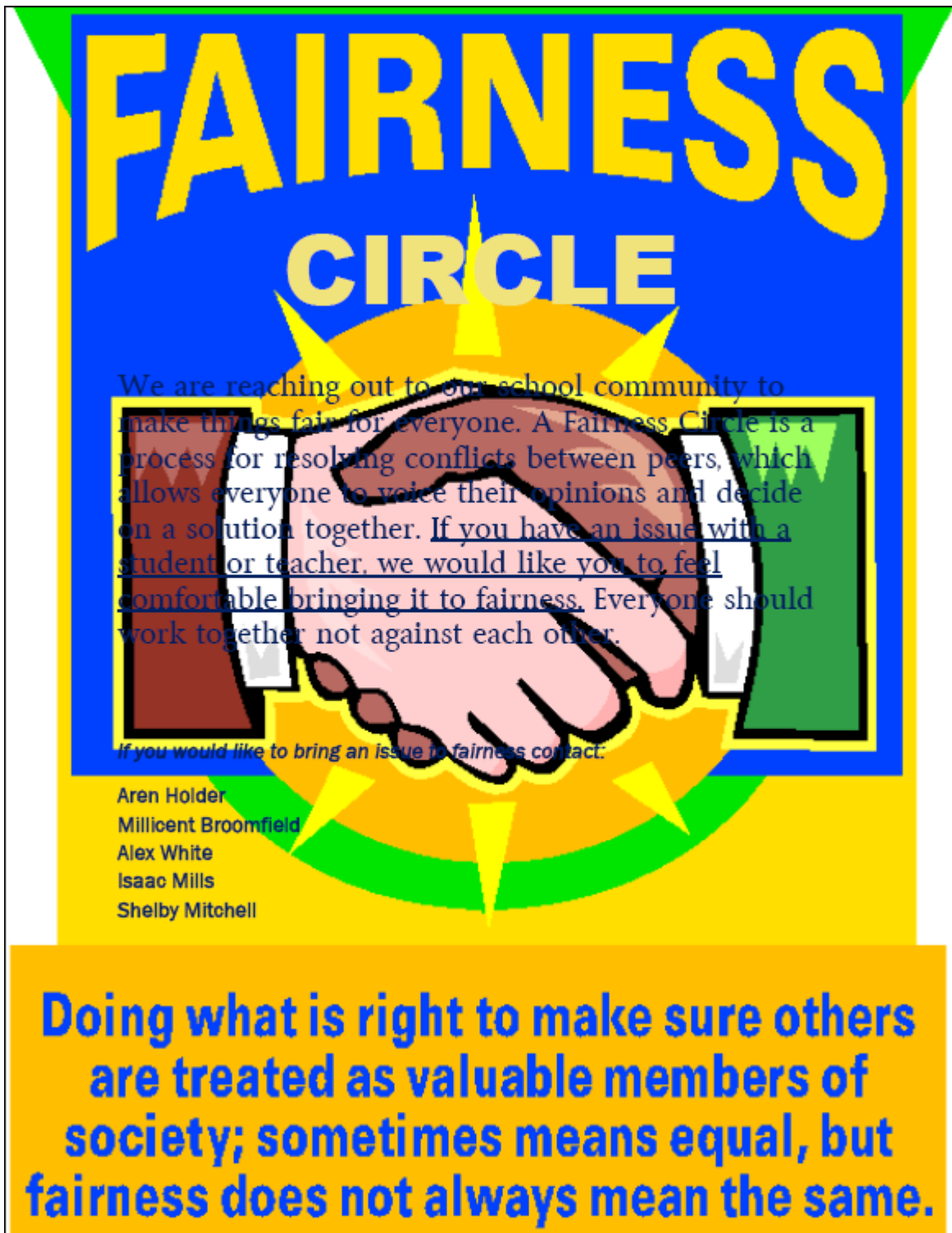
## APPENDIX 2: CSSJ Supporting Documents

---

### **Final Mentee Survey**

- 1.) What did you like about this program?
  
