

FutureMakers Regional Student Voice Report 2016

Executive Summary

The FutureMakers Coalition is a regional initiative and partnership in Southwest Florida (Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee counties) with the goal to transform the workforce by increasing the number of college degrees, certificates or high quality credentials from 27 to 40% by 2025. Acknowledging that the Coalition values the perspective of students the Student Summits were one of the first projects undertaken.

The collaborative design was inspired, in part, by the student summit, Charlotte County Voice of Local Teens (CCVOLT), held in 2014. The Coalition team worked together to implement the summit process throughout the region, including County Summits and a Regional Summit. This approach ensured that many students could be engaged in the process, heard from, and left activated for change. Here are the objectives of the student summit process.

1. Understand educational and career aspirations and challenges from student perspective.
2. Share that information with the FutureMakers Coalition and the regional Southwest Florida community.
3. Develop student leaders to participate in the FutureMakers Coalition.

The County Student Summits help to ensure that the voice from students across the region was heard in their local context. Although much of what was trending at the regional level was true at the county level, each county summit uncovered some specific information unique to that area.

The Regional Student Summit interpreted the county data and gathered new insights. Lessons from the FutureMakers Regional Student Summit include:

- Students overall have a mixed view on their community and feel that more support for students and individual well-being can contribute to improving their outlook.
- High school activities are the most important thing going on for students, and many of them are hard at work to pursue their goals.
- School policies related to testing, scheduling, and workload and stress are the most prevailing challenges in school for students.
- Outside of school, economic conditions and transportation are major issues.
- Students want to see improvements in school policies, as well as more supportive and interactive teachers, the role that personal responsibility and motivation play in change was reinforced
- Improved community relations with students is a top desired change.
- Teachers and schools are most trusted by students to make changes.
- Financial aid is the biggest challenge for higher education.
- Students look to guidance counselors most to help them on their educational and career paths.
- Students want more personal exploration.
- Clewiston High School's "Power Hour" rose to the surface as a regional promising practice.
- Students want to be supported in cultivating strong, positive personal identities.
- Students eager to embark on STEM-related careers and want personal fulfillment.

Recommendations based on student perspective

- Learn more about “Power Hour” and investigate how it might be implemented in other high schools.
- Examine high school policies and practice on testing, scheduling, and workload, as well as teacher-student engagement, particularly as they relate to student stress. Test ideas to reduce student stress.
- Support and develop projects and programs that build relationships between students and their broader community.
- Support and develop initiatives, projects, and programs that increase access to financial aid for students.
- Engage schools and teachers for interventions.
- Focus on guidance counselors to improve higher education access and career path interventions.
- Support projects and programs that help students to cultivate their passions and personal identities.
- Align students interested in STEM-related careers to locally available jobs, develop supportive career pathways.

The student engagement process of the FutureMakers Student Summits

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2. Share that information with the FutureMakers Coalition and the regional Southwest Florida community
3. Develop student leaders to participate in the FutureMakers Coalition

The Student Summits were created upon the belief that it is necessary to engage and involve students as context experts in the progression of FutureMakers. In order to do this, it is necessary to 1) understand educational and career aspirations and challenges from their perspective, 2) share that information with the FutureMakers Coalition and the regional Southwest Florida community, and 3) develop student leaders to participate in the FutureMakers Coalition.

The FutureMakers Student Summit process was collaboratively designed by a group of FutureMakers Coalition partners, including Diane Ramseyer from Drug Free Charlotte, Kelly Thawley from the Foundation for Lee Public Schools, Jessica Manchette from Champions for Learning, Laura Perry from the Glades Public School Foundations, and Ava Barrett of the Hendry County Public Libraries. The project team reviewed the summit proposal designed by Dr. Cindy Banyai, refining it and planning for implementation of the project.

The team decided to have each county hold an initial County Student Summit in the fall of 2015 to hear from a variety of students in their area. These events provide an entry point for identifying student leaders to participate in the Regional Student Summit, as well as provide some initial data from the students.

The Regional Student Summit was then planned for the spring of 2016 by Dr. Cindy Banyai and the FutureMakers Coalition backbone personnel at the Southwest Florida Community Foundation. This event brought together select student leaders from the County Student Summits to participate in discussions on preliminary findings of the summits, connect with one another on the challenges and desired change in education and career planning, and to identify student leaders to participate in the FutureMakers Coalition.

Research design

This research has been undertaken as an investment in understanding communities around Southwest Florida to assist nonprofits, agencies, and regional leaders in developing programs, projects, and initiatives linked to the collective impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011) desired through the FutureMakers Coalition. It helps guide grant processes and change agencies by helping to

provide some information to lay the context of the community, helping us to “take stock” consistent with the Getting to Outcomes (GTO) design model (Wiseman, et al., 2007).

Collective impact is a way regions organize around causes and goals to make regional change for good. It is our way of moving the needle on regional causes and the change needs to be consistent with the community. In fact, “the success of collective impact depends on genuine ownership by the larger community that starts with placing a value, not only on expert knowledge, but also on public knowledge that comes only from authentically engaging the community (Harwood, 2014).” This is why acknowledging and tapping into the knowledge that students have can be a benefit to the success of the FutureMakers Coalition and its related initiatives.

To assist the FutureMakers Coalition in gaining this knowledge a series of student discussions were held at Dunbar High School in February 2015. This pilot helped inform the FutureMakers Coalition project partners in their design of the process and prepare for the County Student Summits held in the fall of 2015.

These student summits were developed to be consistent with principles of participatory action research (Heron & Reason, 2006; Small, 1995). Each summit was conducting using a question guide that was developed based on suggestions for community engagement for collective impact from Richard Hardwood’s 2014 work for the Collective Impact Forum “Putting Community in Collective Impact.” The question guide can be found in Table 1.

Table 1 - CRT Question Guide

Question	Rationale
What story do you tell about our community?	Identify positive/negative community narratives
What’s going on in your community?	Identify community context - issues/situations/conditions/assets that are not obvious to outsiders
What challenges do you face in your daily life?	Better understand the challenges people face in moving toward their aspirations; how people experience those challenges in their daily lives
What needs to change to make these challenges less difficult? (also referenced “ideal community”)	Articulate community’s aspirations; identify community level outcomes
Who do you trust to make these changes?	Gauge enabling environment for program development/effectiveness
What role would you want to play in this change?	Engage group to become active; develop belief in collective impact potential
*What challenges do you face in planning your future education/career?	Better understand the challenges students face in moving toward their aspirations, specifically around higher education/careers
*What changes need to be made to make it easier to pursue your education/career goals?	Articulate potential intervention points to improve student outcomes

*Education-related questions answered by all counties

Questions were asked to the group verbatim and additional follow-up questions, clarifications, and age-based modifications were made so answers reflected the true intention of the question (based on qualitative data gathering approaches outlined in (Patton, 2002)). Participants either discussed the questions and answers amongst themselves, reporting on them in shared posters and sticky note, or participated in a group discussion format.

County Student Summits were held in each of the five Southwest Florida counties. High level summit design and planning was coordinated through the FutureMakers Coalition project partners. Each team member was then responsible for tailoring the summit to the context of their respective community and coordinate implementation. They guided students through the question set and recorded their responses. All counties were asked to at least have the students respond to the education-related questions.

County Summit reports

Dr. Cindy Banyai, Principal Consultant at Banyai Evaluation & Consulting and Research and Evaluation Specialist to the Southwest Florida Community Foundation, analyzed the submitted data to produce a report for each county. Data was analyzed using qualitative coding (Saldana, 2013) to find trends on priority concerns, considerations, and areas. This means that the text was categorized into themes based on its content and relationship to the question prompt. All of the figures presented here on percentage of conversation related to particular questions or topics came from the process of qualitative coding. This section reflects the trends in conversation for each of the county or area student summits. Individual reports from each of the County Student Summits were crafted and shared with each county partner to provide feedback to schools and participants.

Dunbar High School (Lee)

Figure 1 - Dunbar High School students piloting summit questions



The roundtable discussions at Dunbar High School in Lee County served as the pilot for the process and question set and informed the design and implementation of the County Student Summits. Forty seniors in the AVID program were introduced to the question set and helped to refine the process in March 2015.

When asked about the story of their community, 52% had a negative local narrative. This could be due, at least in part, to the most discussed topic on the question of what is going on – neighborhood safety. Aside from the negative aspects though, the students want people to know about the positive aspects of the school and themselves.

While reflecting on challenges, 26% of the discussion focused on high school issues. Economics and transportation were also important issues for them. The desired changes the Dunbar High School students want in relation to these challenges are an improved high school experience, more support for post-secondary education, and community building.

To make their desired changes, the students trust the school and teachers most. However, the next most frequent response on the issue of trust at 24% of responses was that students have a lack of trust when it comes to making change. Eighty-three percent of the students said they would take an active role in making the changes they want to see.

Specifically related to challenges in education, income and equity gaps were the most frequent discussion, followed shortly by personal motivation and support for students. When asked to reflect on the changes they want to see in response to these challenges, 30% of the discussion focused on increased support for students. Increased access to financial aid and more personal responsibility were also discussed frequently as desired changes.

Charlotte

Figure 2 - Students at CCVOLT



Source: Diane Ramseyer

Charlotte County has been the pioneer for the student summit concept in Southwest Florida. Their summit in the fall of 2015 was the second for Charlotte County Voice of Local Teens (CCVOLT). Their first summit in 2014 came as a result of a community-wide developmental asset survey that indicated that teens were not feeling valued in their community. The two key issues identified in the 2014 summit were the desire for more activities for teens and safety, particularly around sidewalks and roads.

