

# HELLO!

# Program Assessment

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**PALISADES CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL**

**Giovanni Stewart & Adam Dilla**

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

HELLO was developed out of a need to organize a school-wide system that would prevent hate incidents, bullying, and other peer conflicts at school. Palisades had experienced several hate incidents both on campus and over social media that attracted negative media attention, and some of these incidents had started in the classroom under the watch of teachers during group lessons. We held several staff meetings to discuss what had happened, but this led mostly to finger-pointing and was fairly unproductive. Our school wanted to implement something that all classrooms could participate in to more effectively address and discourage these conflicts. In the Summer of 2017, Giovanni Stewart developed HELLO - which is part of his 1 to 4 Campus Unification Program - to do just that. HELLO was designed to cultivate a more equitable and inclusive environment within the classroom, and it encourages students and teachers to break down social and cultural barriers by consistently and respectfully acknowledging each other. The idea is simple: throughout each semester, we want students to meet each of their classmates and have meaningful exchanges that help them form more accurate beliefs, reduce negative assumptions, and develop healthier relationships. HELLO also provides new ways for teachers to connect with their students, be more intentional about their welfare, and become more familiar with their experiences both in and out of the classroom.

In order to have a measure of improvement as a result of these activities, a questionnaire was distributed to students at the beginning of the year and then at the end of the year. This questionnaire was designed in collaboration between Stewart and a research consultant, Adam Dilla. This report provides a timeline of the project to date, a comparison between pre-semester and post-semester results, and ideas for improvement moving forward.

## TIMELINE

<b>August, 2017</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stewart and Dilla discuss and design the assessment</li> <li>2. Two versions are pilot tested among small sample of students</li> <li>3. Sample results tabulated, one version was chosen and distributed to relevant student population</li> </ol>
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<b>September</b>	
<b>October</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. HELLO activities implemented in classrooms at PCHS</li> </ol>
<b>November</b>	
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<b>December</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Assessment was re-distributed to student population</li> <li>6. Preliminary results delivered to Stewart and discussed with Dilla</li> <li>7. First draft of report, delivered to Stewart</li> </ol>
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<b>January, 2018</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Feedback and additional requests delivered to Dilla</li> <li>9. Final version of report delivered to Stewart</li> </ol>



## Participation

As with any classroom activity, consistent participation is key when attempting to drive change. In August 2017, 130 teachers were contacted to gauge interest in implementing the HELLO activities in their classrooms. Of those, around 70-75 responded affirmatively, and 21 eventually showed up to the training meeting. Those 21 teachers were contacted at the end of the semester to assess progress, and 12 responded that they had started the activities, while only 5 responded that they had completed the activities. This is important context to consider when evaluating the results presented below.

## FALL Questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed in order to provide a quantitative measure of potential changes among students at PCHS. Multiple versions were tested among a student sample, and a final version was administered online using Google Forms from 8/24/17 – 9/16/17. The link was provided on the PCHS website so that students could access it after school or during the weekend.

### Response Summary

920: Total number of responses

916: Number that responded within the timeframe and answered the first 3 questions

Responses submitted outside of the collection window and those not providing responses to the first 3 questions were deemed invalid and were excluded from analyses.

## WINTER Questionnaire

The questionnaire was re-administered from 11/29 – 12/14. It was identical to the one distributed in the fall, again using Google Forms. Due to the emergency weather conditions experienced by Los Angeles at the time, the planned administration period was disrupted and shorter than expected, forcing it to occur during finals. This likely contributed to the decreased participation rate.

In order to validate responses and segment them based on grade, three questions were added.

- 1) Which grade are you in?
- 2) What is the goal of the HELLO activities? (multiple-choice)
- 3) Have you met every student in your class? (yes/no)

### Response Summary

529: Total number of responses

518: Number that responded within the timeframe and answered the first 3 questions

310: Number that answered correctly, "What is the goal of HELLO?" (60% of 518)

110: Number that met every student in their class (21%)

67: Number that answered the question correctly *and* met every student in their class (13%)

353: Students who either answered the "goal" question correctly *or* had met everyone (68%)

The final sample of 353 students was chosen because they either did the HELLO! activities, or met every one of their classmates (the goal of the activities).



### Sample Overview (among 353 responses)

Class	Count	% of Class Responses
9th	198	69.7%
10th	20	71.4%
11th	44	63.8%
12th	91	63.2%

## QUESTIONS

Questions were grouped together by topic, and the response options were the same for each question<sup>1</sup>. If a student was unsure how to answer, they were encouraged to “make their best guess”.

### **Anti Harassment/Bullying**

If a fight breaks out, I record it on my phone or ignore it rather than report it.

If my friends were bad-mouth another student I didn't know, I just go along with it.

When a friend is using language that degrades a person or group because of their sex, race, sexual orientation, or cultural background, I let them know it's not cool.

Screen-shotting or sharing a post on social media that degrades or makes fun of a classmate is wrong.

### **Teacher Student Relationship**

I trust that my teachers care about my education and respect me by the way they treat me and talk to me.

Our school provides support and encouragement for all students regardless of sex, race, sexual orientation or cultural background.

If another student was being harassed by other students in class, my teacher would help them.

### **Friendliness**

When I walk by a classmate I hardly know but recognize, I acknowledge them with a head nod or a hello.

Students at my school are cool with each other and get along.

I feel and see dirty stares when I walk through campus from people I don't know.

### **Self-segregation/Empathy**

I hanging out with a diverse group rather than sticking to my own kind.

I say what I want regardless of what people think, because that's how I feel.

When there is an opportunity, I stick to people I know rather than getting to know other people.

If I know a classmate of mine needs help clarifying the material, I try to help them.

