Student Voice Data Report
Grades 6-12

The Role of Student Voice & Aspirations in Today's Schools

Fundamental Beliefs

The Quaglia Institute is grounded in three fundamental beliefs that drive our research and work with schools around the world. We believe that:

- Students are the potential, not the problem.
- Students have something to teach us.
- Working together is the only way forward.

The Quaglia Institute is committed to making a difference globally—putting into practice conditions that foster everyone's voice and aspirations in learning communities around the world. One of the many ways the Quaglia Institute encourages schools to listen to the voices of students is through the use of surveys. We have been collecting student data for four decades. The full Quaglia Institute data set for students in grades 6-12 includes 969,607 surveys from 870 schools across 43 states between 2006-2023. Survey responses include students in urban, rural, and suburban schools. This report includes data from the 2018-2023 academic years. During that time, the Quaglia Student Voice survey was taken by 103,125 students in grades 6-12. This school-level survey was administered in 156 schools across 20 states. This data may be utilized to help all stakeholders better understand student voice and aspirations in schools.

Voice is about much more than simply speaking up; it is about engaging in school and making a difference—not only for yourself, but for others. The Quaglia Institute defines voice as *sharing thoughts and ideas in an environment underpinned by trust and respect, offering realistic suggestions for the good of the whole, and accepting responsibility for not only what is said but also what needs to be done*. In order for students to flourish, their voices must be heard—and when they are heard, students more readily embrace the conditions in school that will help them reach their aspirations.

When student voice is honored and invited, the impact is meaningful. Quaglia Student Voice data shows that when students believe they have a voice, they are:

- 25% more likely to report having **Self-Worth**.
- 41% more likely to report experiencing **Engagement**.
- 37% more likely to report having **Purpose**.
- 48% more likely to report being **Academically Motivated**.
- 78% more likely to report having **Teacher Support**.

We want to take a moment to recognize the challenges students and educators faced during the COVID-19 global pandemic and recognize their resiliency as they experienced extended remote learning and challenging transitions back to in-person learning. The impact felt by students during this time should be considered along with the data in this report. Remote and hybrid learning was very difficult for many students, while others thrived. Similarly, the transition back to school campus was welcomed by some, while others struggled greatly. Educators have been diligently addressing significant learning loss, behavior challenges, and increased mental health needs of students. There is no denying that COVID-19 has left a significant mark on schools and the students' experiences, and that this has contributed to an overall decline in student perceptions about school measured in this report. We will continue to use this data to drive conversations with students and educators about how to improve learning experiences in partnership with one another.

8 Conditions That Make a Difference

The data presented in this report is organized by the *8 Conditions That Make a Difference* as identified and defined by Dr. Russell Quaglia, an internationally known leader in the study of student voice and aspirations. The 8 Conditions are:

Belonging

Heroes

Sense of Accomplishment

Fun & Excitement

Curiosity & Creativity

Spirit of Adventure

Leadership & Responsibility

Confidence to Take Action

The 8 Conditions have positive effects on the development of student aspirations in schools. We define aspirations as the ability to dream and set goals for the future while being inspired in the present to reach those dreams. The descriptions of the 8 Conditions outline an approach that frames how schools can recognize and nurture the development of student aspirations. The 8 Conditions represent a core belief in education: There is nothing more important than motivating students to learn. The identified 8 Conditions do not represent an exhaustive list, but each is important if we are to have self-assured, inspired, and goal-directed students. All schools can benefit by creating and cultivating these Conditions in the lives of their students. The 8 Conditions make a difference because they help schools put into practice the three Guiding Principles that facilitate Student Voice & Aspirations: *Self-Worth, Engagement,* and *Purpose*.

Developing Students' Self-Worth:
Belonging, Heroes, and *Sense of Accomplishment*

Self-Worth begins when students experience a sense of Belonging. They feel like they are part of the school community while being recognized and appreciated for their uniqueness. Students also experience *Self-Worth* when someone in their lives believes in them. They need Heroes, people they can look up to, respect, and learn from. To develop *Self-Worth*, students also need a Sense of Accomplishment. They must be recognized as much for their effort, perseverance, and citizenship as they are for high grades and good test scores. As students build *Self-Worth*, they are more likely to persevere through difficult tasks and be inspired to take the steps needed to reach their goals.

