

# ***Power2Achieve (P2A)***

## ***Program Feedback Report***

***2010-11 Field-Testing in Three Kansas High Schools  
Participating in the Character Education Partnership Grant***

- **What Teachers Do to Help Students Learn and Apply P2A Tools**
- **Teacher and Student Suggestions for Program Improvement**

Prepared for the  
***Kansas State Board of Education***

by the



**CENTER FOR THE 4<sup>TH</sup> AND 5<sup>TH</sup> RS**  
**State University of New York at Cortland**

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**F**ounded in 1994 by Dr. Thomas Lickona and located in the School of Education at the State University of New York at Cortland, the *Center for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Rs (Respect and Responsibility)* promotes the Smart & Good Schools approach to character education. A Smart & Good School is committed to developing performance character (needed for the pursuit of excellence) and moral character (needed for ethical behavior) through an ethical learning community.

Dr. Lickona, a developmental psychologist and education professor at SUNY Cortland, directs the Center and is editor of its best-practices newsletter, *excellence & ethics*. Marthe Seales is of-  
fice manager and co-editor of *excellence & ethics*.

Over the past decade and a half, the Center has trained more than 5,000 K-12 educators from more than 40 states and 20 countries through its Summer Institute and fall and spring seminars. The Center also helps schools implement character education through on-site staff development, provides online character education resources through its website ([www.cortland.edu/character](http://www.cortland.edu/character)), and works with national organizations such as the Character Education Partnership ([www.character.org](http://www.character.org)) to promote character education.

Books by Dr. Lickona include *Moral Development and Behavior* (1976); *Raising Good Children* (1983); *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility* (1991); *Character Matters* (2004); and *Smart & Good High Schools* (2005, with Matthew Davidson).

**W**ith the Institute for Excellence & Ethics (IEE; [www.excellenceandethics.org](http://www.excellenceandethics.org)), the Center has carried out the Smart & Good Schools project, supported by grants from the John Templeton Foundation and Sanford N. McDonnell Foundation. IEE designed the Power2 Achieve student curriculum; the Center's role was to collect and report program feedback.

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# **PART 4**

## **THREE STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS**

## THREE STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

**W**e turn now to a different kind of data: student focus groups from the two schools where we were did site visits. We conducted one student focus group at Roosevelt High (enrollment of 120 students) and two at Taft High School (525 students).

We asked the Taft and Roosevelt principals each to identify several teachers “with a strong commitment to the program and who, in the judgment of colleagues and students, teach it well” —and to ask those teachers in turn each to suggest two students from their classes for focus-group participation. We asked for equal numbers of males and females and for “students who are comfortable expressing their opinions in a group.” Focus groups each had 6 students.

**T**he focus group students chosen in this manner were clearly not a random and representative sample of the larger student body, since they all came from classes whose teachers had a reputation for having a positive attitude toward the program and for teaching it well. Therefore it’s likely that the focus group students’ experience of and attitudes toward P2A were on the whole more positive than those of schoolmates who may have had teachers less committed to or less effective at teaching P2A.

Student focus groups did candidly report on some of their schoolmates’ negative attitudes toward P2A. And through other parts of our program feedback effort (e.g., written feedback from three schools), we

heard directly from a larger, more diverse sample of students.

What is the value of reporting the focus-group conversations? First of all, as we’ll see, the themes that emerge from these focus groups converge with and thereby validate many of the themes that have emerged from other data sources, such as our classroom observations, teacher and student interviews, and written student feedback.

A second value of the focus groups is that they provide a different kind of data—one that allows the reader, to “listen in” on these conversations as if you were there, to hear the questions we asked, how students responded, and how they interacted with each other.

Combined with the other data sources in this report, we think the focus groups help to provide an authentic on-the-ground picture of student and staff experiences with the program—and in the process, to shed light on the factors that appeared to enhance or reduce program effectiveness.