<sup>1</sup> Response options were a 5-point frequency scale: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Usually, Always

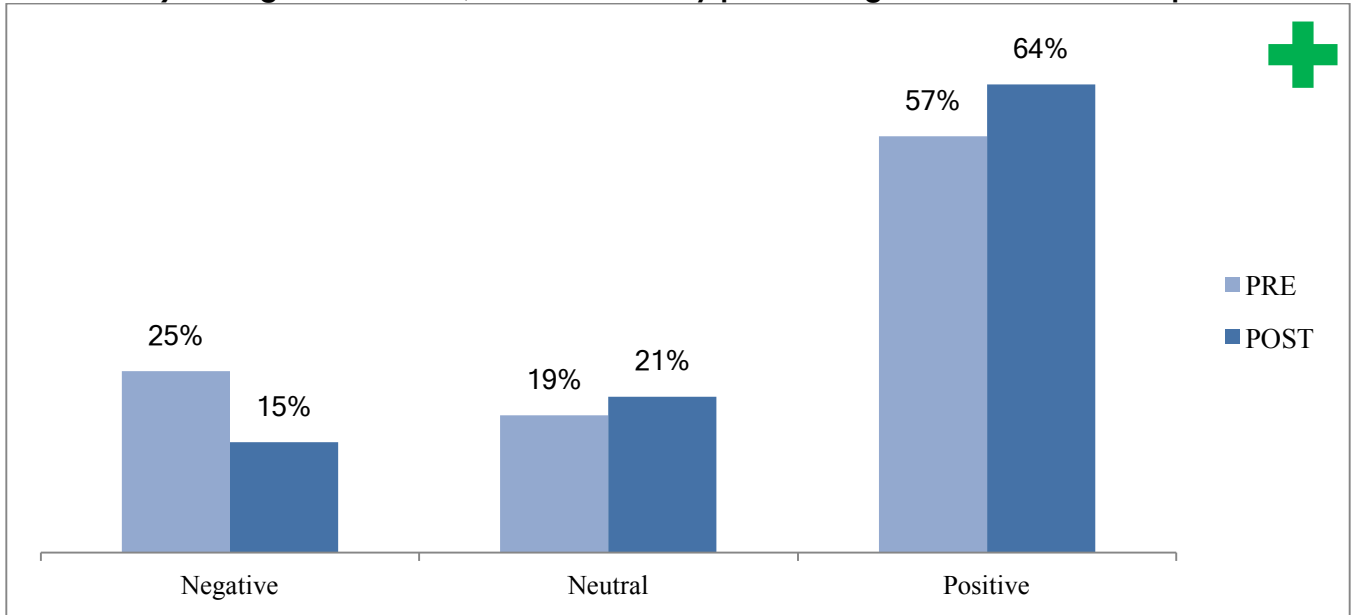


## COMPARING RESULTS

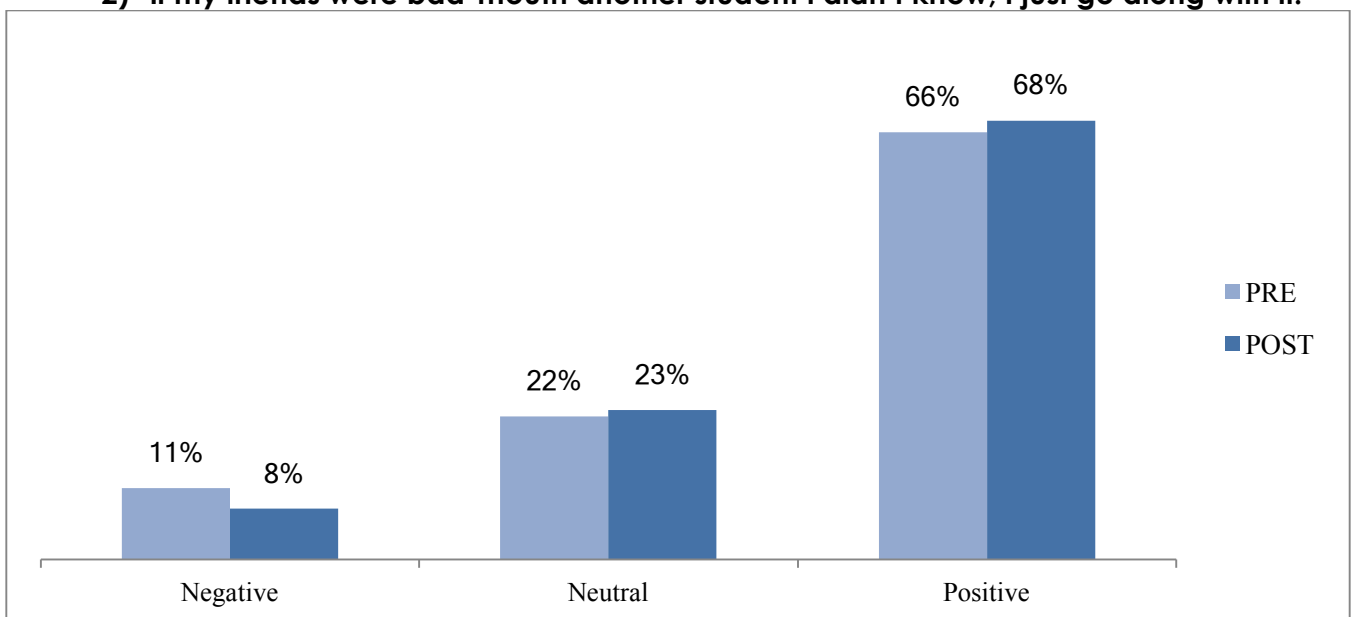
Due to differences in sample sizes, response percentages were used to compare results rather than raw response counts. Because questions were contrasted (i.e. for some, “always” was the ideal response, and for others, “never” was the ideal response) responses were clustered into 3 groups:

- Positive = ideal 2 responses
- Neutral = “sometimes”
- Negative = unfavorable 2 responses