The CCVOLT Summit in October 2015 worked on the model they had used in 2014 and added in the two education-specific questions that all the regional student summits answered. CCVOLT included students from all Charlotte County high schools, as well as a variety of grade levels. The 106 students that participated in the CCVOLT Summit focused on the high school experience. The challenge they most often identified, which held 44% of the conversation, was school policies, particularly around student support. When it comes to change, aligning high school with real life and careers was the most desired, dominating 68% of the conversation.

Collier

Figure 3 - Collier County students discussing questions



Source: Jessica Manchette

The Collier County Student Summit was facilitated by Champions for Learning and held at Hodges University in Naples in November 2015. It included 34 tenth grade students from Collier County high schools. This summit focused solely on the question set, where students were broken up into table groups to answer the questions and 2 facilitators helped to guide the process.

Collier students have generally positive view of their community, highlighting academic opportunities. When asked what is going on, they are very focused on personal goals, but do point to some issues related to youth activities, school policies, and negative external influences.

The most prominent challenges, holding 18% of the conversation, discussed by Collier students relate to time management. This was followed closely by vexing external influences at 15%. When asked about the changes they would like to see related to these challenges, the students focused their conversation, 39%, on improvements to school policies. Access to healthy food, a later school start time, and transportation accessibility, were also trending topics.

Students turn to schools and teachers most, 48% of the responses on trust, to help them make the changes they want to see. Family and others like them are also trusted sources of assistance. Otherwise, Collier students are willing to take an engaged role in making the changes they want to see happen.

On the topic of education specific challenges, Collier students are most concerned about financial aid. Career and choice of study area, as well as personal motivation and responsibility are also areas that they face challenges. The changes that Collier students want to see in response to these challenges focused on themselves, with 33% of the conversation focusing on increasing personal responsibility. Other trends in education related desired change included more student support, more financial aid for post-secondary education, and better access to information, particularly related to post-secondary education.

Glades

The Glades County Student Summit was held at Moore Haven High School with the assistance of the Glades Foundation for Public Schools in November 2015. Seven students participated, three ninth graders and four tenth graders. The story Glades students tell about their community is one of connectedness between the school and the community. When asked what is going on, students reflect on isolation, disconnected youth, peer relations, and disconnected youth.

Glades students did not respond to the general questions on challenges and change, but did discuss challenges and change in relation to planning for their education and career. Challenges in education was the focus of the discussion. Internal factors for success and high school challenges each comprised 27% of the conversation. They were also concerned with how to ask for support when they need it. When asked about the changes they would like to see to overcome these challenges, the conversation was split between improving high school policies and community building. Teachers and the school are trusted most to make these changes.

Hendry

Hendry County held their student summit at Clewiston High School with seven students in February 2016. Students here have a somewhat mixed view of their community, reflecting on their long-term connectedness and dearth of youth activities. When asked about what is going on in their community, “Power Hour” (an in-school free period where students can do homework, and connect with teachers, staff, and peers) and sports were tops.

Stress related to school and home were the biggest challenges identified by Hendry students. The changes they want to see are related to their school experience with a desire to see “Power Hour” continued, as well as more information on higher education and classes related to careers. The students are not sure who to trust to make the changes they want to see, but they think the school is the best place to start. They are also willing to take an engaged role to make change.

Specifically related to education and career goals, Hendry County students report they have a lack of information and are under prepared. However, they feel the school is working toward supporting them in these areas, particularly with “Power Hour.”

Lee

Figure 4 - Lee County student asking question during County Summit



Source: Kelly Thawley

Fifty-one students from all grades gathered as part of the Lee County Student Summit, facilitated by the Foundation for Lee Public Schools, in October 2015. Lee students have a mixed view of their community, with 35% reporting a positive local narrative. However, when asked to reflect on what is really going on in their community, Lee students want outsiders to know about all the positive happenings for them and their schools. Forty-eight percent of the discussion on challenges of Lee County students focused on issues in high school, specifically workload, testing, and teacher engagement. All of the other challenges lag behind in comparison, with the next most discussed challenge of higher education issues only comprising 11% of the conversation.

Personal motivation was the biggest change Lee students wanted to see to overcome their challenges, taking up 42% of the conversation. Improved school policies and more supportive teachers were also highly discussed. Lee students trust themselves the most, 40% of the discussion, to make this change, but also look to schools and families to support change. Ninety-four percent of the students said they would take an active role to make their desired changes.

Specifically related to challenges in planning for education and careers, Lee students focused on high school issues, 49% of the conversation. Higher education challenges were the next most talked about challenge, followed by personal factors and social relations. To address these challenges, students would like to see improvements in school policies, particularly around career exposure and student support.

Regional Student Summit

The FutureMakers Regional Student Summit continued the work that was done at the county level on convening and listening to students in their area. The overall design of the summit was crafted by Dr. Cindy Banyai and vetted by the FutureMakers Coalition project partners. Ahead of the Summit, students were invited to submit photos on the theme of “A Day in the Life” and these photos were displayed in a digital slideshow during the Summit. After a brief introduction to the FutureMakers Coalition and the concept of the Summit, participants moved through a series of interactive stations. The stations included the data placemat gallery walk and graphically facilitated discussions on challenges and desired change in education and career planning. Participants were also invited to talk about their future goals in a video booth. The results of the stations and activities are discussed later in this section.

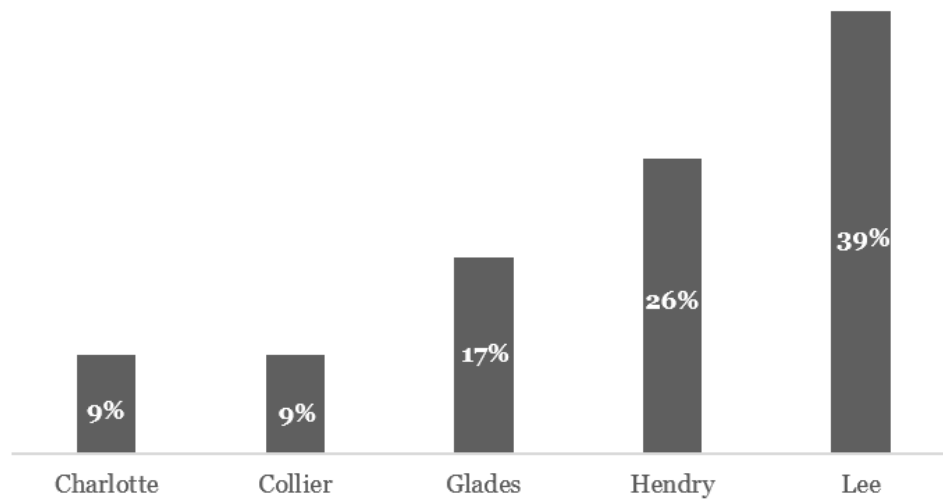
Each county summit convener was asked to send student participants to the Regional Student Summit. Participants were selected by the Coalition project team based on the following principles:

- Inclusion of participants from as many schools as possible,
- Inclusion of participants from an array of cultural and economic background, and diversity in ability, grades, and
- Number of participants is relative to the relative the capacity of county partners to gather and transport the students to the event, and are as inclusive and representative as possible.

The Summit was held after school on February 12, 2016 at Hodges University in Fort Myers and was coordinated by Southwest Florida Community Foundation. Twenty-four students from each of the five counties in Southwest Florida and 20 volunteer guides and facilitators from across the region participated in the Summit.

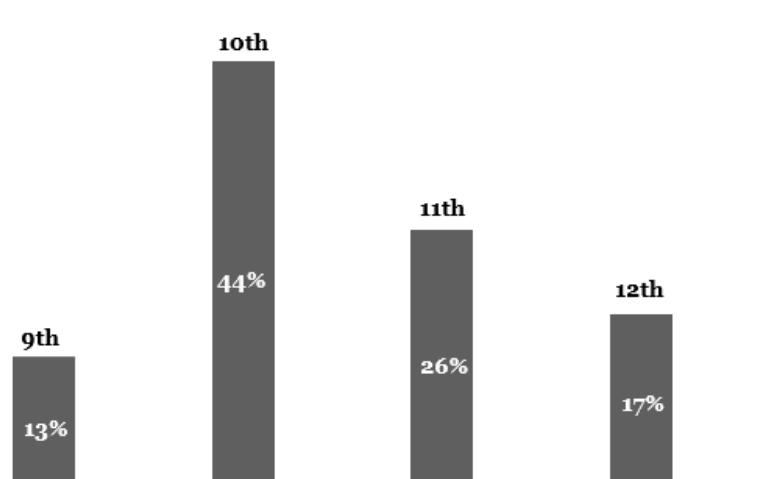
The Summit was an informative process with many of the students feeling energized, engaged and valued afterward. This bodes particularly well for putting students on the path toward post-secondary attainment because 61% of participants are first generation college hopefuls and encouragement for them to proceed is vital. Lee County was well represented with 39% of the participants, followed by Hendry County with 26%. The chart below shows to total participation breakdown by county.