  
  
  
  
- 2.) What didn't you like about this program?
  
  
  
  
  
- 3.) Do you think this program was helpful? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
- 4.) Would you recommend this program to incoming freshmen? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
- 5.) Do you think you and your mentor had a good relationship? Why or why not?
  
  
  
  
  
- 6.) Would you like to be enrolled in this program again next year?

### Fairness Circle Flyer

The flyer features a central graphic of two hands shaking in a firm grip, set against a bright yellow sun with rays. The background is a vibrant blue with a yellow border. The title 'FAIRNESS CIRCLE' is written in large, bold, yellow and white letters at the top. Below the title, a paragraph explains the concept of a Fairness Circle as a process for resolving conflicts. A list of contact names is provided below the paragraph. At the bottom, a yellow box contains a blue text message about treating others as valuable members of society.

# FAIRNESS CIRCLE

We are reaching out to our school community to make things fair for everyone. A Fairness Circle is a process for resolving conflicts between peers, which allows everyone to voice their opinions and decide on a solution together. If you have an issue with a student or teacher, we would like you to feel comfortable bringing it to fairness. Everyone should work together not against each other.

*If you would like to bring an issue to fairness contact:*

Aren Holder  
Millicent Broomfield  
Alex White  
Isaac Mills  
Shelby Mitchell

**Doing what is right to make sure others are treated as valuable members of society; sometimes means equal, but fairness does not always mean the same.**

## APPENDIX 3: Gotham Supporting Documents

---

### Fairness Circle Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

#### Every Human Has Rights!

As humans we demand respect. Respect leads to communication, accountability, and equity. With these things it is more manageable for a student-body to function well in a school learning environment. In order to create a respectful environment, students and teachers should know and honor their rights. Hopefully the Fairness Circle will allow both teachers and students to handle conflicts in a collaborative, professional, and respectful way. Every human has rights, so we have to make sure that everyone is treated as a valued and important member of Gotham's community.

#### What is Fairness Circle?

Fairness Circle is a group of both students and staff members that is called together when students and/or teachers have conflicts and help them come up with a resolution by consensus. We respect the rules of privacy, one mic, and equity and do our best to make sure Fairness Circle meetings run as smoothly as possible.

#### What Situations Are Suitable to Bring to the Fairness Circle?

Teacher/Student: student violates a core value and it affects teacher, or vice versa

Student/Student: student violates a core value and it affects another student (or a group of students)

#### How Are Fairness Circles Brought Together?

Staff members and/or students can report fairness cases to the Dean or another member of the Fairness Committee. A Fairness Circle meeting is scheduled for a day and time that is convenient to both parties.

#### What Happens if the Circle Cannot Agree on a Resolution?

Most likely the Fairness Circle will come to consensus so both parties leave the meeting feeling the decision was reasonable. But, if the circle fails to do so the consequence will be left to the Dean, Social Worker, and/or Principal.

#### Fairness Committee Participants

Aren Holder

Millicent Broomfield

Alex White

Isaac Mills

Shelby Mitchell

# APPENDIX 3: Gotham Supporting Documents

---

## Fairness Circle Resolution Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1.) Describe the issue between the two people/sides:

*When did the issue occur?*

*One side's story:*

*Other side's story:*

2.) What core value was violated and how?

3.) What damage was caused and who was affected?

4.) How can we undo the harm and restore justice?

*Suggestions from person brought to fairness:*

*Suggestions from panel:*

5.) Agreed Upon Resolution:

Signatures:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX 3: Gotham Supporting Documents

---

### Post-Fairness Circle Survey

*After your Fairness Circle, please answer the following questions below as honestly as possible about your feelings and experiences:*

1.) How comfortable were you expressing your thoughts and describing the situation you encountered?

---

---

2.) Did you feel like your side of the story was heard? (If you'd like to, explain)

---

---

3.) How well do you think the facilitator did? What did he/she do well? What could he/she improve?