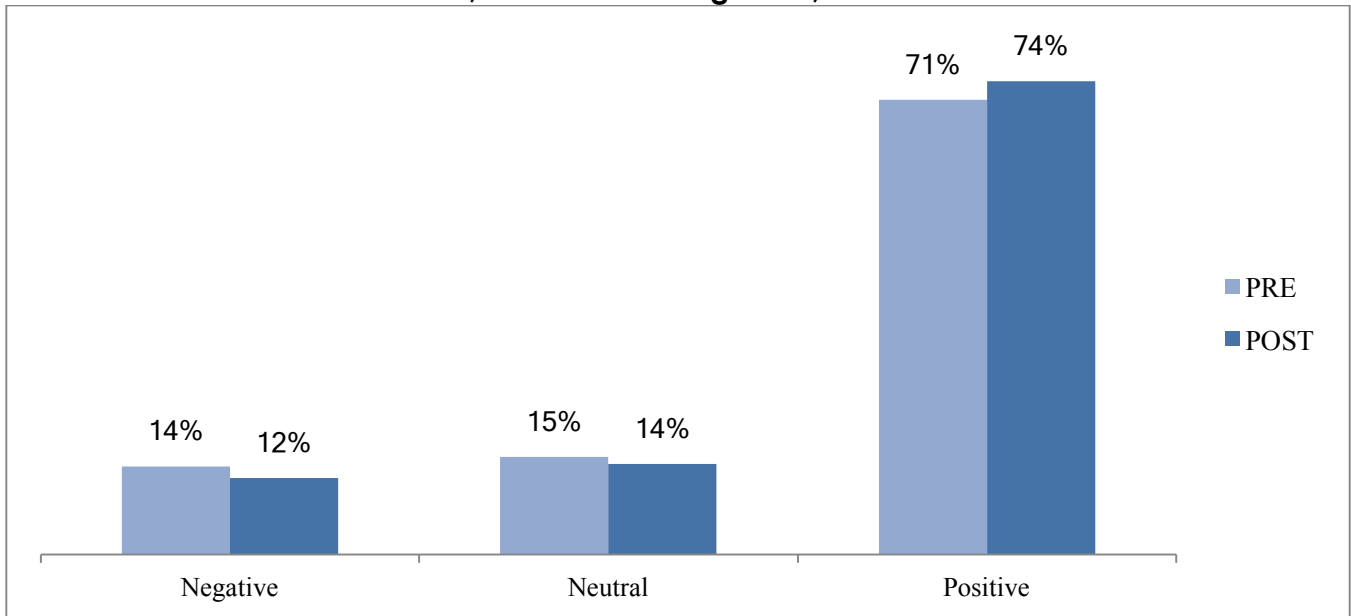
### 1) If a fight breaks out, I record it on my phone or ignore it rather than report it.



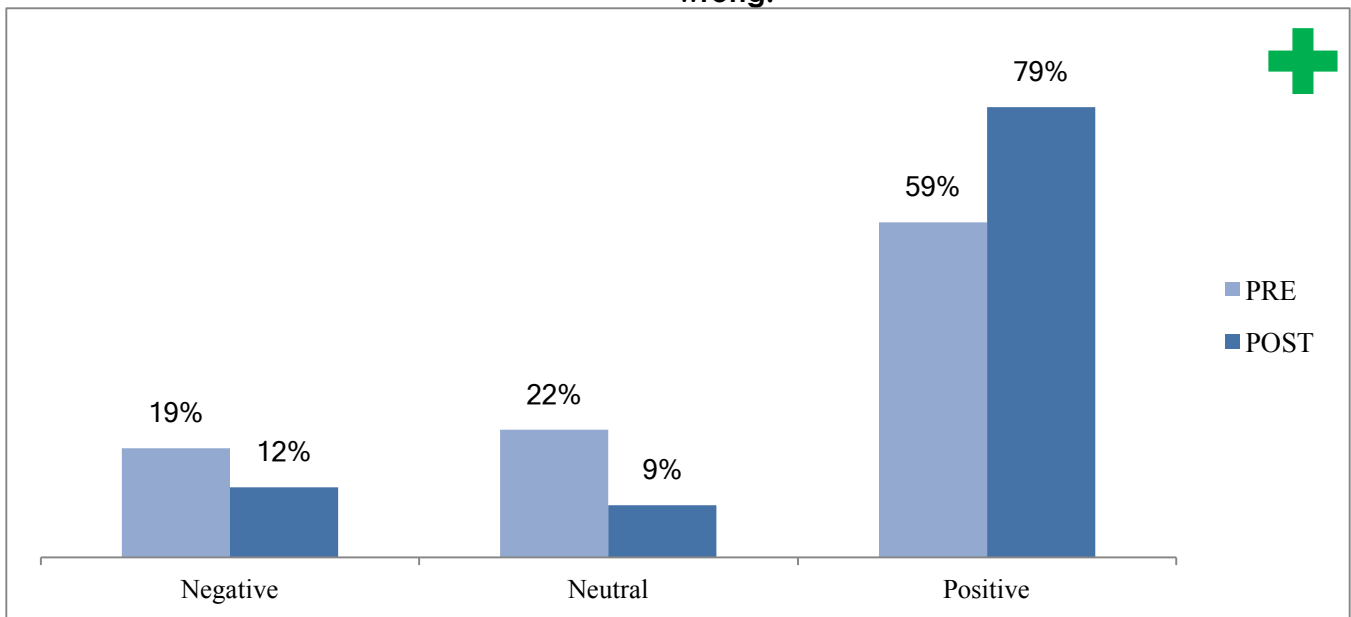
### 2) If my friends were bad-mouth another student I didn't know, I just go along with it.