### TAFT HIGH SCHOOL: FOCUS GROUP 1

**T**he Taft High School student focus group was comprised of 4 sophomores and 2 juniors. All six students had had the Power2Learn version of the program the year before and were therefore able to make comparative evaluations. We began:

**TL:** *Since all of you had last year’s Power2Learn program, let’s begin by going around and asking: How would you compare your experiences with Power2Learn and Power2Achieve?*

## Power2Learn vs. Power2Achieve

Student 1: Last year seemed to be more about character attributes. This year, it's more about personal habits—skills you can use, such as time management.

Student 2: This year there are more practical tools to help us achieve.

Student 3: It's more hands-on this year with not so many worksheets. There's more variety.

Student 4: Last year it seemed to be telling us, "Listen to this, do this, do that." This year, there are more videos, more music—it's more creative. It's better than last year.

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*"This year it's more hands-on, with more variety."*

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Student 5: This year we're also more accustomed to going to P2A. Last year we started halfway through the year; we didn't want to do it. We wanted to go back to our normal schedule.

Student 6: This year, the teachers are teaching it to us rather than the computer. They can relate to us more. They know us, so they can teach it so we can understand it. They relate it more to their own lives. I think they're better prepared, too.

*TL: What do you think is the purpose of Power-2Achieve?*

Student 1: How to manage your time.

Student 3: I really think it's still about building character, too, along with things like time management. Right now, we're creating books where we're supposed to show little kids what to do right. The book is about teaching a moral—a life lesson to help a kid to build good character by hard work, perseverance, and so on.

## When Should This Be Taught?

*TL: Do you think a program to teach character is something that should be happening all through school?*

Student 6: I think it would have been better to have this program when we were younger. In high

school, kids already have their own lives. They don't want to change. They have their minds made up about what kind of person they are.

*TL: But does that mean high school students can't become better persons?*

*Take time management, for example—would you say that the majority of high school students manage their time well and rarely waste time?*

Student 6: No, but if it works for them to be procrastinators—if they need that time crunch for motivation—they'll keep doing it.

Student 2: The program does help us learn other ways to do things. But a lot of us have our own ways—we know what works for us. We have our own routines.

Student 5: P2A offers the tools to improve, but that doesn't necessarily mean we'll use them. But that's true of anything—it depends on the attitude of the student.

## What Do Good Teachers Do?

*TL: We're trying to find out what teachers do that helps high school students—in spite of the challenges you just described—learn the P2A tools and use them inside and outside school.*

*How do your teachers try to do that?*

Student 2: Each teacher has their own strong points. Our art teacher is very creative. She talks to us like we're people and relates to us.

Student 3: Other teachers just want to get it over with. They just go by the book—whatever it says, and they don't really teach it to us. If you're going to apply these tools in your life, you have to have a teacher willing to teach it that way.

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*"P2A offers the tools to improve, but that doesn't mean we'll use them. That depends on the attitude of the student."*

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Student 6: Our teacher tells us stories about his life so we can relate it to ours. If we get going on another track, he lets us go on that track for a while and then relates it back to the discussion we were having originally.

Student 4: In our class, we have to learn to work as a team. We're learning social skills this way, but also staying on task.

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*"I think there's less drama at school now. We're learning to cope and cooperate."*

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Student 5: We don't ever get to choose a partner in our class. We draw cards to see who we'll sit with, so it's random. We have a different partner every week. Even if you don't feel comfortable with that person at first, you become comfortable and learn to work with him.

Student 3: It's helped me work better with people I don't know. I can more easily open up to them. Even in other classes now, I talk to people I didn't used to talk to. I notice people's strengths.

Student 2: P2A is like any other class—it won't work if you don't get along with the teacher. I have one teacher I don't get along with. I was brought up to think that you give respect and you get respect. She doesn't respect me, and I don't respect her. She thinks all students are the same. Not everyone reads at the same speed and has the same understanding she has. But I get along well with my other teachers. They relate to me as a person, not just as another adolescent.

Student 3: Coming into this school, we were stereotyped as the worst class the school had ever seen. But as the teachers got to know us, they told us, "As we understand you better, you're not as rowdy as they say." They're starting to understand how we think. We have our family problems, work problems, friends, and stuff. We can't just come to class and always be cheerful.