Table 2 – Percentage of total participation in Regional Student Summit by county



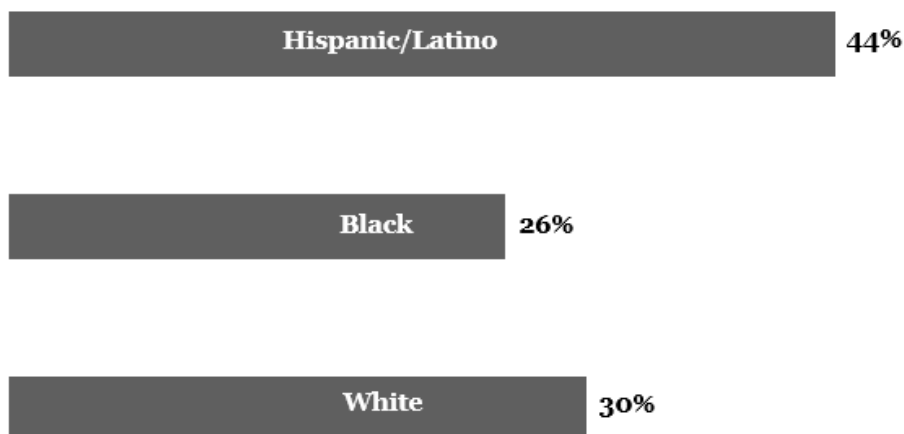
Forty-four percent of the Summit participants were in the 10th grade. This was in response to the desires of the FutureMakers Coalition project partners to be able to engage students earlier in the process of community engagement and leadership development. Participation by grade is shown in the chart below.

Table 3 - Regional Student Summit participation by grade



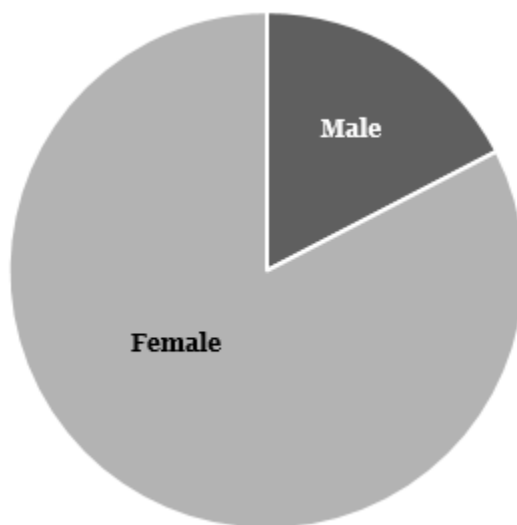
Hispanic/Latino and Black (African American and Caribbean descent) students were well represented at the Summit, comprising 70% of participants. This bodes well for engaging the youth involved in the demographic shifts in the region, as well as from traditionally underserved communities. The next graph shows the demographic breakdown of Summit participants.

Table 4 - Regional Student Summit participation by demographic



Girls were also well represented at the FutureMakers Regional Student Summit, as the large majority of participants, 83%, were female.

Table 5 - Regional Student Summit participation by gender



The next several sections look at the results and additional data collected from the activities of the Regional Student Summit. First, the gallery walk of the data placemat posters will be discussed and analyzed. Followed by the analysis of the graphic facilitation discussion on education and careers. Then, a look at the trends in student aspirations discovered through the video booth. Finally, student life will be explored through examining the photographs entered into the “A Day in the Life” photo contest.

Data placemat posters and the gallery walk

County level data was aggregated¹ to produce the “data placemat” (Pankaj & Emery, 2016) posters. Data placemats are a facilitative technique that allow stakeholders to participate and create a shared meaning of the data. One data placemat poster was created from the county summit data for each of regional prompt questions. Each poster had a trained facilitator that was tasked with briefly describing the information contained on the poster and inviting the students to react to the presented information, as well as to an accompanying prompt question. Students engaged with the posters through a “gallery walk” (Bowman, 2005) where they walked through the displayed posters, stopping at each one to reflect and respond. At each stop they could respond freely to the poster, engage in conversation with the facilitator, post their response with sticky notes, or react to the data with “emotion stickers” that help to gauge positive and negative and emotional responses to the presented data. The sticky notes and stickers were then coded based on their positivity and negativity to inform this final data analysis.

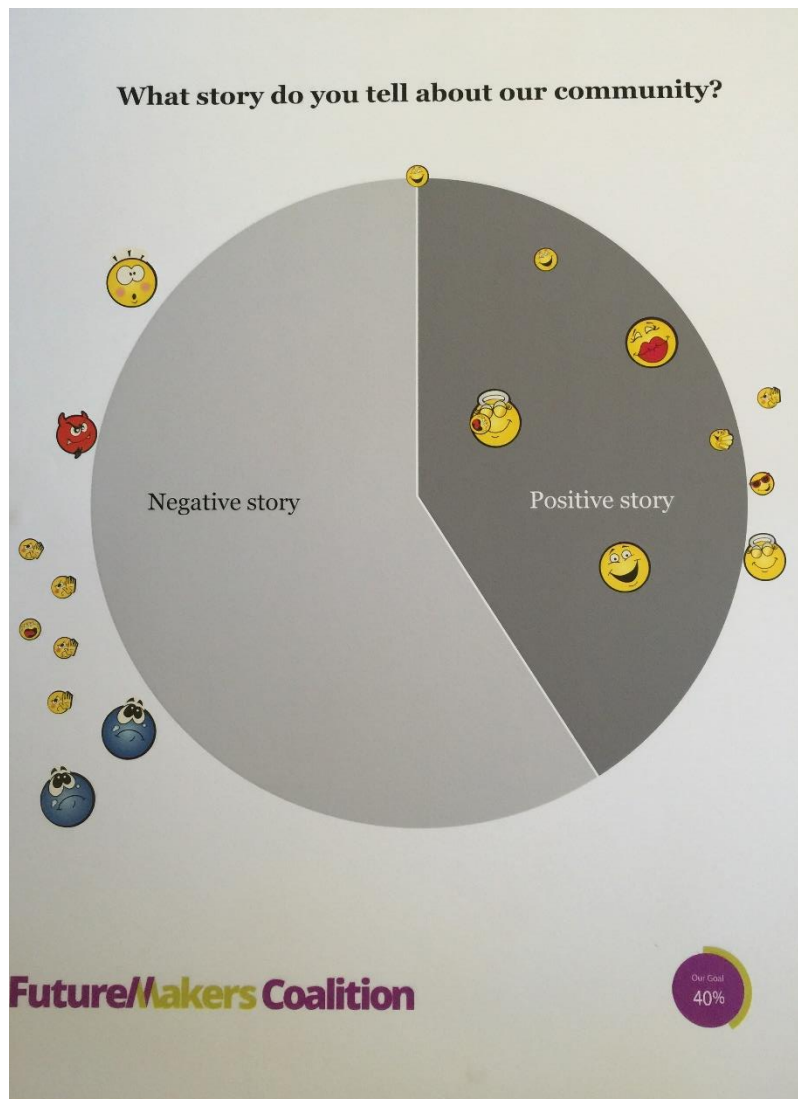
Figure 5- Students participate in Gallery Walk during Regional Student Summit



Here are the data placemat posters with the students’ reactions included, followed by the analysis and discussion on their responses to the accompanying prompt question.

¹ Due to time constraints, Hendry County data was not aggregated into the data placemat posters at the Regional Summit.

Figure 6 - Data placemat poster 1

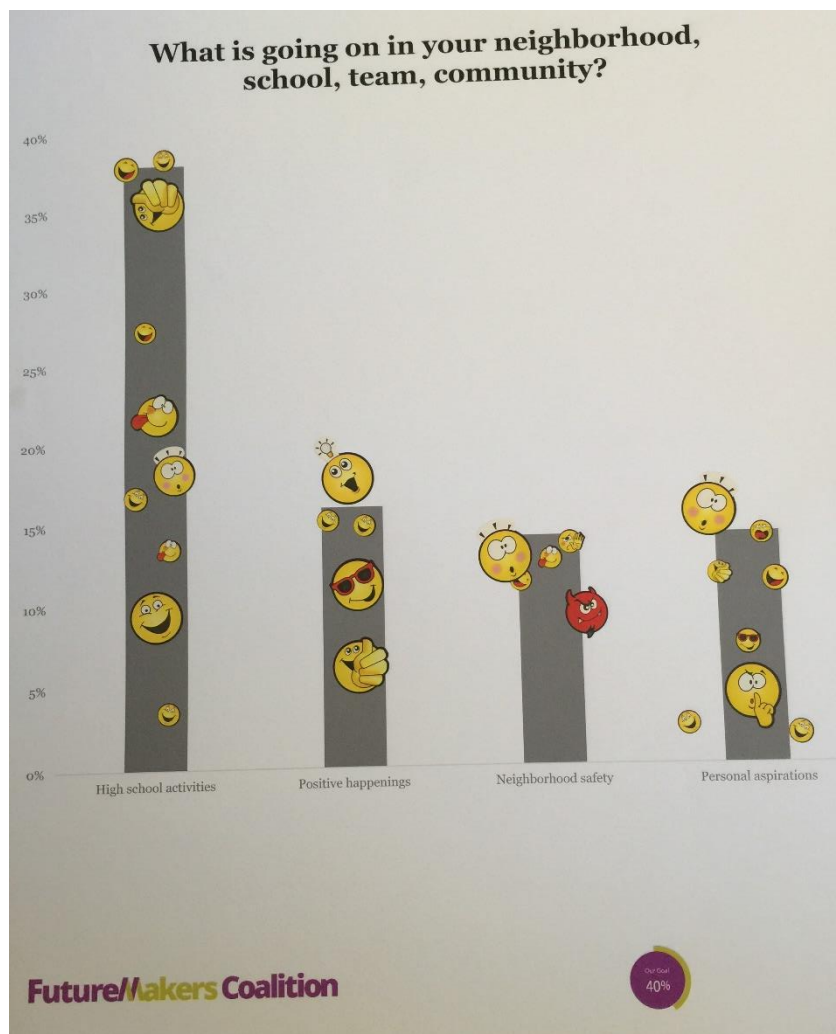


Data placemat poster 1 contains the aggregated analysis from the county summits on the question “What story do you tell about your community?” This question serves to understand the way people view their community, as well as to define their community frame for the rest of the questions.