Fostering Students' Engagement in Learning:
Fun & Excitement, Curiosity & Creativity, and *Spirit of Adventure*

Engagement means that students experience Fun & Excitement in their learning. They become so involved that they almost lose track of time. At the end of the lesson, they wonder, "Where did that time go?" Actively engaged students are not afraid to ask "Why?" or "Why not?" about the world around them. Curiosity & Creativity are alive in the way they learn, fostering inquisitiveness and a desire to satisfy their minds with new discoveries. Engaged students also have a Spirit of Adventure. They are not afraid to try new things or to take on healthy challenges, regardless of whether they might succeed or fail. With *Engagement*, learning becomes important in and of itself.

Encouraging a Sense of Purpose:
Leadership & Responsibility and *Confidence to Take Action*

Schools must challenge students to think about their *Purpose*—who they want to become as well as what they want to be. To reach this goal, students need to explore what it means to have, and create, a successful and rewarding life. *Purpose* is about being responsible, accountable, and confident. To develop *Purpose*, students need the opportunity to assume Leadership & Responsibility in their lives. They must learn to make decisions and understand the consequences of their choices. When students have *Purpose*, they have the Confidence to Take Action toward a meaningful, productive, and rewarding future. They believe in themselves and are motivated to reach their dreams.

All members of the school community can foster the 8 Conditions and make a positive difference in the lives of today's students by supporting the goals students set and strive to reach.

Student voice acknowledges that students have unique perspectives on learning, teaching, and schooling, and they should have opportunities to actively shape their own education.

-Dr. Russell Quaglia

Demographics

The demographic data are presented both as counts and percentages.[1]

Total number of respondents: 103125

Gender of Students		
Gender	Count	Percent
Male	50715	49.5%
Female	49218	48.0%
Other	2498	2.4%

Students Planning on Going to College		
College	Count	Percent
Yes	76162	74.1%
No	4539	4.4%
Undecided	22052	21.5%

Grade of Students		
Grade	Count	Percent
6th	14511	14.1%
7th	16071	15.7%
8th	15419	15.0%
9th	17242	16.8%
10th	14690	14.3%
11th	13436	13.1%
12th	11311	11.0%

Participants in Co-Curricular Activities[2]		
Co-Curricular	Count	Percent
Music	25682	25.0%
Theater	6363	6.2%
Sports	48640	47.4%
Academic Clubs	11940	11.6%
Student Council	5234	5.1%
Other	20907	20.4%
Not involved in activities	27060	26.4%

Age of Students		
Age	Count	Percent
9	115	0.1%
10	160	0.2%
11	8195	8.0%
12	15799	15.3%
13	16128	15.7%
14	16627	16.1%
15	15551	15.1%
16	14127	13.7%
17	11943	11.6%
18	3918	3.8%
19	224	0.2%
Other	180	0.2%

Racial Heritage of Students[2]		
Racial Heritage	Count	Percent
White	58371	56.8%
Black or African American	5758	5.6%
Hispanic, Latino	33397	32.5%
Asian	9556	9.3%
Native Hawaiian	1753	1.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	6315	6.1%
Other Pacific Islander	1928	1.9%
Other	7911	7.7%

Language Selected by Respondent for Survey		
Language	Count	Percent
English	100854	97.8%
Spanish	2259	2.2%

[1] Count totals for specific demographics may not equal the total survey count, as not all respondents report demographic information. Total percentages may not equal one hundred due to rounding.

[2] In this table, the percentages may total more than 100% since respondents were instructed to select all that apply.

Belonging

The Condition of Belonging means that students are valued members of a community while still maintaining their uniqueness. It is a relationship between two or more persons characterized by a sense of connection and support. A sense of Belonging is an important Condition for students' feeling of well-being, social engagement, and competence. The Condition of Belonging increases intrinsic motivation, for it fosters self-confidence and investment in the community. Teachers have the opportunity to establish a culture of Belonging in their classrooms, one that promotes their students' sense of well-being, connection, and self-belief. Students can help create a sense of Belonging by looking for peers who might not feel connected to the school and making an intentional effort to get to know them.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
1. School is a welcoming and friendly place.	65.9%	68.8%	64.2%	69.9%	65.5%	62.0%	66.7%	64.0%	66.4%	67.0%
2. Teachers make an effort to get to know me.	59.8%	63.1%	57.2%	70.7%	64.3%	59.4%	56.9%	54.1%	55.0%	57.2%
3. I have difficulty fitting in at school.	19.8%	17.8%	20.7%	22.4%	21.0%	19.2%	18.5%	19.0%	18.7%	19.3%
4. I am proud of my school.	55.8%	56.7%	55.9%	66.0%	57.4%	50.0%	58.9%	52.8%	51.6%	51.9%
5. I am a valued member of my school community.	38.9%	39.6%	39.1%	43.3%	39.8%	38.1%	35.9%	36.6%	38.0%	41.4%