### Changes Students See in Teachers and Their School

*TL: Why do you think teachers understand you better now?*

Student 2: They're getting to know us at a deeper level. They spent the entire last year talking about character.

Student 3: I think there's less drama at school now. We're learning to cope and cooperate with each other.

Student 4: We're learning social skills and problem-solving.

Student 6: Maybe "maturity" is a better way to talk about this, rather than character.

*TL: Have you noticed any change in teachers' attitudes toward the program between last year and this year?*

Student 5: My teacher last year would say, "We gotta do P2L." Then she'd go sit at her desk. Then she'd say, "If you don't do the worksheet, I'm not giving you points."

Student 2: My teacher last year refused to do it.

Student 3: There are still some teachers that just don't like it, and their attitude shows it.

Student 4: If it seems like the teacher doesn't care, you feel a kind of detachment. You think, "Why should we sit here and listen to you when we could talk to a friend or do homework?"

Student 2: I'd say it's about half and half, as far as teachers being positive or negative about it.

### A Learning Process for Teachers

Student 1: I feel this program is a learning process for teachers, just as much as it is for students.

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*"This is a learning process for teachers, just as it is for students."*

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*TL: In what sense is it a learning process for teachers?*

Student 2: Some kids feel that the active learning strategies in P2A are natural to some teachers but uncomfortable for some of the more conservative teachers.

Student 1: There are some teachers who also aren't comfortable talking to students about themselves. They separate themselves a little bit, like, "I'm up here, and you're here to learn."

Student 3: If a teacher doesn't want to teach it, they shouldn't have to. It should be taught by those who have a passion to teach character.

**Student 4:** If kids don't want to take it, they shouldn't have to either.

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***"I think that people who don't want to do this know they need to change—and it's this class that's helping them see that."***

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**Student 6:** But those are the kids that really need it.

**Student 5:** There are a lot of kids that don't like it. You hear them walking down the hallway, saying, "Oh, no—we have P2A today!" They complain about having to go.

**TL:** Why do you think those students dislike it so much?

**Student 2:** Some people aren't open to new ideas or working with new people. They just like the people they hang out with.

**Student 6:** I think that people who don't want to do it *know* they need to change—and that scares them. That's what makes them have the bad attitude, because they know they should change, and in fact, it's this class that's helping them see that. But they refuse because they don't *want* to change. They're comfortable with who they are, even if it's not the best.

**Student 2:** I think that if the students with the same problems or attitudes could be in the same class, they would do better. They would have that commonality, and they could relate to each other. They could understand what everyone else is going through. Then their attitudes toward the program might be more positive.

**Student 1:** I feel like the program itself, though, is a lot better than last year. It's a lot more hands-on and interactive.

**Student 5:** It's also a break in your day. You're not just sitting in a classroom and listening to a teacher lecture you. You're actually having a conversation and expressing what you think and feel. It's a stress reliever for me.

## TAFT HIGH SCHOOL: FOCUS GROUP 2

We asked Taft's principal if we could do a second focus group on Day 2 of our site visit,

this time including freshmen, who were getting their first program exposure. We began this second focus group discussion with two freshmen boys and two girls. About halfway through, two sophomore boys joined the discussion.

Some of the students' comments in this focus group converged with previously cited themes—such as the value of having to get to know new people, students' preference for hands-on activities and whole-group discussion over doing worksheets with a partner, and the importance of the teacher's attitude.

Other comments, however, brought new things to light—such as the value of "family homework," the impact of P2A on students' classroom behavior, and students' desire for greater voice in how P2A is implemented.

### Freshmen Report on "Family Homework"

One of the most interesting things to emerge from this focus group was a "family homework" assignment that required students to do an experiment at home.

**Student 1:** After a lesson on communication, our teacher gave us an assignment to do in our families. She said, "Go home and try to be nice to your parents and siblings for a whole week, and see what happens."