The responses were simply coded into positive and negative responses, of which 59% of all the responses to this question being negative. Students responded to the pie chart demonstrating the breakdown, shown in Figure 1. Through the emotion stickers, students responded roughly equally, reflecting positively on the positive stories, and negatively on the negative stories.

In order to better understand this result, students were also asked these follow-up prompt questions: “Why are there more negative stories?” and “How can we change the story?” The top trends in the students’ answers were related to increased student support, personal well-being, a desire for more community support of students, and reducing students’ bad attitudes. One notable response to why there are more negative stories was “Poor interactions between community members. We need to be a community in all age groups.” This supports the idea that students are interested in bringing their community together and feeling supported there within. In response to how to change the story, another student wrote “more school spirit and hugs #love :).” This response helps to illustrate the students’ care and desire for connectivity with one another and a continued search for strong locally connected identities.

Figure 7 - Data placemat poster 2



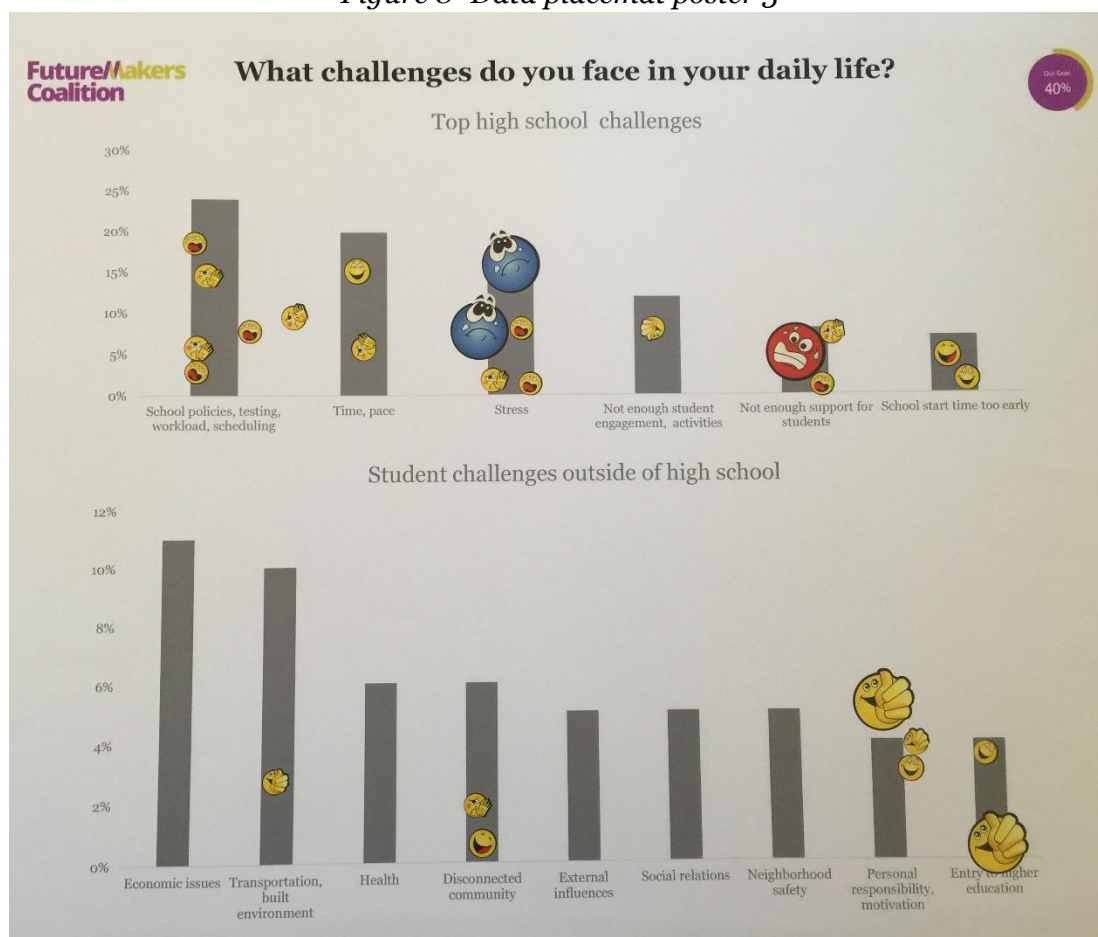
Data placemat poster 2 shows the results of the county discussions on what is really going on in students’ communities. The poster showed that students are mainly concerned with activities going on in their schools, and that they also want people to be aware of positive aspects about

their schools, selves, and community groups. The question also uncovered some concerns related to neighborhood safety that weighs on the students.

Summit participants reacted most to the high school activities, reinforcing that this is, in fact, something of importance to them. There were also many reactions, mostly positive, on the personal aspiration bar, which helps to elevate its comparative importance. Summit participants wanted to reinforce that students are working hard toward their goals.

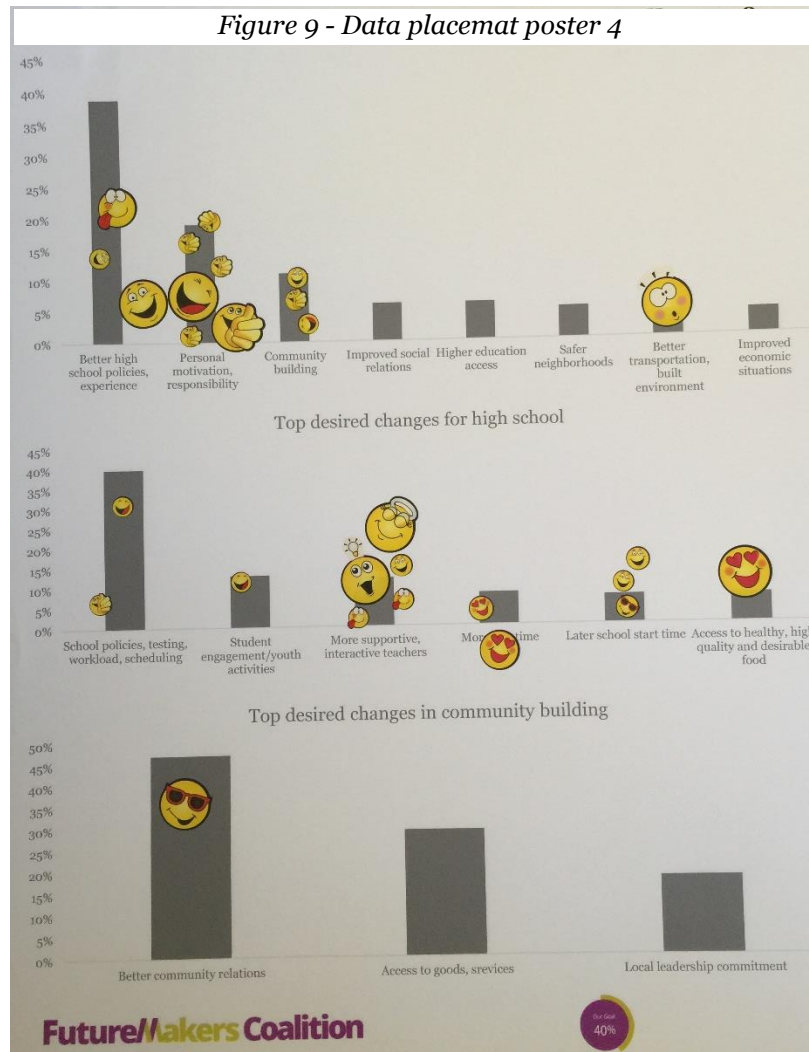
There was also a follow-up question prompt for this data placemat poster as well. Students were further asked to respond to the question “What's one thing you wish everyone knew was going on in your neighborhood or school?” Here, students continued to emphasize the academic opportunities and positive aspects of their schools and communities. One student demonstrates this by saying “My school has a lot of activities. We really get out there with the community. We wanna make a change.”