---

---

4.) How well did the panelists help facilitate the session? Do you think they were fair?

---

---

5.) How comfortable do you feel with the resolution that the circle came to?

---

---

6.) How likely would you be in the future to bring someone to Fairness Circle to resolve a conflict?

---

---

Any other ideas for improving the Fairness Circle process?

---

---

## APPENDIX 3: Gotham Supporting Documents

---

What does it look like when our core values are broken?

Core Value Advisory Lesson

*Advisories should come together and give common examples of how each core value can be violated.*

- 1.) **Respect** (for individuals, creative product, advisories, and community)

---

---

---

---

---

- 2.) **City as Classroom**

---

---

---

---

---

- 3.) **Professionalism**

---

---

---

---

---

## APPENDIX 3: Gotham Supporting Documents

---

### Core Value Advisory Lesson Results

*Common examples of how core values can be violated:*

#### 1.) **Respect** (for individuals, creative product, advisories, and community)

Destroy artwork	(6)
Fighting	(4)
Bullying	(3)
Disrespect others	(2)
Immaturity	(2)
Spreading rumors	(1)
Discrimination	(1)

#### 2.) **City as a classroom**

Being loud and disruptive	(7)
Disrespectful on trip	(5)
Skipping community service	(3)
Bad behavior	(3)
Acting up on train	(2)
Littering	(2)

#### 3.) **Professionalism**

Dressing inappropriately	(10)
Speaking inappropriately	(7)
Overuse of electronics	(3)
Disrespect environment	(2)

## APPENDIX 4: ICE Supporting Documents

---

### Feedback Cycle #1: Advisory Lesson Prompt/Note Sheet

Student Voice Collaborative

4/7/2011

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisory Section: \_\_\_\_\_

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- What are expectations?
- What are teachers' expectations for students?
- What are students' expectations for teachers?
- How do we want to be treated by each other?
- What kind of community do we want to be a part of?

Student Responses:

Teachers Response:

## APPENDIX 4: ICE Supporting Documents

---

### Cycle #1: Summary of Feedback

Student Expectations For Teachers:	Teacher Expectations For Students:	Agreement:	Issues/Gaps:
<p><i>Teachers should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treated students with respect</li> <li>• Be supportive</li> <li>• Be punctual/timely</li> <li>• Be motivated/driven</li> <li>• Listen to students and allow them to influence how they teach</li> <li>• Be knowledgeable/Have answers</li> <li>• Be entertaining</li> <li>• Give 2nd chances</li> <li>• Not be hypocrites</li> <li>• Be strict to get respect</li> </ul>	<p><i>Students should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be respectful</li> <li>• Be educated</li> <li>• Be opinionated</li> <li>• Be on time</li> <li>• Do their best</li> <li>• Appreciate teachers</li> <li>• Do not be “under the influence”</li> <li>• Want to succeed</li> <li>• ICE habits of Mind</li> <li>• Help classmates when they have questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consequences are not clear</li> <li>• More agreement regarding academic expectations (less agreement regarding non-academic expectations)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People find it hard to give respect when they don’t feel they are getting it</li> <li>• People often do not know what to do when expectations are not met</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 4: ICE Supporting Documents

---

### Feedback Cycle #2: Advisory Lesson Prompt/Note Sheet

Student Voice Collaborative

5/24/2011

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisory Section: \_\_\_\_\_

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- What is the definition of respect?
- When have you felt disrespected at ICE? Give Examples!
- What are some things that students and teachers can do together to make sure expectations aren't abused?

Student Responses:

Teachers Response:

## APPENDIX 4: ICE Supporting Documents

---

### Cycle #2: Summary of Feedback

What is Respect?	Examples of Disrespect Between Students & Teachers	Actions We Can Take
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listening to each other</li><li>• Appreciating others</li><li>• Treating other as you would want to be treated.</li><li>• Not yelling at other people</li><li>• Working with others</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When teachers accuse students of things they didn't do</li><li>• When students do not do their homework or follow rules</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussions/Activities: How to improve communication and clarify expectations</li><li>• Meetings with Principal</li><li>• Start Fairness Committee</li></ul>

## APPENDIX 4: ICE Supporting Documents

---

### End of Year Survey Student-Staff Feedback Cycle

1.) Have you seen improvement with the new school-wide focus groups?