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***"I respected my brother and my dad and did more around the house. They noticed."***

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**Student 2:** I respected my brother and my dad and did more things around the house. They noticed and were nicer to me, and I got to go places. They said they respected my maturity. I think most kids got along with their parents better after they did this assignment.

### The Impact of Teacher Attitude

In this focus group, we heard again about variation in students' response to P2A and how the teacher's attitude toward the program was a significant factor influencing students' attitude.

**Student 3:** I think if you pay attention and learn something, this can help you in life.

Student 4: But a lot of students don't like it.

**TL:** *Why do some students think they can learn from this program, but others don't?*

Student 3: Some students just don't care. They think it's a waste of time.

**TL:** *Can the teacher change that attitude?*

Student 3: It's part of the teachers' problem, too, because they think the same way. Some teachers don't do P2A at all. They think it's dumb and a waste of time.

Student 4: Our teacher says we can do P2A "the easy way or the hard way." No one really likes to read the packet for 45 minutes. But we do like the activities. So if we were good the day before in Seminar, he shortens the packet down to one page. If we were talking a lot the day before in Seminar, we have to read the whole packet. But most of the kids in our class don't like to do it, so he gives us the option of not doing it at all. Then we just have regular study hall instead.

Student 2: I think people would like it a lot more if there was more hands-on stuff and less reading and writing. The kids who generally don't like it have a more positive attitude when there's a fun activity. We made an airplane out of popsicle sticks as a team and had to work together in a competition. When there are competing teams, people get involved more and try to do a better job.

### How P2A Has Affected Students

Here, as in other conversations, students spoke of P2A's impact on peer relationships.

**TL:** *You described changing how you treat family members as a result of an assignment in this class. Are there any other ways the program has affected you personally?*

Student 1: In one class we talked about the bad influence some friends might have. Some of them might bring you down. I stopped staying after school as much to hang out with certain people I had been friends with.

Student 2: In our regular classes, when we see kids from P2A, we talk to them—whereas before we wouldn't. In P2A you get to know new people be-

cause you have to work with them in groups. You think, "Hey, they're not half as bad as I thought."

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**TL:** *"When there are competing teams, people try to do a better job."*

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Student 3: You think to yourself that you need to get out of your comfort zone and make new friends. They have to step out of their comfort zone, too. You kind of meet in the middle.

**TL:** *Has P2A given you any tools that have helped you?*

Student 1: I started using my time better after the lesson on that.

Student 2: Setting goals has helped me. I get up in the morning now and jog. I use goal-setting for pushups before I go to bed and when I get up. I shoot hoops after school every day for an hour. I want to go to college and get a scholarship for sports—that's my long-term goal. I need to get a scholarship because my family doesn't have a lot of money.

### Two Sophomores Weigh In

At this point, two boys, both sophomores (referred to here as Students 5 and 6), joined the group. They, too, emphasized the importance of the teacher's role.

**TL:** *Can we ask each of you guys to give us your take on P2A?*

Student 5: I think it has a good purpose, but frankly, I don't like being pushed in with people I don't normally ever talk to. In my opinion, that should be done more gradually, building up to talking with people you're not friends with.

Student 6: The general idea of P2A is good, but this year it seems like it's mostly about time management. It's overkill on that. Okay, we get the time management idea.

Student 5: In the middle of this semester I got moved to a different P2A class. Teachers present it differently. Some teachers try to make it fun. With the teacher I have now, it's all business. It gets bland and boring.

## A Preference for Whole-Group Discussion

In last year's feedback on Power2Learn, students consistently said they preferred whole-group discussion to working with a partner. That sentiment was expressed again by students in Power2Achieve, as in the comments below.

**TL:** *What would make P2A class less bland or boring?*

**Student 5:** Last year, my teacher had the whole class sit in a circle, and we talked about things in a group discussion. Even the kids who didn't want to participate in the beginning started responding. We got to listen to other people and see what their values were. This year we don't do things with the whole group—it's just small groups. I don't like that.