Figure 8- Data placemat poster 3



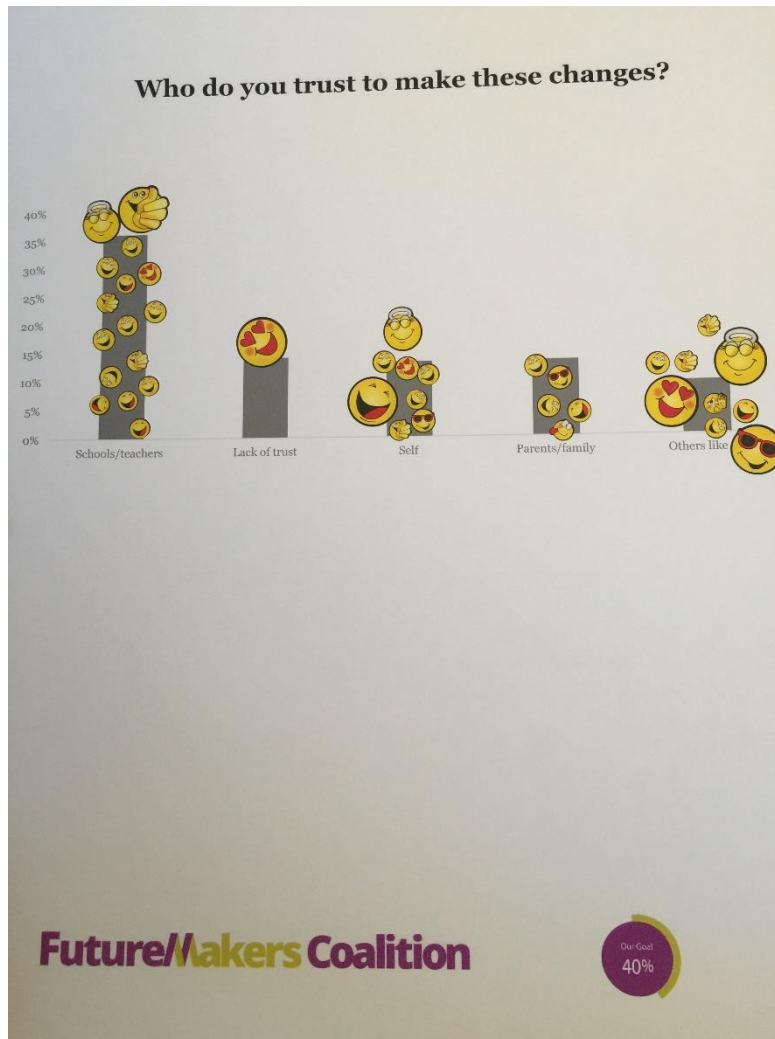
Data placemat poster 3 looks at the challenges students face in their life, both at school and outside of school. The poster shows that school policies, including testing and workload, are the biggest challenge students report in school. Outside of school, students are most concerned about economic and transportation issues. Summit participants responded most frequently, and further reinforced, the negative feelings associated with school policies and student stress. The participant responses here indicate that time and pace as a challenge are not as important,

particularly compared to school policies and stress. Their reactions also emphasize the importance of school challenges compare to the lesser emphasis on community and external challenges. There were no follow-on questions associated with this poster in the gallery walk because this poster focused on school and other posters in the gallery walk addressed education-specific challenges and desired changes.



Data placemat poster 4 shows areas of desired change that students reported in the County Student Summits. The poster shows the overall top desired changes, and also disaggregates the responses to desired changes in high school and the community. The Regional Student Summit participants had a strong response to personal motivation and responsibility. This means that they would really like to see from themselves and their peers a more concerted effort to reach their personal goals. When it comes to desired change in schools, the students' reactions focused positively on having more supportive teachers and later school start times. There were also no follow-up questions for this poster because of the latter related posters in the gallery walk.

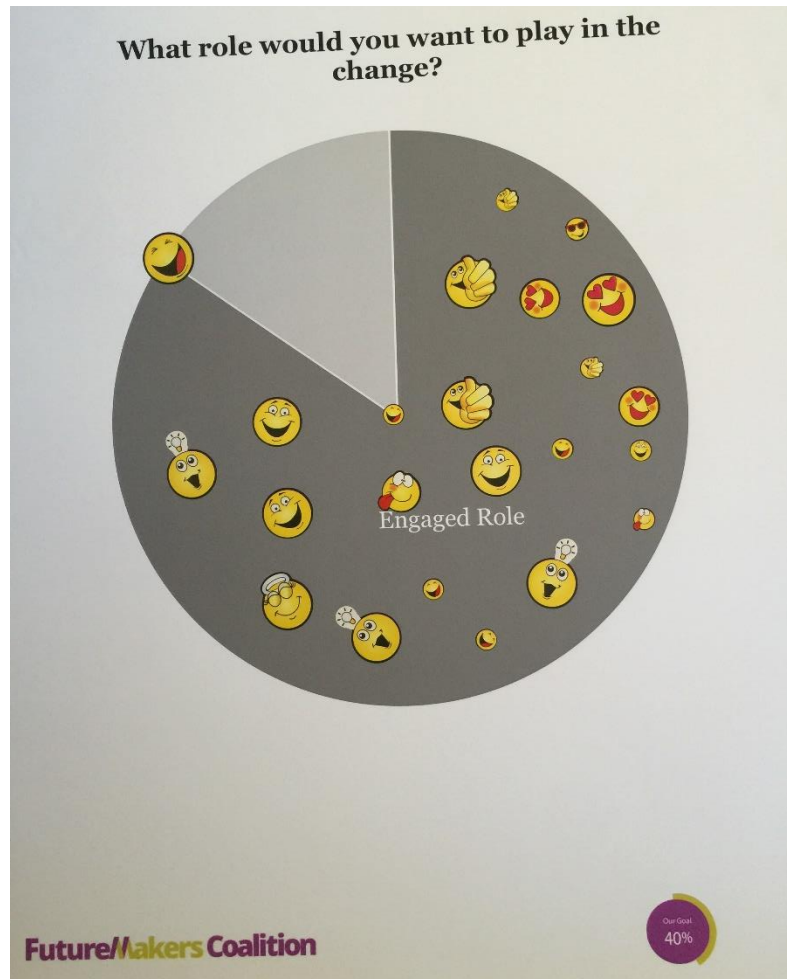
Figure 10 - Data placemat poster 5



Data placemat poster 5 displays those that students trust to make their desired changes. County Student Summit participants overwhelmingly look to schools and teachers to make their desired changes, which is consistent with the notion that they would most like to see changes in school policies and activities. The second most common response in the County Student Summits to the question of trust was that they did not trust anyone. However, at the Regional Student Summit, participants did not echo this sentiment. Summit participants did react positively to trusting themselves and others like them to make change.

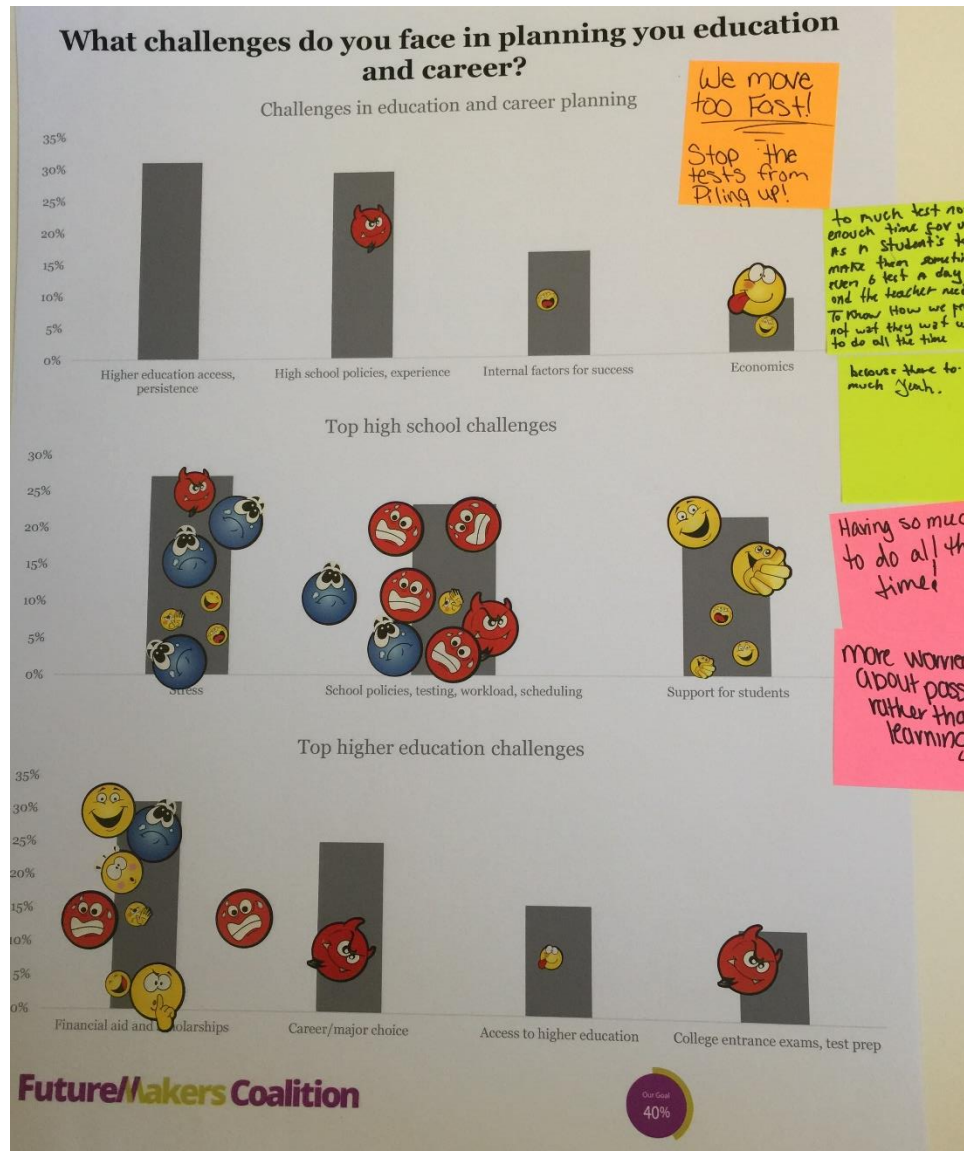
As a follow-up to the data on trust, students were asked to reflect on the question “How can you work with those you trust to make the changes you want?” These questions were not coded for trends, because they actually sought to encourage students to reach out to those they trust to make steps toward their desired change – a key component of participatory action research. However, notions of greater communication with those who can make change were popular. This is demonstrated through the quotes “DO NOT be scared to speak your mind” and “Communicate thoughts and feelings. Don’t give up. Speak up.”