Heroes

Heroes are the everyday people—teachers, friends, family—in students' lives who inspire them to excel and to make positive changes in attitude and lifestyle. Heroes are the people students can connect with, who have a positive influence on them, and who listen to and value their ideas. Heroes build trust in others and belief in oneself. Teachers can be Heroes to their students. Students can look up to teachers as people to learn from and communicate with about many things. Building relationships with students through support, guidance, and encouragement enables them to become more confident in their academic, personal, and social growth. Students can also be Heroes to one another by engaging in acts of kindness, celebrating the successes of peers, and offering words of encouragement to students who may be struggling.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
6. Students respect teachers.	49.9%	53.0%	47.4%	53.8%	48.3%	45.2%	50.0%	48.2%	52.1%	52.8%
7. Adults at this school listen to students' suggestions.	54.1%	55.3%	53.8%	65.0%	58.1%	52.9%	53.6%	49.8%	48.6%	49.0%
8. My parents care about my education.	95.0%	95.2%	95.4%	96.0%	95.8%	95.1%	95.4%	94.6%	94.4%	92.6%
9. If I have a problem, I have a teacher that I can talk to.	62.3%	62.1%	63.5%	64.5%	61.1%	59.4%	58.8%	60.7%	65.0%	69.5%
10. Teachers respect students.	64.5%	64.9%	65.0%	73.3%	66.5%	62.8%	63.7%	60.7%	61.6%	62.0%
11. Students respect each other.	40.0%	43.4%	37.2%	40.0%	36.6%	35.9%	40.8%	40.5%	43.0%	44.5%
12. Teachers care if I am absent from school.	48.9%	49.5%	48.8%	57.1%	51.1%	47.4%	46.2%	44.7%	46.8%	48.7%

Sense of Accomplishment

The Condition of Sense of Accomplishment recognizes effort, perseverance, and citizenship as signs of students' success. Educators have traditionally used a narrow view of accomplishment that refers to academic achievement, innate ability, or who is "best in the class." Sense of Accomplishment, however, is viewed in terms of personal growth and effort, not just through measurable outcomes and countable successes. Teachers have the opportunity to celebrate their students' accomplishments in visible ways. Taking time to recognize and support students' efforts can help motivate them to persevere through difficult tasks, creating an appreciation for hard work and dedication. Students can also celebrate one another by looking for opportunities to recognize peers for their actions and achievements that positively contribute to the school community.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
13. I have never been recognized for something positive at school.	23.3%	24.1%	22.0%	25.1%	23.4%	23.2%	21.5%	22.7%	23.4%	24.0%
14. Teachers recognize me when I try my best.	55.1%	56.4%	54.8%	60.0%	55.6%	54.4%	52.3%	53.1%	54.3%	56.9%
15. Adults and students work together to make our school better.	51.9%	52.0%	52.8%	63.3%	55.3%	49.9%	52.0%	47.9%	46.1%	47.0%
16. Teachers let my parents know what I do well.	50.0%	52.2%	48.4%	70.4%	62.2%	55.5%	44.0%	39.4%	37.7%	36.4%
17. I put forth my best effort at school.	75.1%	71.6%	79.7%	81.7%	77.2%	73.6%	75.4%	72.2%	72.9%	71.9%
18. I know what I need to do to be successful in my classes.	82.3%	82.7%	82.9%	83.4%	81.8%	81.3%	82.9%	81.5%	81.8%	83.9%

Fun & Excitement

The Condition of Fun & Excitement is characterized by students being inspired. They are actively engaged and emotionally involved in their schoolwork. Students who exhibit Fun & Excitement are usually self-confident, curious, and prepared; they are willing to meet the challenges of the day. Teachers who foster Fun & Excitement provide new opportunities, initiate challenges, and respect individual interests. Students must also share in the responsibility for bringing this Condition to life by developing a willingness to voice their ideas about how to make the classroom a fun and exciting place to learn.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
19. I enjoy being at school.	52.1%	52.6%	52.6%	60.6%	54.6%	50.3%	50.5%	47.6%	49.2%	51.7%
20. Teachers enjoy working with students.	64.7%	65.4%	64.9%	70.7%	64.6%	61.0%	63.5%	62.5%	64.6%	66.7%
21. School is boring.	46.6%	49.4%	43.0%	32.2%	40.5%	47.8%	49.7%	53.2%	52.8%	51.5%
22. Teachers have fun at school.	38.8%	40.1%	37.9%	43.5%	38.6%	35.8%	36.5%	36.3%	39.3%	42.8%
23. Learning can be fun.	67.2%	66.0%	69.0%	66.3%	62.2%	62.1%	65.8%	68.6%	72.8%	75.5%