**3) When a friend is using language that degrades a person or group because of their sex, race, sexual orientation, or cultural background, I let them know it's not cool.<sup>2</sup>**

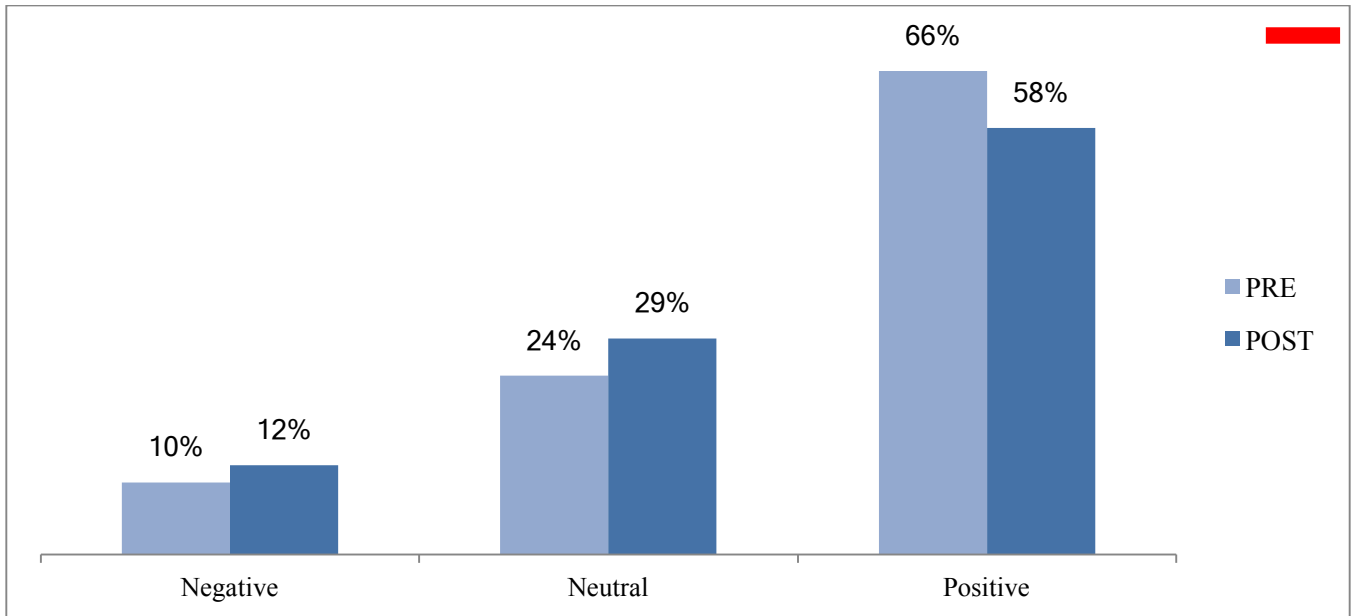


**4) Screen shotting or sharing a post on social media that degrades or makes fun of a classmate is wrong.**

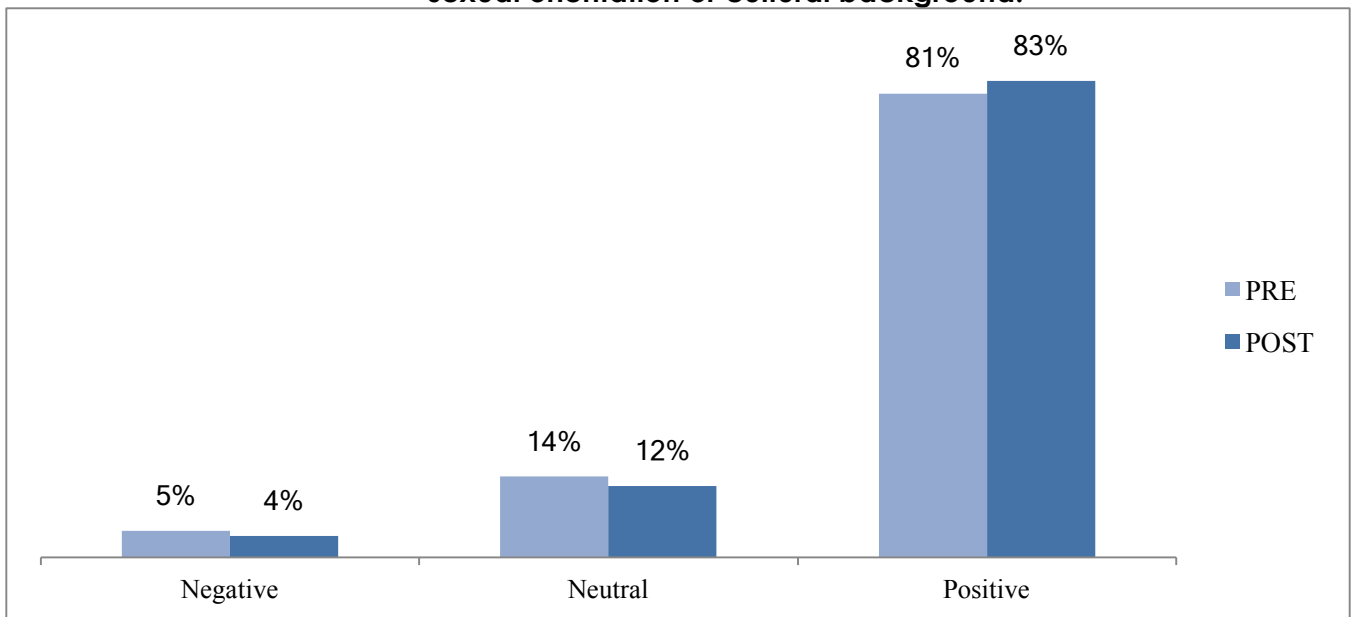


<sup>2</sup> Not all questions had responses from all students, so those percentages do not sum to 100%