Figure 11 - Data placemat poster 6



Data placemat poster 6 reflects on the students' willingness to activate to make the changes they want to see. Eighty-five percent of the County Summit participants said they want to take an engaged role in making their desired changes. The participants of the Regional Student Summit echoed this change with nearly all of the responses on the engaged role being positive or very positive.

Figure 12 - Data placemat poster 7



Data placemat poster 7 reflects specifically on the challenges students face in relation to career and education planning. The poster shows the overall challenges discussed by the students at the County Student Summits, then disaggregates and delves further into the discussion trends specifically related to high school or post-secondary education. This was done to learn more about the issues affecting students, so tailored remedies can be developed. From the reactions by the Regional Student Summit participants, we can see that high school policies and financial aid were the most important areas, followed closely by student stress. The responses to school policies were entirely negative, while there were mixed reactions when considering financial aid.

Regional Summit participants were asked to further reflect on the question “Who can you reach out to for help with education and career challenges?” This was done to help hone targeted interventions to support student challenges. Guidance counselors are seen as the primary

resource to support students in education challenges, garnering 33% of the responses. Below is a chart that shows the other top places students look for help.

Table 6 - People students look to for help with education and career challenges

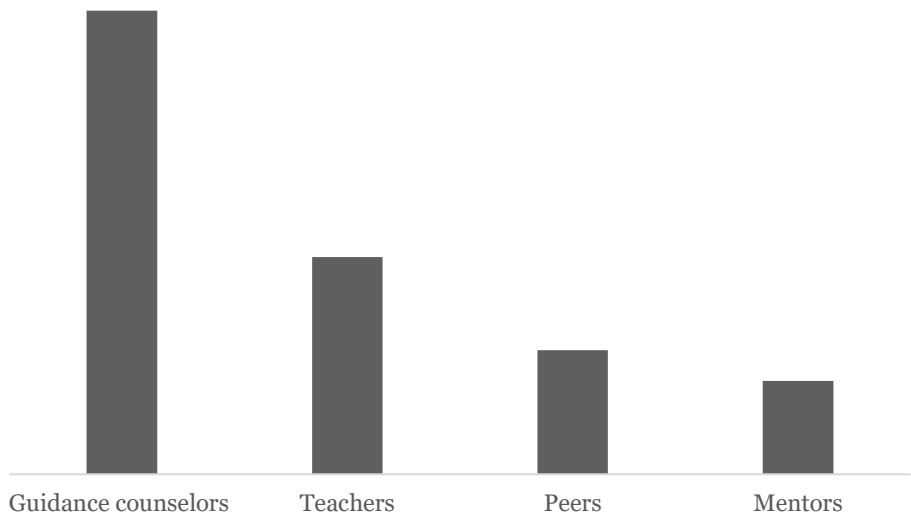
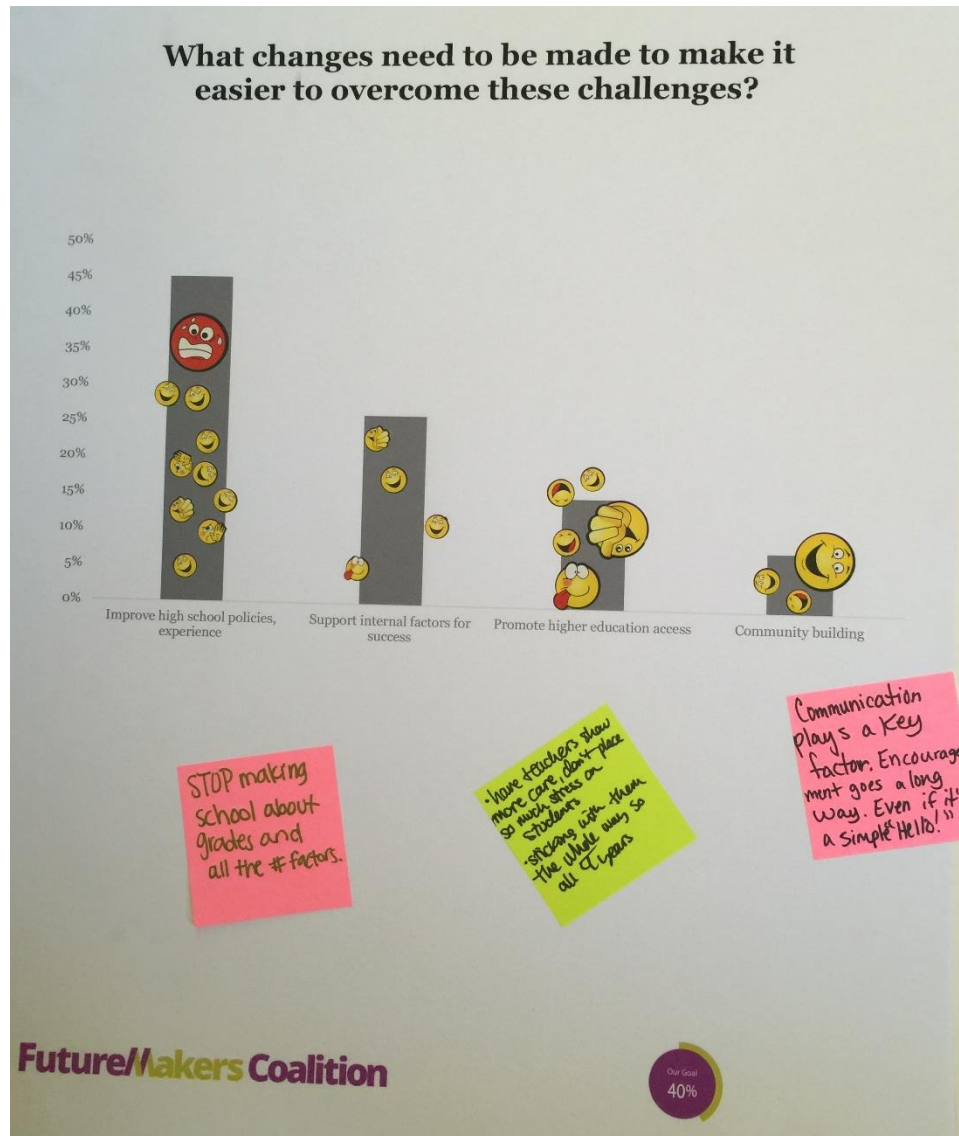


Figure 13 - Data placemat poster 8



Data placemat poster 8 is the last one from the gallery walk activity in the FutureMakers Regional Student Summit. It displayed the top areas students want to see change specifically related to overcoming education related challenges. Improve high school policies was by far the most discussed topic, dominating 45% of conversations around the region. Likewise, participants of the Regional Student Summit echoed this desired change.

Once again, students were asked a follow up question, “What can you do to make these changes happen?” These answers were not coded, but were used as a way to engage participants in a creative thought process around empowering themselves to make the changes they want to see. One participant used the poster to encourage others by saying “Be an advocate for change. There’s a huge difference between “I want to make a change” and “I’m GOING to make a change”.”

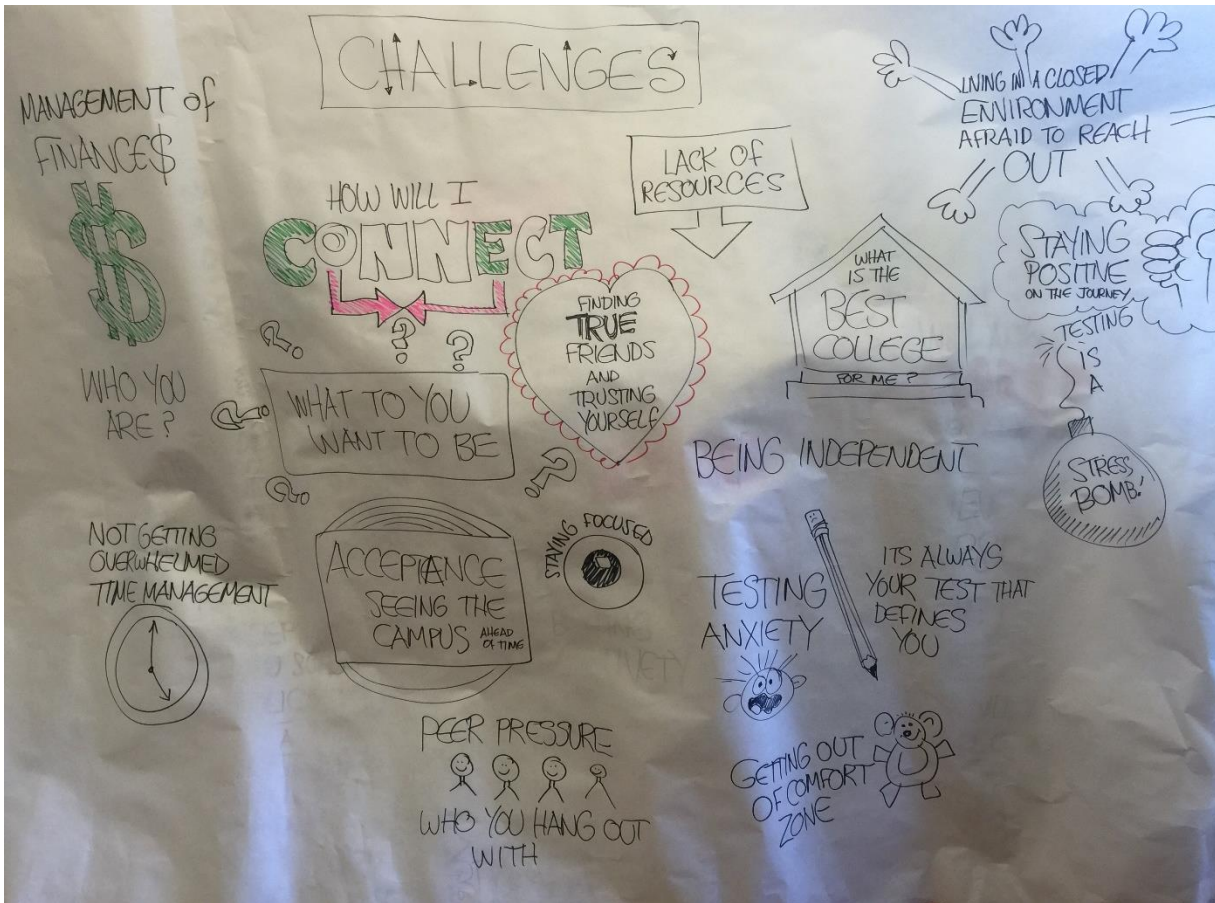
Another response gave some indication of what they student planned to do after they left the summit, “Tell more of my peers how to get involved and make a changes. There's lots of great resources out there, just nobody knows how to go about finding/accessing it or reaching out.”