Curiosity & Creativity

The Condition of Curiosity & Creativity is characterized by inquisitiveness, a strong desire to learn new or interesting things, and an eagerness to satisfy the mind with new discoveries. Curiosity triggers students to ask "Why?" while creativity gives them the initiative to ask "Why not?" The intensity of Curiosity & Creativity tends to diminish over time due to the habituating effects of the environment. Teachers can devote extra attention to creating a classroom environment that promotes questioning and creative exploration in order to maintain student motivation. Students do not have to wait for teachers to invite them to be curious and creative. They can proactively ask questions and bring their creative thinking to their learning experiences on a regular basis.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
24. I feel comfortable asking questions in class.	59.0%	65.2%	53.8%	60.6%	57.0%	56.4%	58.7%	58.3%	60.0%	63.8%
25. Students work with adults to find solutions to school problems.	51.6%	52.9%	51.0%	63.7%	55.9%	50.9%	50.0%	47.3%	45.8%	45.8%
26. I enjoy working on projects with other students.	60.3%	63.6%	58.2%	67.4%	63.7%	62.2%	58.8%	56.5%	56.6%	54.7%
27. My classes help me understand what is happening in my everyday life.	40.7%	41.9%	40.4%	51.3%	46.9%	41.5%	37.5%	34.5%	34.6%	37.5%
28. I find homework helpful to my overall learning.	30.7%	29.8%	32.3%	38.8%	32.2%	29.9%	28.1%	27.1%	28.4%	30.0%
29. I understand the importance of what I am learning in school.	65.1%	65.3%	65.9%	75.5%	69.2%	64.7%	64.3%	58.8%	59.4%	62.5%
30. At school I am encouraged to be creative.	60.2%	58.5%	62.7%	70.4%	64.4%	59.6%	58.3%	55.6%	55.6%	56.5%

Spirit of Adventure

Spirit of Adventure is characterized by students' abilities to take on positive, healthy challenges at school and home, with family and friends. Students experience the Spirit of Adventure when they tackle something new without the fear of failure or success. Teachers can encourage and support students' Spirit of Adventure by urging them to explore new things. When teachers create an atmosphere that allows for healthy decision-making and risk-taking, students can become more confident and resilient. Students with a Spirit of Adventure see life as full of opportunities worth exploring for their own sake and are willing to jump in and try new things at school.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
31. Students are supportive of each other.	52.4%	54.5%	51.0%	52.5%	48.7%	48.3%	53.5%	53.9%	55.0%	56.0%
32. I am afraid to try something if I think I may fail.	38.9%	32.3%	45.1%	39.2%	39.8%	38.1%	40.2%	39.8%	38.5%	35.7%
33. I am excited to tell my friends when I am successful.	58.5%	53.6%	64.3%	57.4%	55.5%	54.5%	58.3%	59.8%	61.6%	64.3%
34. I like challenging assignments.	39.6%	40.2%	39.5%	43.1%	37.9%	36.7%	36.1%	38.1%	41.4%	46.5%
35. Teachers help me learn from my mistakes.	64.8%	67.2%	63.6%	76.2%	69.3%	65.2%	63.5%	59.5%	59.3%	58.7%