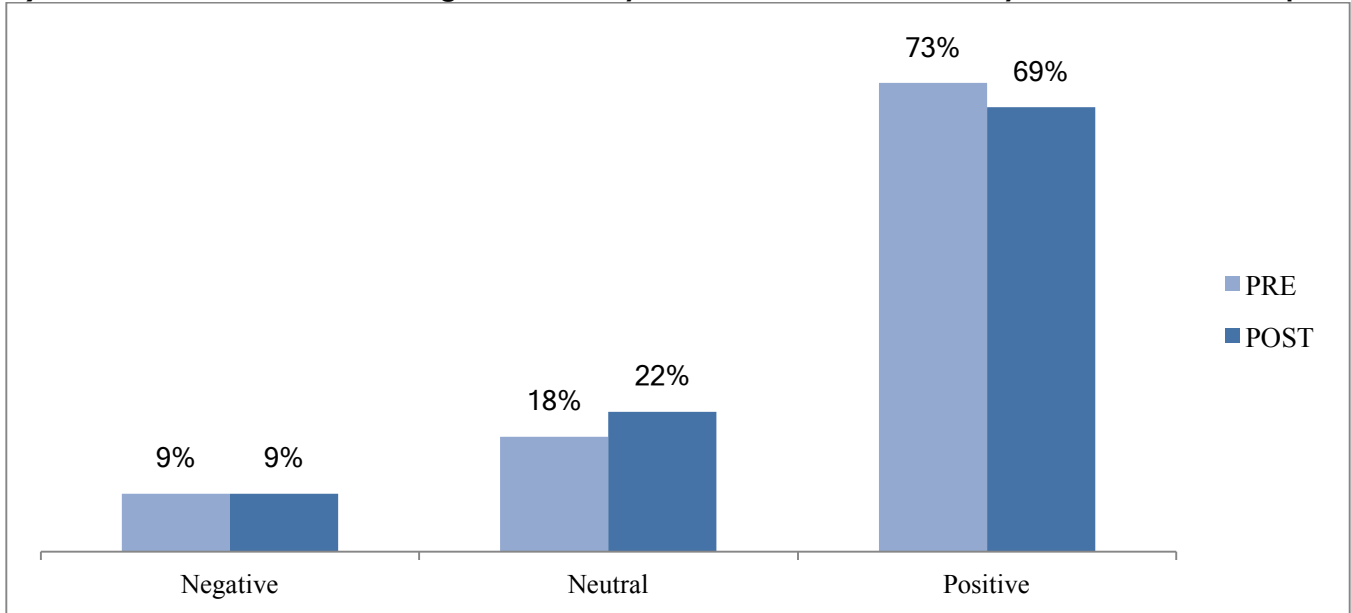
5) I trust that my teachers care about my education and respect me by the way they treat and talk to me.



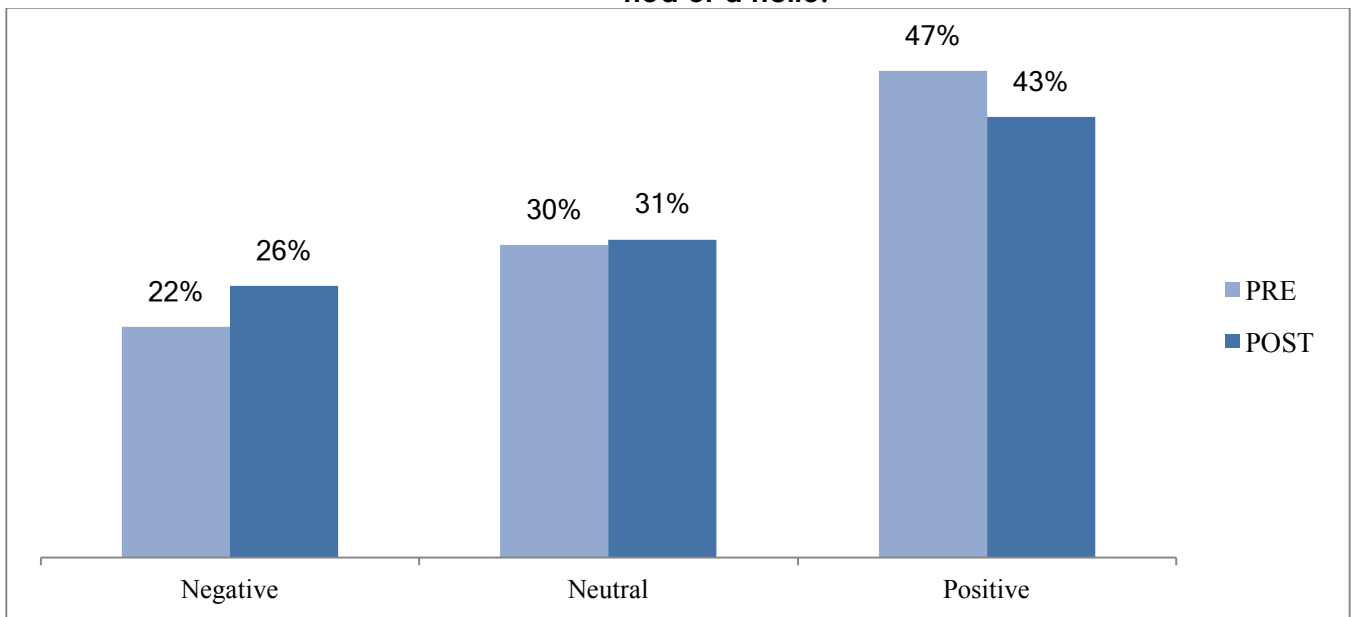
6) Our school provides support and encouragement for all students regardless of sex, race, sexual orientation or cultural background.



7) If another student was being harassed by other students in class, my teacher would help them.

