



# YOUTH POLICY SUMMIT

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## YOUTH POLICY SUMMIT PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Fall 2011

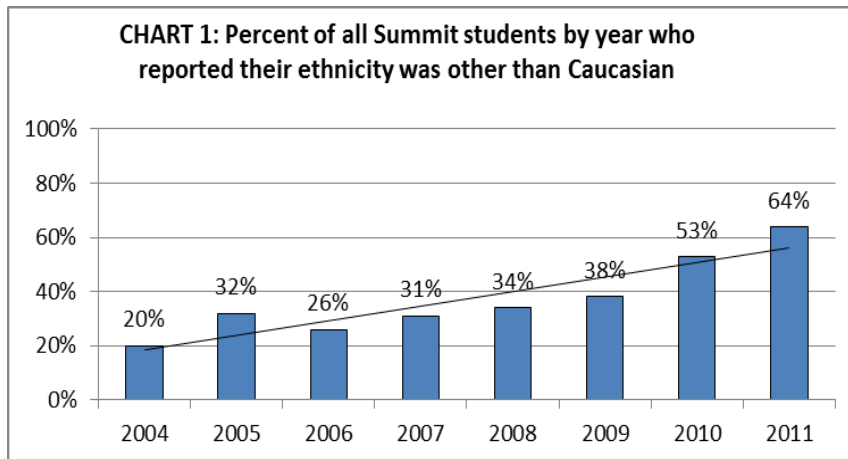
WITH THANKS TO THE ALTRIA GROUP FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF YPS PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Youth Policy Summit (YPS) program of The Keystone Center (Keystone) is a multi-faceted educational immersion experience that brings high school students together in a group learning environment to analyze a contemporary, science-intensive policy issue.

The primary metric of success for this program is demonstration of positive outcomes for student participants in their collaboration, complex communication, and problem solving/critical thinking skills, all of which are widely recognized as essential 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills. YPS also contributes to students' knowledge of current public policy issues as well as their understanding of policy-making processes. In addition, Keystone is measuring the performance of the program itself in order to strengthen it over time.

### Program Demographics

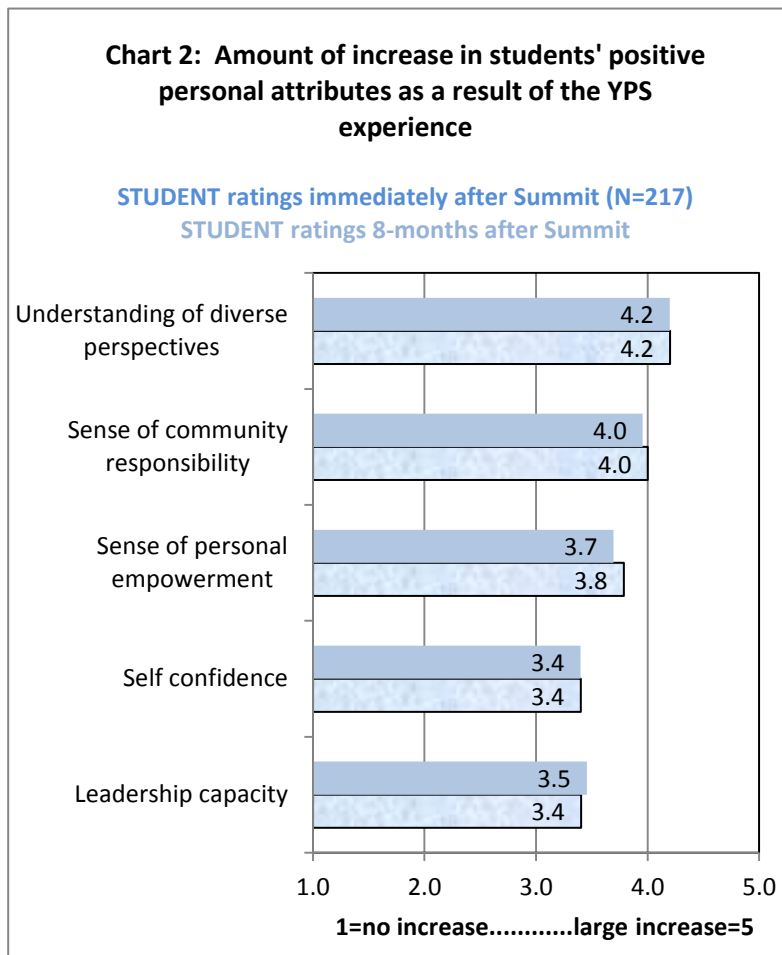
The program has grown substantially over its eight year history and has served a total of 682 ethnically diverse students from more than 70 schools in 23 states. The YPS program is effective for high school students in various grade levels, but is most effective for rising juniors and seniors.