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*"I think that if you really watch kids during class, you can see a difference in their attitude and how they treat other people."*

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**Student 6:** In our class, we don't ever discuss things as a whole group. We have a worksheet that we have to do with a partner. Our teacher gives out worksheets for everything. The biggest groups we've had were three or four people. If we do try to talk about stuff, she tells us to stop talking and keep doing our work. It's like any other class.

**TL:** *It sounds as if you've had some negative experiences with P2A but also some positive experiences.*

*When you do have a positive experience using a tool, how can you let your teachers know that?*

**Student 5:** Report it to the teacher and explain what happened.

**Student 6:** Teachers should make time in class for feedback.

## Changes in Classroom Attitude and Behavior

**Student 5:** I think that if you really watch kids during class, you can see a difference in their attitude and the way they treat other people. In my opinion, it's better.

It used to be that when you came into this school and went from class to class, there'd be talking in the back of the room most of the time. I've noticed that since we started this program, that's really cut

back. Whereas before, you could barely hear the teacher because of kids talking, now, for the most part, there may be just one or two kids talking in the back, and you can really hear and understand the teacher.

**TL:** *How did P2A contribute to that change?*

**Student 5:** In P2A classes, kids knew whether the teacher cared about P2A or not. Usually with teachers that cared about P2A, the classes were better behaved. And when those kids went into other teachers' classes, they were better behaved, and I think that sent a ripple influence through the school.

**TL:** *Why do you think students with teachers who cared about P2A were better behaved?*

**Student 5:** When teachers talk with you more like a human being, you feel less intimidated. You can relate to them more easily.

**Student 1 (freshman):** I think the teacher should have to do the assignments, too. It would be good if they talked about how they have flaws and how they've used some of these tools. If they did, I think more kids would use it.

## Do Students Have a Voice in P2A?

The discussion turned to changes students would like to see in the program—and whether they currently have opportunities for input into how P2A is implemented.

**Student 5:** I think if we mixed the grades for P2A, it would be good. Right now, the upperclassmen don't have much respect for the underclassmen. If we mixed the groups, I think we'd get along better. I think the teachers would be less stressed out because there would be fewer conflicts.

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*"Upperclassmen don't have much respect for underclassmen. If we mixed the groups, I think we'd get along better."*

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**TL:** *Do students have a voice regarding decisions such as mixing up the classes for P2A?*

**Student 5:** They don't really ever ask our opinion about anything. There are no suggestion boxes at school.

**TL:** Do you have a student council?

**Student 6:** We do have student council representatives, and we could talk to them, but it doesn't really make a difference because the administration thinks that what they think is right. They think that because we're just teenagers, we don't know what we need.

**TL:** Would you like to have more of a voice regarding school issues, including what's the best way to implement P2A?

**General response:** Yes.

## ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL FOCUS GROUP

At Roosevelt High, our focus group consisted entirely of upper-grade students: three juniors and three seniors. None of these students experienced the full 50-minute P2A lesson (taught only to freshmen by Mrs. M, as described in Part 3). Instead, these focus group students' exposure to P2A tools came twice a week during their 20-minute, mixed-grades Seminar, taught by all 20 of the school's faculty.

At Roosevelt, each Seminar teacher had the task of going through the P2A lessons for a given Unit, picking a tool to teach in their section of Seminar, and devising a way to teach it that they thought would have relevance for their kids. This resulted in a lot of teacher creativity—and, if the focus group is a valid indication, a positive student response, despite the fact that the Seminars faced the challenge of making the class interesting and useful for all grade levels, 9-12.

**TL:** Let me go around and ask each of you, "What's a tool you've learned from this program?"

**How has your teacher helped you learn that tool in your P2A class and use it outside of class?"**

**Student 1:** The time management tool. I was really bad when it came to that. Now at home, I pick small things to get done every day. I don't just sit around. Same thing with homework. Before, I did hardly anything on homework.

**TL:** Has managing your time better made a difference for you?

**Student 1:** I've got better grades now.

**TL:** What has your Seminar teacher done to make the tools work for you?

**Student 1:** She's always enthusiastic; she always gets your spirits up. She relates it to everyday life.

**Student 2:** My teacher puts her own changes into it. We build off your lessons but add other things. Like after we did that activity where we had to interview someone we didn't know well, she had us write something positive about another person. People wrote things you might not think they would write—like someone said I had a good personality.