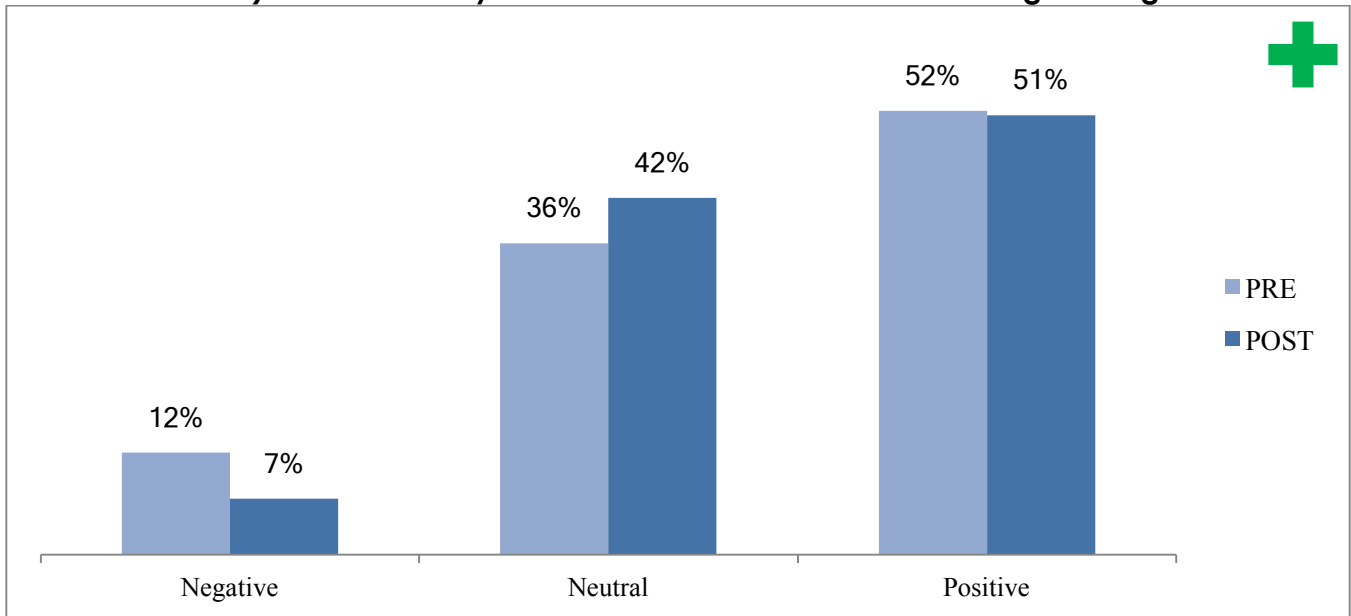


8) When I walk by a classmate I hardly know but recognize, I acknowledge them with a head nod or a hello.