## 2010 and 2011 Evaluation Findings

**The YPS program is a valuable experience for students.** Participating students and teachers rated the YPS program as a highly positive learning experience for students (4.5 or greater on a 5.0 scale). Both students and teachers agreed that they would recommend the YPS program to other schools and students (4.4 or greater on a 5.0 scale).

**Students placed high value on the four key components of the program:** *Policy analysis and policy making* (4.4 on a 5.0 scale); *Negotiation and mediation* (4.3 on a 5.0 scale); *Diversity of stakeholder perspectives* (4.2 on a 5.0 scale); and *Developing consensus recommendations* (4.1 on a 5.0 scale).



**The YPS experience produces a broad range of knowledge and skill outcomes** for participating students including increases in five positive personal attributes: *Understanding diverse perspectives; Sense of community responsibility; Sense of personal empowerment; Self confidence; and Leadership capacity.* After their YPS experience, students reported that they were applying these increased personal attributes in a range of academic, community, and personal situations.

*"Whenever I work in group projects with my classmates, I look back on my YPS experience and utilize those skills that I learned there. I am a stronger leader because of it and am much more willing to step up in my everyday and school life."*

**YPS students increased and applied important communication skills.** Both students and teachers thought that students had made substantial gains in their abilities to *Listen to and respect others' ideas; Present a group's ideas; and Express or defend their own ideas.* Students offered comments that illustrated ways in which they were applying these increased communication skills.

*"After this experience I feel that I have the ability to formulate ideas and express them clearly in a short amount of time."*

*"I learned to speak my mind more freely. I learned to argue for my opinions."*

**Students also increased and applied important skills for working in groups.** Both students and teachers thought that students had made substantial gains in their abilities to *Make groups decisions; Negotiate and compromise; and Brainstorm for ideas*. Students offered comments that illustrated a wide range of ways in which they were applying these increased skills for working in groups.

*"I'm glad to say that the mediation training that I received while at YPS plays a role in nearly every argument or discussion that I'm in today."*

*"I think learning to work with others and contribute ideas to reach a common consensus was the most important. The experience was unlike any I've ever had in a classroom, and prepared me for similar situations that I will encounter later in life in my career."*

**YPS students developed and applied critical thinking / problem solving skills** including: *Apply information to solve a real problem; Think of new ways to solve a problem; and Work with others to figure out how to solve a problem*. Student comments revealed that they were using these problem solving skills in academic, extracurricular, and personal situations.

*"Through participation in the YPS I am able to research/gather information better, [and] work with others to find a solution more efficiently."*

**Students increased and applied their knowledge of the Summit's environmental-societal topic, and the YPS experience increased their awareness of related industries.** Some students commented that the Summit was influencing their academic decisions such as *Applying to a particular college or Applying for a scholarship* as well as their exploration of various career possibilities related to their Summit's topic.

*"I think that the YPS experience has helped me to better understand some of the career paths I might be interested in as well as how I can help to bring a new dimension to those careers."*

**Students planed to share what they had learned through their YPS experiences both within their own schools and in their communities and states** through: *Outreach and presentations; Further Action; Person-to-person interactions; and Sharing specific learning*.

*"I have used this knowledge in determining what project I should undertake to improve the community as a whole. Since water quality is a diverse issue in which every community member is a stakeholder, I believe this could potentially spur community awareness and action."*

**In summary, program evaluation results show that the YPS program provides valuable learning experiences from which students are gaining important knowledge and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills applicable in their current and future academic, community, and personal lives.**

For a copy of the full Fall 2011 Evaluation Report, please contact Jessye Crowe-Rothstein at [jcrothstein@keystone.org](mailto:jcrothstein@keystone.org) or Elizabeth Roush at [eroush@keystone.org](mailto:eroush@keystone.org) or visit [www.youthpolicysummit.org](http://www.youthpolicysummit.org).