2.) If yes, what is one specific improvement?

3.) Do you feel this could help further better I.C.E.?

4.) What is one suggestion for furthering this program?



## APPENDIX 5: Vanguard Supporting Documents

---

### How it Works...

#### Student Voice in Teaching

Step 1: The STUDENT VOICE FACILITATOR hands out surveys and collects them (10 mins)

Step 2: The STUDENT VOICE FACILITATOR works w/ Jeremy & Manny (advisory/lunch) to analyze results/highlight key ideas

Step 3: The STUDENT VOICE FACILITATOR shares survey results w/ the VANGUARD TEACHER and FORDHAM TEACHER (right before teachers have weekly planning meeting)

Step 4: At the beginning of the next class, STUDENT VOICE FACILITATOR shares key feedback w/ class. VANGUARD TEACHER and FORDHAM TEACHER discuss ways they will respond to feedback. If questions/challenges arise, STUDENT VOICE FACILITATOR takes note and solicits ideas for student-led solutions.

*Below is a suggested schedule, though cycles should fit into regular teaching/planning schedule:*

#### Proposed Schedule

##### *Cycle 1*

Thursday (4/28) -- Survey class/Analyze results for HW

Friday (4/29) -- Share survey results key ideas with teachers/Teachers Meet and Plan

Monday (5/2) -- Share survey results and teacher responses with class

##### *Cycle 2*

Thursday (5/5) -- Survey class/Analyze results for HW

Friday (5/6) -- Share survey results key ideas with teachers/Teachers Meet and Plan

Monday (5/9) -- Share survey results and teacher responses with class

##### *Cycle 3*

Thursday (5/12) -- Survey class/Analyze results for HW

Friday (5/13) -- Share survey results key ideas with teachers/Teachers Meet and Plan

Monday (5/16) -- Share survey results and teacher responses with class

##### *Cycle 4*

Thursday (5/19) -- Survey class/Analyze results for HW

Friday (5/20) -- Share survey results key ideas with teachers/Teachers Meet and Plan

Monday (5/23) -- Share survey results and teacher responses with class

##### *Cycle 5*

Thursday (5/26) -- Survey class/Analyze results for HW

Friday (5/27) -- Share survey results key ideas with teachers/Teachers Meet and Plan

Tuesday (5/31) -- Share survey results and teacher responses with class

## APPENDIX 5: Vanguard Supporting Documents

---

### Participant Contract

#### Expectations for Vanguard Teachers

*Responsibilities:*

- o Meet weekly with Student Voice Facilitator and Fordham Student Teacher
  - Review student feedback
  - Figure out ways to add student feedback into lessons
- o Grade Student Voice Facilitator student on participation
- o Attend introduction meeting in April
- o Attend wrap up meeting in May

*Benefits:*

- o Opportunity to see student perspectives and experiences more clearly
- o Opportunity to improve teaching and engagement

X\_\_\_\_\_

#### Expectations for Fordham Student Teachers

*Responsibilities:*

- o Meet weekly with Student Voice Facilitator and Vanguard teacher
  - Review student feedback
  - Figure out ways to add student feedback into lessons
- o Make sure Student Voice Facilitator hands out feedback sheet
- o Attend introduction meeting in April
- o Attend wrap up meeting in May

*Benefits:*

- o Opportunity to see student perspectives and experiences more clearly
- o Opportunity to improve teaching and engagement

X\_\_\_\_\_

#### Expectations for Student Voice Facilitator

*Responsibilities:*

- o Meet weekly with Fordham Student Teacher and Vanguard teacher
- o Hand out feedback sheet once a week
- o Collect and analyze feedback sheets; Find key ideas and share w/ teachers
- o Attend introduction meeting in April
- o Attend wrap up meeting in May