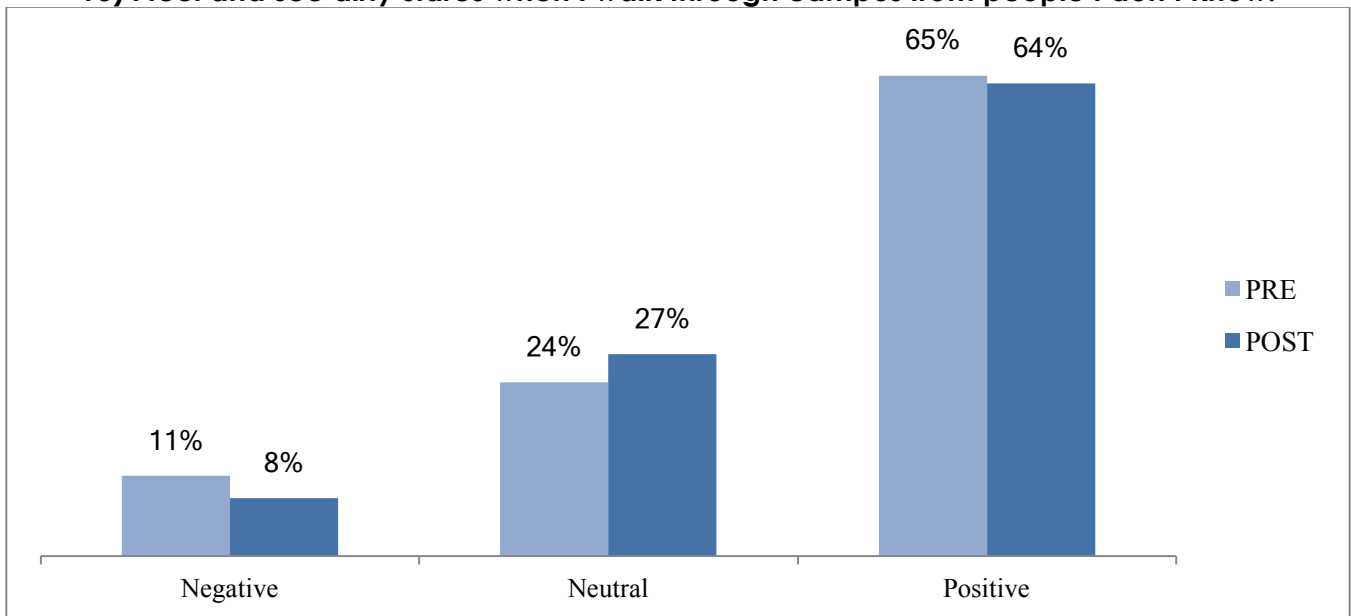




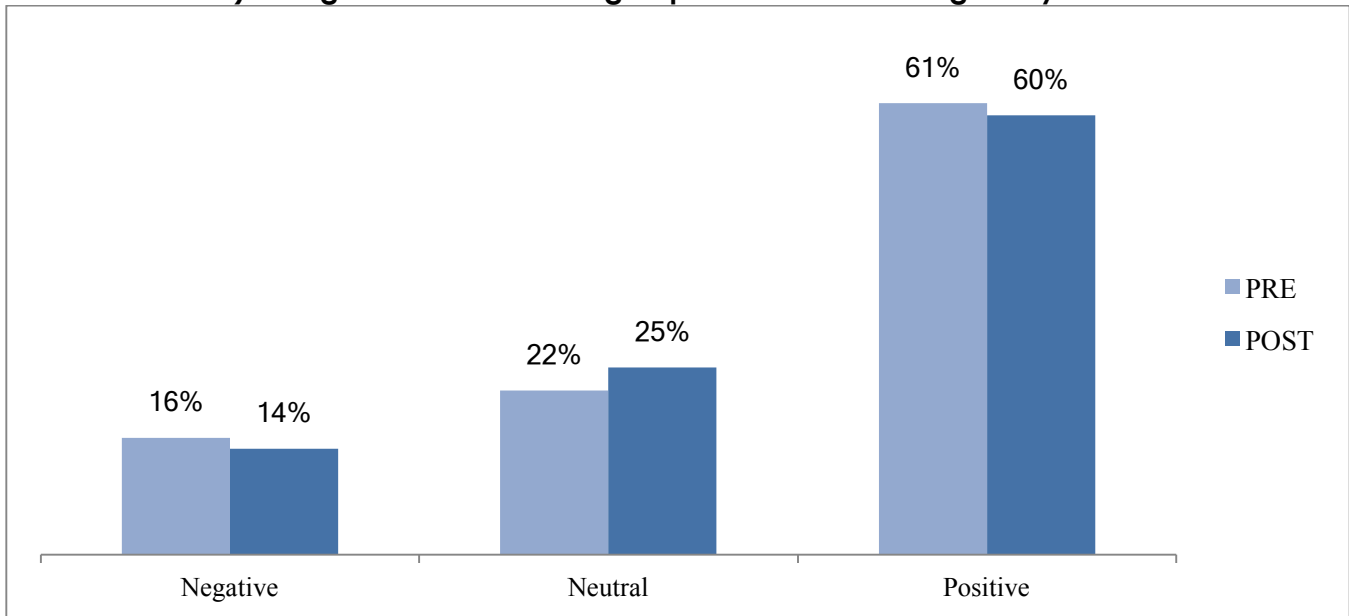
**9) Students at my school are cool with each other and get along.**



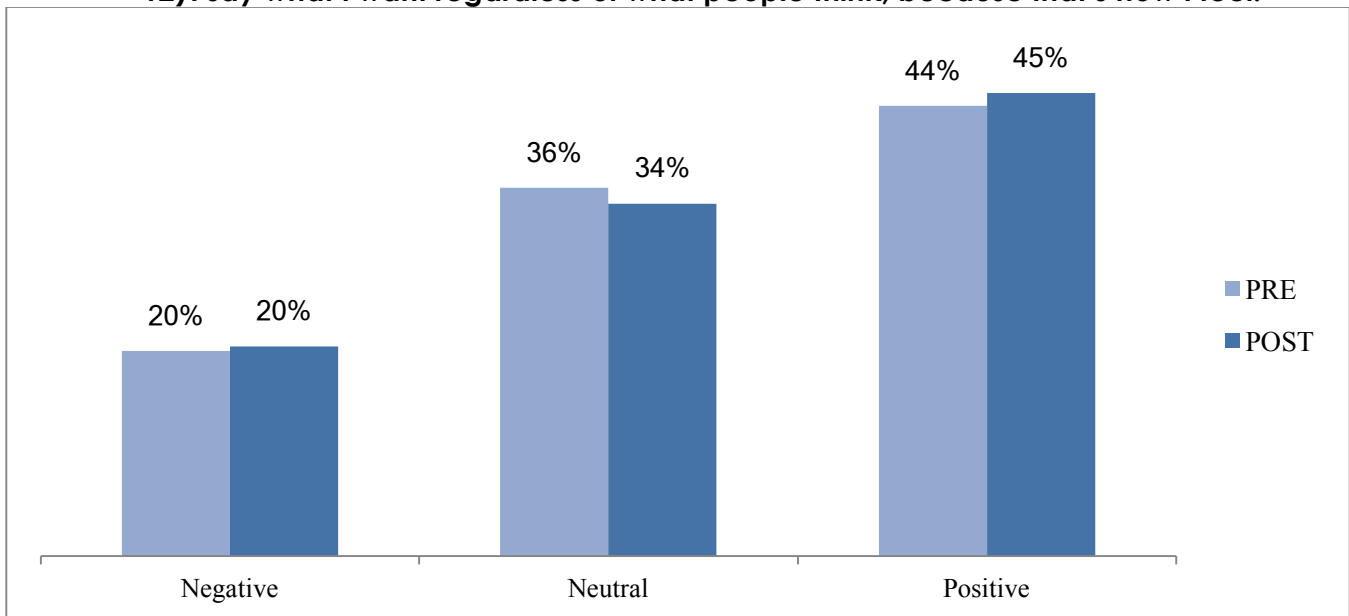
**10) I feel and see dirty stares when I walk through campus from people I don't know.**