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**"It helps you push past the rumors."**

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**Student 3:** Our teacher knew we really liked movies, so she brought in a YouTube clip that was funny but also related to time management.

**Student 4:** The program pushes the teacher's creativity.

## P2A's Impact on Peer Relationships

**Student 3:** It's helped me personally, but I think it's also helped the whole school. You can see boundaries being pushed.

**Student 5:** It showed me how quick we are to assume things about other people. It helps you push past the rumors you hear.

**Student 6:** In Seminar you see people every day, so you get to know them. Last year, Seminar was just

like a homeroom—you could sit on other side of room and say nothing.

Student 4: We'd be silent. No one would talk with anyone else. Now we do.

Student 3: I think the program helps you find more ways to relate to people. In my Seminar, I didn't talk to some people because I didn't think I had anything in common with them. But once you get to know somebody, and you realize that you do have common interests, it's gives you something to talk about. It makes it easier to approach them and start a conversation.

Student 4: I think it's helped us gain trust in more people.

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*"I think it's helped us to gain trust."*

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### Impact on Teachers

Student 1: It also pushes our teachers to get to know us better. Sometimes we don't know a lot about our teachers, and they don't know a lot about us—so they can't relate to us as well if we're having trouble in school.

*TL: How does the program help teachers get to know you?*

Student 1: They find out things about us. They might not know if we hunt or fish. Now they find out what we're into, like extra-curricular activities and stuff.

Student 2: I find it hard to talk about myself. I'm a modest person. But in Seminar, my teacher, who is also my football coach, had us choose the 3 character traits that most describe us. He said, "Pretend you're applying for a job, and you have to write your own recommendation." Your employer is thinking, "I've got 50 people here, why should I hire you?" It was a good thing to do, because someday you're going to have to be able to sell yourself.

### Goal-Setting

Student 6: In my Seminar, we've really worked on goal-making and how to achieve our goals. I'm in 4H. Fair is coming up this summer. What are you going to do to get to State? I've made goals on how to get a heifer ready to show . . . start work-

ing with her, get her to calm down so she can lead well and not freak out.

### "Does Anybody Have a Problem?"

Student 2: When we come into Seminar, our teacher will ask, "Okay, does anyone have a problem they're having lately that they want to talk about?" At the beginning of the year, not many people talked. But now they do.

There's one guy in our Seminar who has a time management problem. Our teacher wrote on the board, "Bobby's time management problem," and said, "Okay, how can we help Bobby with his time management problem?" At first, Bobby was like, "Why are you guys singling me out?" But then he saw we were trying to help him. Now he's on time a lot more.

### P2A and College

*TL: Do you see this affecting you beyond high school?*

Student 3: In college, you're on your own. You don't have Mom and Dad there. You're going to have a lot more responsibility there, especially if you're living off campus. When you have classes in the morning and nothing the rest of the day, you're going to have to set goals for yourself. You'll have to manage your time to do your homework.

Student 6: When I go to college, time management will be a big deal for me. I'm going to have to get up on time, make sure I'm getting my work done, make sure I'm studying. I'll have to do what I have to do to reach my goal of graduating from college and getting a good job.

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*"I overcame a really big fear."*

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Student 5: I'm pretty good with time management, but my problem is with communication. In my Seminar, we were really open about everything, whether it was school, friends, home, or anything. And it actually helped me because I'm in Forensics, and I had to do a presentation. I'm a very shy person when it comes to talking in front of people, but we actually made it to nationals this year. So I overcame a really big fear.

**TL:** *What happened that helped you overcome that fear?*

Student 5: In Seminar, the teacher came up with this lesson where we picked a song and listened to it in class. Then we talked about why it reflects you. That was something I didn't want to do. But it really helped me open up. And listening to everyone else's stories, I thought, "Wow, I didn't know you were going through that." It helped us communicate with other people.