The data placemat poster gallery walk turned out to be a useful way to engage the Regional Summit participants in an analysis of the county-level data, as well as to inform them on the trends and engage them in response to the data. Most of the participant reflections emphasized and confirmed the initial analysis, however, their reflections also helped to put some analyses in perspective. For instance, Regional Student Summit participants did not put emphasis on a lack of trust, which helps to clarify that this is not an issue of concern at the regional level. Regional Student Summit participants also emphasized personal responsibility and motivation more than the county data reflects.

Facilitated discussions and graphic recordings

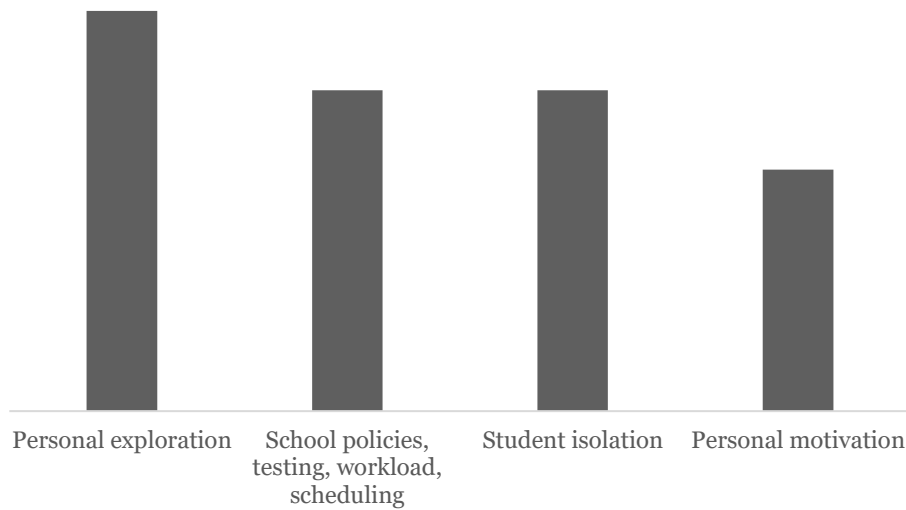
Aside from the gallery walk, students cycled through two graphically facilitated discussions. In each discussion, students were seated in a circle and focused on a guiding question with discussion lead by a trained facilitator. Simultaneously, a trained graphic recorder was in the front of the room capturing the group’s discussion visually. This was done to help the students track their discussion, as well as to have a way to record and understand the discussion trends. The figure below shows an example of one of the graphic recordings done by local cartoonist Doug MacGregor.

Figure 14 - Graphic recording from education and career challenges created by Doug MacGregor



The graphic facilitation sessions focused in on the education related questions that the students reflected on in the County Student Summits – “What challenges do you face in planning your education and career?” and “What can be changed to help you overcome challenges in planning your education and career?” Each graphic recording was coded to find the discussion trends in each of these areas. Below is a chart that shows the education challenges on the mind of the Regional Student Summit participants.

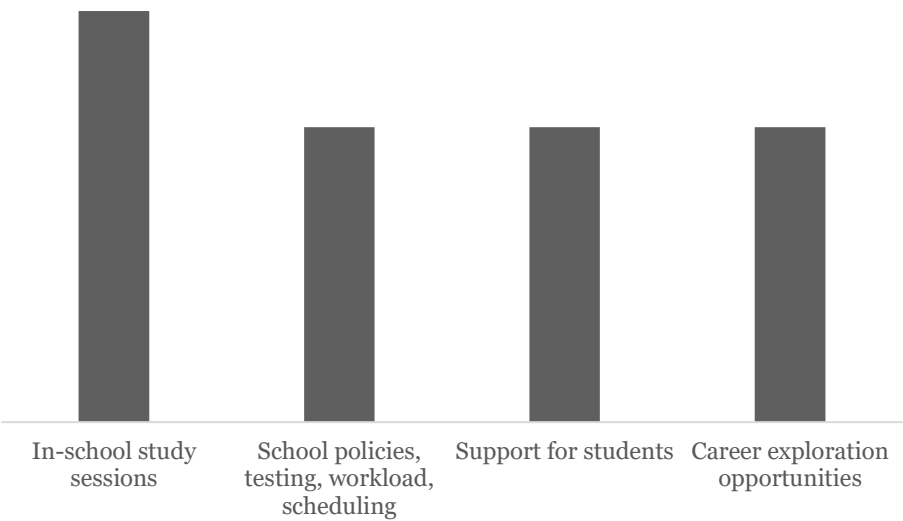
Table 7 - Topic trends in education and career challenges discussion



School policies and personal motivation were frequent trends in the county-level discussions, but some additional topics emerged during these sessions. Personal exploration was the most discussed topic when it came to educational challenges during the graphic facilitation sessions. Students talked about “Not knowing what you want to do” and “Building a new comfort zone.” Students also demonstrated concern about what happens after they finish high school with the trend of student isolation. Discussion points like “Will anyone care? When I leave for school” and “How will I connect???” help to illustrate this.

The next chart looks at discussion trends when the Regional Student Summit participants were asked about the changes they would like to see to help overcome their educational challenges. It was during these discussions that the innovative program from Hendry County, Power Hour, was raved about. Power Hour is an hour-long free period during the school day that students can use to connect with friends, study, catch up on school work, and reach out for support to teachers and administrators. The program was instituted by Principal Roberto Sanchez at Clewiston High School. He modeled the program after others in Florida, with the hopes that it would create space for students to better meet their personal and academic needs. Other frequently discussed topics in this area were improvements to school policies, more support for students, and more career exploration.

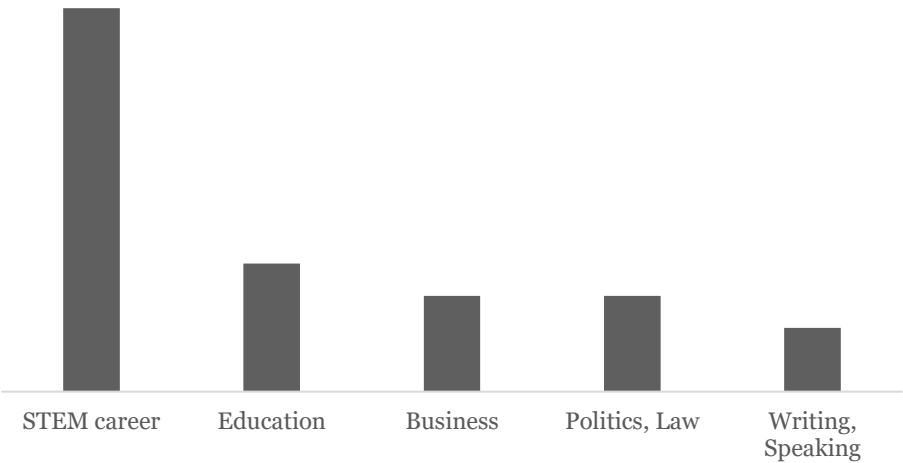
Table 8 - Topic trends in desired change in education and career challenges discussion



Video booth

While students were arriving for the Summit a manned video camera was waiting to hear from them and capture the students’ voice on concept of “Where I see me in 2025.” Students were asked to write down their desired future career on a sign and to talk about their future goals on camera. All of the Summit attendees participated in the video booth. When reflecting on their future careers, half of the respondents indicated they would like to go into a STEM-related career. Below is a table with other common career goals.

Table 9 - Most common career choices



The student responses to the question “Where do you see yourself in 10 year?” were also captured and coded. Many of the students’ responses were simply related to their desired career goals, however, personal fulfillment was the second most common response. The chart bellows shows the other common themes in the student responses on their future.

Table 10 - Most common responses to "Where do you see yourself in 10 years?"