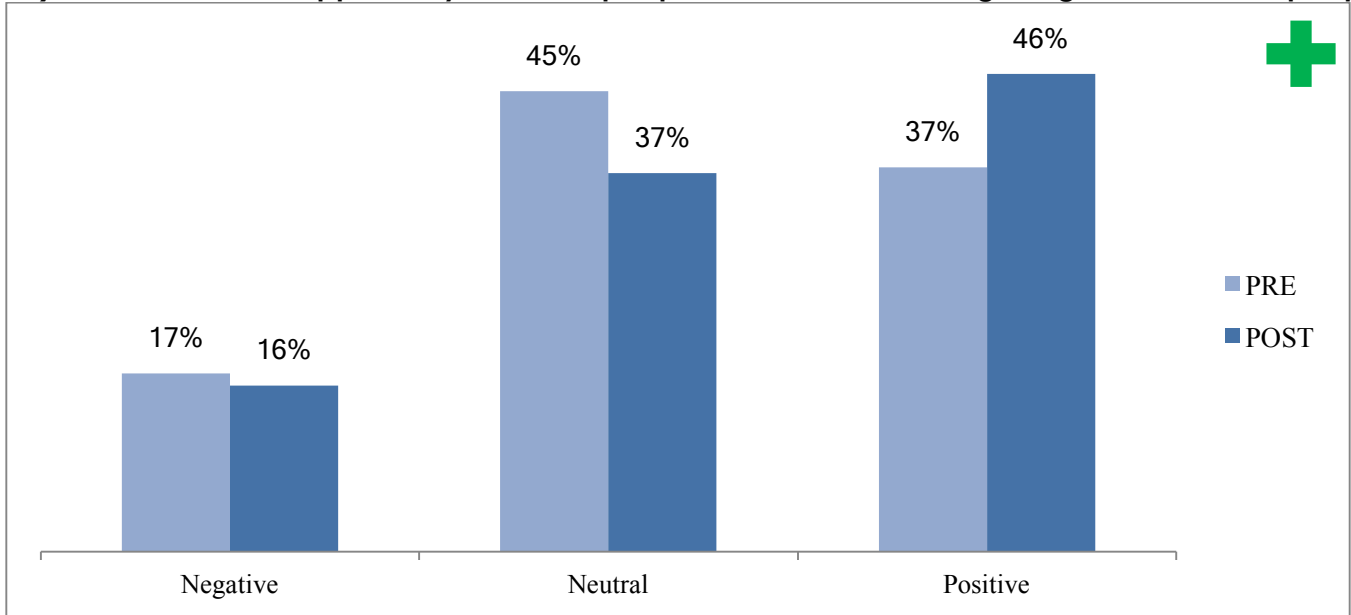
**11) I hang out with a diverse group rather than sticking to my own kind.**



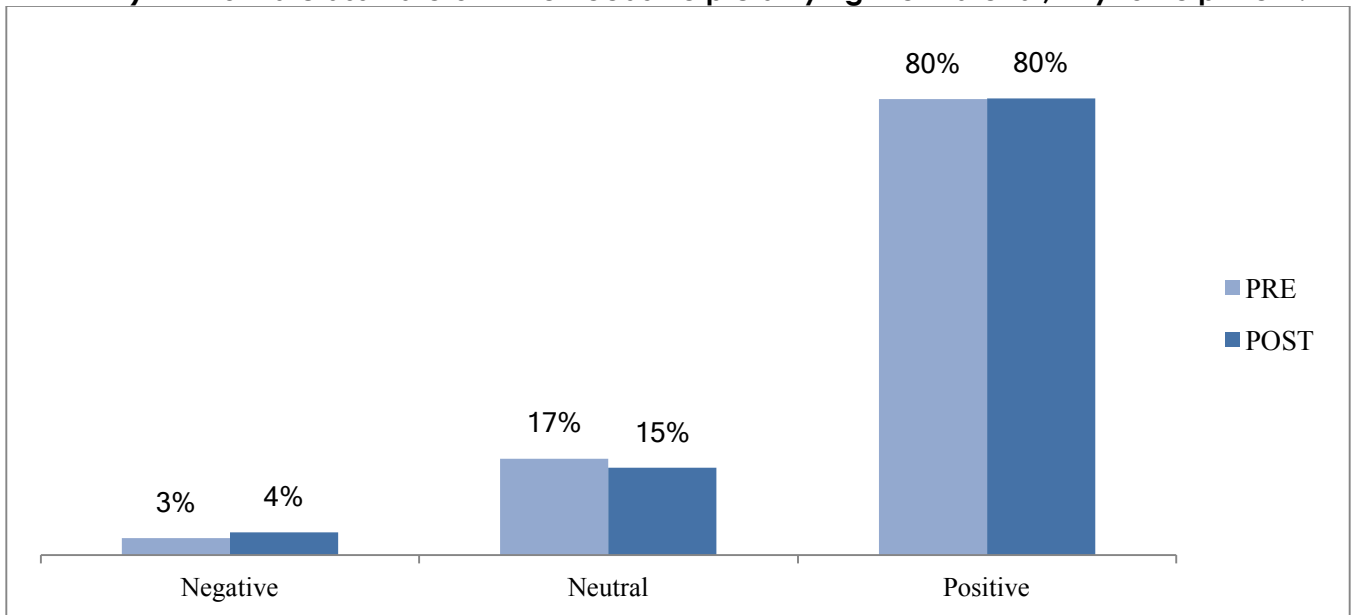
**12) I say what I want regardless of what people think, because that's how I feel.**



13) When there is an opportunity, I stick to people I know rather than getting to know other people.



14) If I know a classmate of mine needs help clarifying the material, I try to help them.





## SUMMARY

Measuring changes among high school students can be difficult, as their responses to identical questions can vary across the semester based on a variety of factors. For the purposes of this report, we use 5% change as the threshold for a noteworthy difference between pre-administration and post-administration periods.

Scores on items 1 (reporting a fight), 4 (social media harassment), and 13 (getting to know others) all improved, with a greater proportion of positive responses and a lower proportion of negative and neutral responses from students. Additionally, item 9 (students get along) showed that a number of responses moved from negative to neutral, which is also an improvement. Not surprisingly, these items are all closely tied to the mission of the HELLO program, respectful acknowledgement one another, and stand as evidence of the program's positive impact.

As we look forward, our team hopes to improve the HELLO activities in the following ways, (1) by implementing HELLO on a school wide scale in 2018 Spring semester at Palisades Charter High School. (2) simplified activities were added for small intentional moments of acknowledgement to not disrupt the flow of class instruction. The information we received from teachers in our mid semester check-up from teachers suggested the original activity took too much time and felt redundant. (3) we will be implementing a face-to-face student interview process as our new system of measurement. We found it difficult to rely on teachers to stay consistent and allow time for students to participate in the questionnaire process. Also, we wanted to improve the questions we were asking to allow for a better understanding.

It is worth noting the positive effects of these activities would likely be far greater with increased participation throughout the school. Of the group of teachers that initially expressed interest in incorporating the activities in their classroom, only 7% eventually completed the activities as planned, which makes it difficult to enact a campus-wide cultural change. So, while the HELLO team continues to build and multiply the program itself, it must also to turn to the teachers for help.