Student 2: Sometimes I don't know what's appropriate to say and what's not appropriate. One of the things we discussed was, "Think before you speak." I really had to work on that. Now I don't hurt people as much.

### Impact on Relationships With Parents

Student 3: When I'm talking with my mom, and I want to go somewhere and she says no, it's easier to negotiate now. I can say, "If I do this, can I do this?" Instead of yelling back and forth, we can actually talk and not get into a fight.

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*"Instead of yelling back and forth, my mom and I can actually talk."*

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Student 4: I don't have to negotiate with my parents, because I don't do anything to get in trouble. But before this year, I didn't really talk to my parents very much because I didn't really have anything to talk to them about. But after this program, I found more stuff, so I started to talk to my parents more.

Student 1: I learned to take the initiative more. That helped me with stuff at home, too. I don't wait for dad to tell me to load the dishwasher. Just do it.

### Schoolwide Impact: More Respect

Student 6: Last year we had a lot of people that didn't behave very well. A lot of things in the bathroom and lockers would get broken. I don't think we've haven't had any incidents this year. The Seminar has helped. People have more respect.

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*"Last year, a lot of things in the school got broken. I don't think we've had any incidents this year."*

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Student 3: Last year there were groups of people, and they wouldn't separate. Now people from groups are starting to go out and talk to other people instead of just staying in their own little groups. It's just becoming one big group of people.

Student 3: Our school is a lot more open now. I've seen people talking to people they never talked to before.

Student 4: It also teaches everyone to be themselves. Don't try to change yourself to fit into cliques.

**TL:** *How does the program tell you to be yourself?*

Student 3: If you are good at art, it teaches you that you don't have to be a jock to fit in. You can become a better version of yourself.

### No More Hazing

Student 5: In weight-lifting, it's now freshmen through seniors working together. I've seen people push other people to get them to do better.

Student 4: Three years ago, during football practice in the summer, some of the seniors would laugh at us freshmen if we couldn't lift the weights we were trying to lift. Seniors did a lot of hazing—it was really bad. Now we're friends with everyone. Our principal has really pushed to get hazing out of the school. With the combination of our principal and P2A, we haven't had any problems at all this year.

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*"You don't have to be a jock to fit in. You can become a better version of yourself."*

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**TL:** *So are you saying the program with the help of school leadership, has challenged students to be better persons?*

Student 4: Yes, and when you better yourself, you want to help better other people.

## Ways to Improve the Program?

**TL:** *Any ways you would change this program to make it more effective?*

**Student 1:** *Have the teachers start with the program, but push them to become creative with it find something that will really hit home with the students.*

**Student 2:** *Most kids are visual learners, so videos really hit home on real life stuff, rather than a piece of paper with lists.*

*I liked it when our Seminar teacher looked up videos on YouTube that related to the tools we were talking about. That was really cool.*

**Student 3:** *Our driver's ed. teacher showed us a really graphic video about texting and driving. It shows you exactly what happens when you text and drive. After watching that, I won't ever use my phone when I'm driving.*

**Student 4:** *A majority of kids have Facebook. If they can show the projects we do on Facebook, that would reach a lot of other people.*

**Student 5:** *I think teenagers talking to other teenagers really helps.*

**Student 6:** *Maybe Seminar teachers could bring their kids into the library on different days of the week. Kids could get on the computer and put in what they did this week in P2A.*

Roosevelt's student focus group provided clear echoes of themes articulated by the two student focus groups from Taft High School. Roosevelt students felt the program had helped them get to know their teachers and fellow students better. They spoke of personal growth, such as overcoming a fear and learning to think before speaking. They also described changes they saw in their school culture: more openness, more trust, fewer acts of vandalism, and the elimination of hazing.

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***"If we show our projects on Facebook, that would reach a lot of people."***

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One cannot, of course, assume a causal connection between such changes and the P2A program, and time will tell if these positive changes endure. Program evaluation will also have to look at IEE's measure of school culture, the Culture of Excellence & Ethics Assessment (CEEA), to see if data from that align with the hopeful student perceptions reported here.