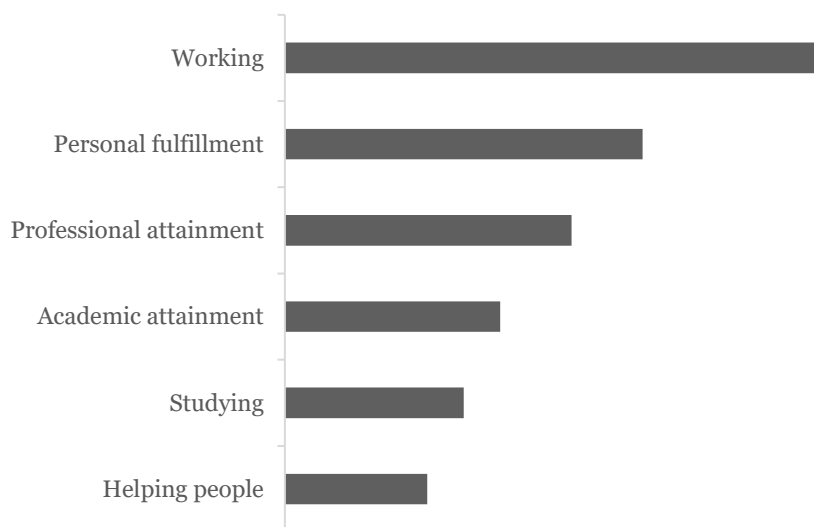
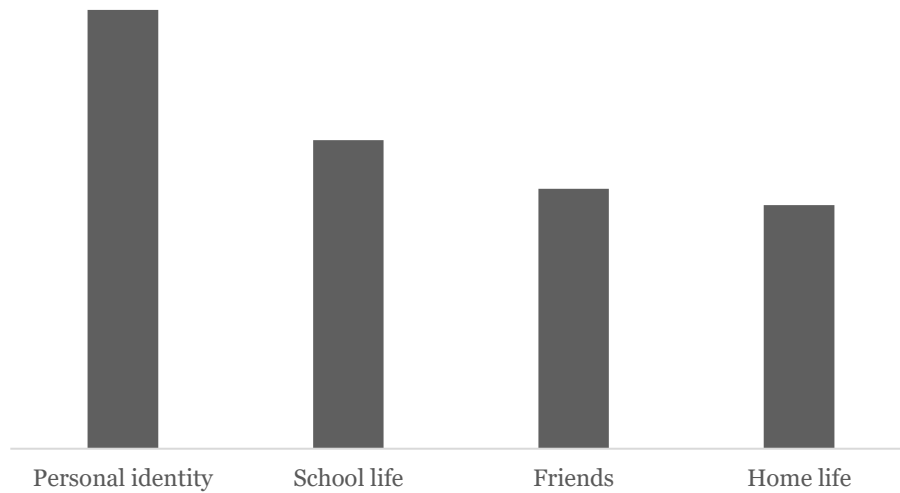


Photo gallery

Ahead of the conference and working in conjunction with the FutureMakers mini-team, students were invited to submit photos showing “A Day in the Life Of”. Students entering the photo contest were then eligible for special prizes, in addition to the door prizes that were raffled off during the Regional Student Summit. The concept behind the photo gallery was to 1) engage the students to be reflective about their aspirations and themselves ahead of the Regional Student Summit and 2) give diverse students from across the region a forum to share and reflect on their similarities and difference.

Three young women submitted photo galleries for the contest. These photos were digitally displayed via a looped and randomized photo slideshow that played during the arrival and departure phase of the Regional Student Summit. This added to the atmosphere and gave the students something to discuss as they ate snacks and prepared for the Regional Student Summit activity stations to begin.

Table 11 - Trends in photo contest submissions



The submitted photos were coded to look for themes, particularly in the way that the students want to display themselves. Among all of the photos, 27% were coded as being related to personal identity, meaning they show the particular approach, humor, social commentary, or attitude of the photographer. An example of this was Francisca's photo from below, where she took a selfie that shows her face and added text and emojis below to help demonstrate her character.

Figure 15 - Contest photo submission showing personal identity



Source: Francisca St. Germaine

Photos related to school life, friends, and home life were also frequently seen. Although the photos themselves were illustrative of the lives of students, the trends in their themes are also important to our understanding of how to reach students. The fact that largest portion of photos submitted

were related to personal identity, if you add in the photos related to activities and interest the percentage goes to 37%, lends itself to this area being one of utmost importance to students. Furthermore, it supports the idea that developing a keen sense of self and engaging in passion projects keeps students engaged and on track toward attainment and successful careers (Semuels, 2016), in part because these students are currently engaged and on track and clearly value their unique identity.

Student Leadership Team

The Student Leadership Team is comprised of students from each county that demonstrate exemplary interest, articulation, and passion for regional change around educational attainment. FutureMakers Regional Student Summit participants were invited to self-select to be part of the Student Leadership Team. Nineteen students from the Regional Student Summit elected to participate in the Student Leadership Team.

This team is invited to participate in FutureMakers events and Regional Action Team meetings to bring the student voice, as context experts, to the discussion and development of co-designed projects and programs and the interpretation of related data. This work may be considered as part of a students' service learning. Thus far, there are at least two examples of members of the Student Leadership Team contributing to the work of the Coalition. First, one student leader participated in the in-person Persistence and Progress Regional Action Team meeting, where the regional shared outcomes were introduced and the rapid-cycle testing of related ideas was initiated. Another student leader wrote an editorial on the student perspective and engagement in the FutureMakers Coalition as part of a large piece on the Coalition in the local newspaper, the Fort Myers News-Press. More examples like this are sure to arise as the Student Leadership Team becomes more fully integrated into the work of the FutureMakers Coalition.

Overview and conclusion

The FutureMakers Coalition values the perspective of students. It is for this reason that the Coalition had the Regional Student Summit included in the initial Charter crafted for Lumina Foundation. The collaborative design and implementation of the summit process throughout the region made sure many students could be engaged in the process, heard from and left activated for change. It has been an iterative and interactive process involving several steps of discussion, analysis, and interpretation, by the content experts in the Coalition and the content experts, the students. It has been a long process, taking over one year, but the results are valuable pieces of information that can guide the work and future activities of the FutureMakers Coalition. Let's take a look at the prevailing insights we learned through the student summit process.

The County Student Summits help to ensure that the voice of students across the region is heard in their local context. Although much of what was trending at the regional level is true at the county level, each county summit uncovered some specific information unique to that area. Dunbar High School emphasized the importance of neighborhood safety. Charlotte County students seek more alignment between what they learn in high school and what they need for life and careers. Collier County focused on vexing external influences and personal responsibility. Glades also echoed internal factors for success and the need to reach out specifically when issues

arise. Hendry County touted the benefits of “Power Hour.” Lee County students trust themselves above anyone else to make the changes they want to see.

The gallery walk reinforced the trends in the data collected from the County Student Summits, and also provided some additional insights. Students overall have a mixed view on their community and feel that more support for students and individual well-being can contribute to improving their outlook. High school activities are the most important thing going on for students, and many of them are hard at work to pursue their goals. School policies related to testing, scheduling, and workload and stress are the most prevailing challenges in school for students.

Outside of school economic conditions and transportation are major issues. Regionally, students want to see improvements in school policies, as well as more supportive and interactive teachers, but students at the Summit reinforced the role that personal responsibility and motivation play in change. Improved community relations with students also rose to the top in desired changes. Teachers and schools are most trusted by students to make the changes they want to see. When it comes to challenges in higher education, students are most concerned about financial aid. Students look to guidance counselors most to help them on their educational and career paths. Otherwise, students encourage themselves and their peers to reach out to get the assistance they need and to advocate for the changes they want to see.

The graphically facilitated discussions on education challenges and changes was ruled by the desire for more personal exploration and the institution of supportive school policies and learning spaces. “Power Hour” rose to the surface as a regional promising practice that resonated with students. The challenges related to personal exploration serve to remind that students should be supported in the efforts to cultivate strong, positive personal identities.

The Video Booth demonstrated that students are eager to embark on STEM-related careers and can envision themselves working in STEM and seeking personal fulfillment. This information supports continued investment in STEM education, as well as the development of STEM career paths and employment opportunities.

The personal identity of students is of great value to them. Supporting the cultivation of positive personal identities among students is a potential intervention point to support their individual success and for the success of other academic interventions. This is the primary lesson gleaned from the “A Day in the Life Of” photo contest.

Recommendations for action from the information from this report include:

- Learn more about “Power Hour” and investigate how it might be implemented in other high schools
- Examine high school policies and practice on testing, scheduling, and workload, as well as teacher-student engagement, particularly as they relate to student stress. Test ideas to reduce student stress
- Support and develop projects and programs that build relationships between students and their broader community
- Support and develop initiatives, projects, and programs that increase access to financial aid for students
- Engage schools and teachers for interventions
- Focus on guidance counselors to improve higher education access and career path interventions

- Support projects and programs that help students to cultivate their passions and personal identities
- Align students interested in STEM-related careers to locally available jobs, develop supportive career pathways

This report represents an important piece of dialogue for the FutureMakers Coalition, with perhaps some of the most important stakeholders in the work to increase post-secondary attainment, students. Additionally, 19 student leaders have been activated to participate in the Coalition and to serve as ambassadors to their communities and fellow students on behalf of the Coalition and its region-wide change goals. This student summit process was just the first attempt to engage context experts into the FutureMakers Coalition. In addition to the valuable information provided here, it has also provided a framework and a set of tools to guide future community and context expert engagement.

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