Leadership & Responsibility

The Condition of Leadership & Responsibility means students can express their ideas and are willing to accept the consequences of their actions. This cultivates shared accountability for the classroom environment and school community. Fostering leadership empowers students to make just and appropriate decisions and to take pride in their actions. Teachers who promote this Condition teach and expect their students to be good decision makers. They provide legitimate decision-making opportunities, seek student input, and expect students to be accountable for their words and actions. Students are trusted to make the right decisions and are recognized for doing so. Leadership is not reserved for those elected to student council. All students have a leadership role in their own lives and learning, and they can be responsible leaders in big and small ways at school.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
36. Students have a voice in decision-making at school.	52.0%	52.2%	52.6%	59.1%	54.1%	51.1%	54.3%	49.9%	47.2%	46.0%
37. I take action on causes I believe in.	67.4%	67.2%	68.2%	66.6%	64.6%	64.1%	66.8%	67.8%	70.7%	73.1%
38. Other students see me as a leader.	25.9%	25.9%	26.3%	23.5%	22.9%	23.9%	23.1%	25.7%	29.9%	35.7%
39. I use my voice to express my thoughts and ideas.	57.1%	58.4%	56.6%	56.4%	53.8%	54.2%	56.3%	57.3%	60.4%	63.7%
40. Teachers encourage students to make decisions.	65.3%	66.0%	65.5%	70.5%	66.3%	64.5%	65.5%	63.2%	62.7%	64.1%
41. Teachers are willing to learn from students.	49.8%	50.5%	49.6%	57.5%	51.6%	48.6%	47.6%	46.9%	47.1%	48.7%
42. It is my responsibility to make sure I am learning.	85.1%	85.2%	85.9%	88.1%	85.2%	84.5%	85.2%	83.6%	84.1%	85.0%
43. I know the goals my school is working on this year.	42.6%	43.4%	42.7%	50.2%	46.3%	43.8%	40.7%	37.4%	38.7%	39.8%

Confidence to Take Action

Confidence to Take Action is the extent to which students believe in themselves and are encouraged to dream about their futures while being motivated to take steps in the present to achieve their goals. This Condition is characterized by a positive and healthy outlook on life and by looking inward rather than outward for approval. Teachers can build their students' Confidence to Take Action by providing support, celebrating diversity, and encouraging independent thinking. By enhancing the quality of academic and personal growth, teachers empower their students to become active and involved members of their learning environments. Ultimately, this Condition comes to life when students are confident to take actions that benefit their own lives and the good of the whole.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
44. I believe I can be successful.	84.9%	86.6%	84.6%	83.9%	82.7%	83.0%	85.6%	85.1%	87.1%	87.6%
45. I have a responsibility to make the world better for others.	65.5%	63.0%	68.9%	67.9%	64.0%	62.3%	64.5%	65.1%	66.3%	70.2%
46. Teachers believe in me and expect me to be successful.	73.8%	73.3%	75.2%	77.3%	74.2%	72.6%	73.0%	71.8%	73.2%	74.5%
47. I am excited about my future.	71.4%	71.4%	73.0%	72.6%	70.5%	69.5%	70.7%	69.5%	71.7%	76.7%
48. I think it is important to set high goals.	76.9%	76.6%	78.8%	76.5%	74.7%	74.4%	76.7%	77.1%	79.2%	81.1%
49. School is preparing me well for my future.	58.2%	57.5%	60.3%	70.9%	64.2%	59.6%	58.7%	50.9%	49.5%	50.3%
50. Students develop programs that improve the whole school.	43.8%	43.8%	44.5%	50.7%	45.0%	40.1%	45.3%	41.3%	41.0%	41.8%

Student Voice

The seven statements in the table below appear in other tables throughout this report as they relate to particular Conditions. Student Voice, however, not only gives us access to what students think about school through the lens of the 8 Conditions, it is also a construct in itself. As such, this table provides insight into what students believe about adult openness to and partnership with their ideas and suggestions. It is our hope that within a school, adults and students develop skills and create regular opportunities to listen to, learn from, and lead with one another in order to continually improve and support all members of the school community in reaching their fullest potential.

Survey Statement	Total in Agreement	Gender		Grade						
		Male	Female	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
7. Adults at this school listen to students' suggestions.	54.1%	55.3%	53.8%	65.0%	58.1%	52.9%	53.6%	49.8%	48.6%	49.0%
15. Adults and students work together to make our school better.	51.9%	52.0%	52.8%	63.3%	55.3%	49.9%	52.0%	47.9%	46.1%	47.0%
25. Students work with adults to find solutions to school problems.	51.6%	52.9%	51.0%	63.7%	55.9%	50.9%	50.0%	47.3%	45.8%	45.8%
36. Students have a voice in decision-making at school.	52.0%	52.2%	52.6%	59.1%	54.1%	51.1%	54.3%	49.9%	47.2%	46.0%
37. I take action on causes I believe in.	67.4%	67.2%	68.2%	66.6%	64.6%	64.1%	66.8%	67.8%	70.7%	73.1%
39. I use my voice to express my thoughts and ideas.	57.1%	58.4%	56.6%	56.4%	53.8%	54.2%	56.3%	57.3%	60.4%	63.7%
50. Students develop programs that improve the whole school.	43.8%	43.8%	44.5%	50.7%	45.0%	40.1%	45.3%	41.3%	41.0%	41.8%

For more information, please contact the Quaglia Institute at support@quagliainstitute.org.