*Benefits:*

- o Opportunity to get insight on how lessons are planned
- o Opportunity to be a leader and ensure lessons reflect student needs and interests
- o Opportunity to work and connect with Fordham University

X\_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX 5: Vanguard Supporting Documents

---

## Introductory/Concluding Teacher Survey

1.) To what degree do you feel that students are engaged in your class? (*circle one*)

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Somewhat	Don't know	Moderately	Extremely

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2.) How do you know when students are engaged?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3.) At what moments are students most engaged in your class?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4.) At what moments are students least engaged in your class?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5.) How can you improve on student engagement?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6.) Do students who are more engaged perform better in class?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 5: Vanguard Supporting Documents

---

### SAMPLE Humanities Class Feedback Sheet

1.) On a scale of 1-5, how much do you enjoy this class? (1 = not at all, 5 = a lot)

1    2    3    4    5

2.) On a scale of 1-5, how much do you enjoy book circle? (1 = not at all, 5 = a lot)  
(Book Circle: when we all sit around the tables and take turns reading)

1    2    3    4    5

3.) Would you rather read at home or during class? (Circle your answer)

Home                      Class

4.) On a scale of 1-5, how much do you enjoy the videos we watch in class?

1    2    3    4    5

5.) Of the Three Novels we read, which one was your least and most favorite? Put (L) for Least and (F) for favorite.

Zoot Suit: Luiz Valdez                      \_\_\_\_\_

Paper Daughter: M. Elaine. Mar                      \_\_\_\_\_

Flight: Sherman Alexie                      \_\_\_\_\_

6.) Please share your opinions and suggestions for the class  
(you don't need to fill this part out if you feel uncomfortable)

I hate when we...

I really like when we...

Can we...

# APPENDIX 5: Vanguard Supporting Documents

---

## SAMPLE Math Feedback Survey

1.) On a scale from 1 to 5, how much did you enjoy this week's topic? (1 = not at all, 5 = a lot)

1      2      3      4      5

2.) On a scale from 1 to 5, how much of this week's lesson did you understand? (1 = none, 5 = all)

1      2      3      4      5

3.) What part of this week's lesson (if any) was not interesting and why?

\_\_\_\_\_

4.) Do you think there is a better method that can be used to teach the class the lesson?

YES                  NO

Explain \_\_\_\_\_

5.) Where do you think you need the most help in math?

Homework      Classwork      Understanding checks      Teaching method used by teacher

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6.) When do you think you and the class is most engaged (focused/interested/actively involved) in class?

At Arrival                  Warm -Ups                  Lessons                  Class work

7.) When do you think you and the class are least engaged?

At Arrival                  Warm -Ups                  Lessons                  Class work

8.) What teaching strategies/activities engage you most in class?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9.) How do you think the teachers can make the students more interested in class?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10.) What percent students do you think are actively participating in class?

0-20%                  21-40%                  41-60%                  61-80                  81-100%

11.) When you are more engaged do you perform better? Explain.

\_\_\_\_\_

12.) Any other comments/suggestions/feedback (write below)

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 5: Vanguard Supporting Documents

---

### Some Key Findings From Teacher Survey

- Teachers thought there should be some sort of archiving system for all the data that is collected from a hopefully year-long program next year.
- We should remove the students who don't seem to care about the survey from our data analysis.
- The surveys became very repetitive and students started to feel as though it was a hassle to fill out.
- Teachers see project as a great opportunity to teach students research skills.
- Teachers believed that engagement slightly increased or stayed the same from the beginning of the program to the end, but believed that the program should be held for longer periods to see how it works.



**CHILDREN FIRST NETWORK 102**  
333 7TH AVENUE, 7TH FLOOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10001

**Student Voice Collaborative**  
Program Coordinator: Ari Sussman  
Phone: 212-356-3847  
Fax: 917-339-1687  
E-mail: [asussman@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:asussman@schools.nyc.gov)