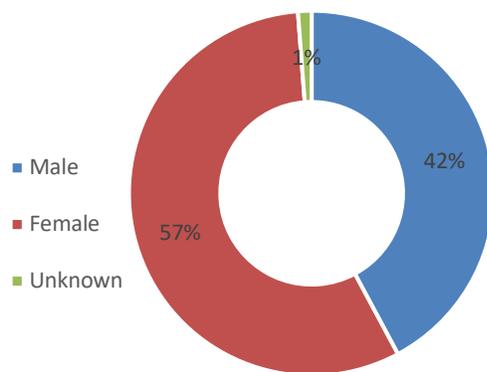


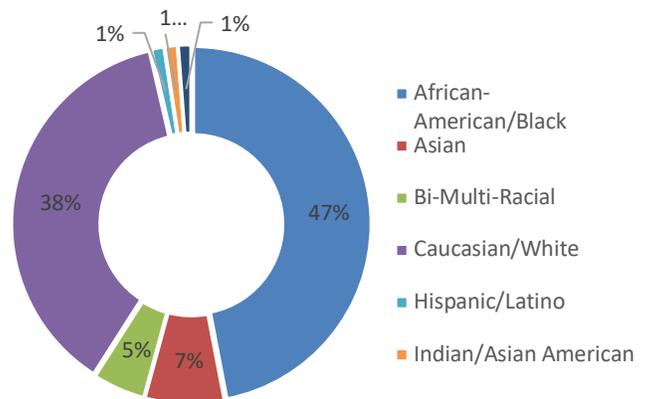
Youth Leadership St. Louis is the St. Louis region's only established inter-district high school program that is non-competitive in nature. No other program brings together such a large and diverse group of students. YLSL has been recognized locally, nationally, and internationally for its excellence and service to youth.

With the commitment and support of strong school and community partners, YLSL provided **83 students from 18 partnering schools and community organizations, from 40 different zip codes**, with information, inspiration, and guidance to become the next leaders in our region.

YLSL Students By Gender



YLSL Students By Race



Last year, YLSL welcomed three new community partners: Vintendo4Africa, The SoulFisher Ministries, and Refuge & Restoration Church. Student leaders completed a trust-building opening virtual retreat and program sessions covering Health Care, Criminal Justice, Valuing Diversity, Poverty, Social Responsibility and Leadership, Education, and a closing graduation.

Building agile leaders became the overarching theme as the pandemic ensued. This required YLSL to pivot from in-person led programming to virtual learning sessions in March 2020. This shift to virtual online live programs provided an opportunity to pilot-test an online version of YLSL. In April 2020, YLSL successfully executed its first virtual graduation. Additionally, student leaders completed action research projects covering topics ranging from how to improve virtual learning for students to creating space for students to lead.

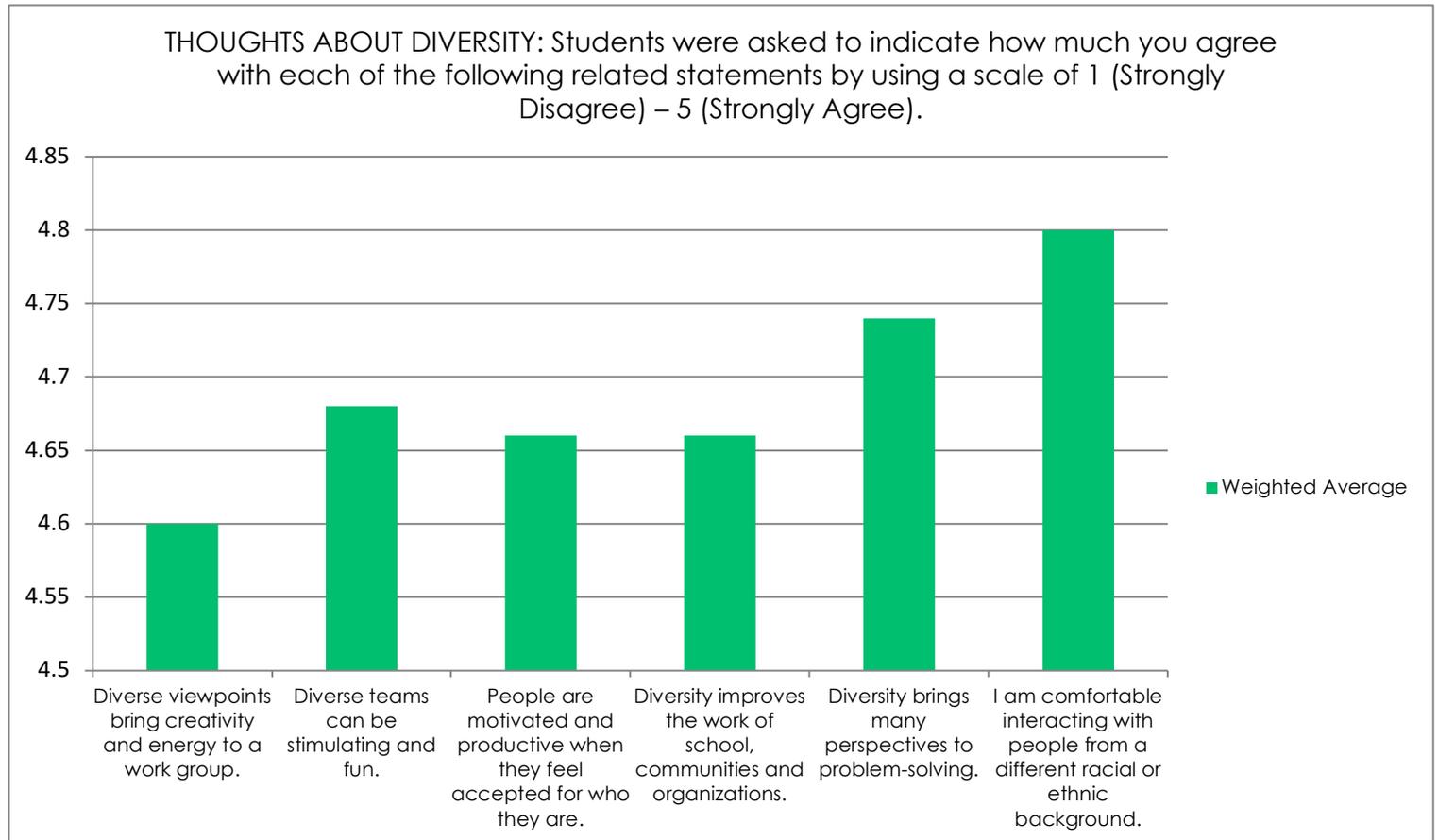
The FOCUS St. Louis 2020-2021 cohort of Youth Leadership St. Louis (YLSL) were better prepared to lead and engage with their schools and communities, work across difference, communicate effectively, and maintain interest in a range of issues critical to our region's success.

In 2020-2021, amid a global pandemic and racial reckoning cohort outcomes remained very positive and demonstrate significant gains. Overall, YLSL participants report increased skills in the following areas:

- 91% report an increase in **self-management** skills
- 87% report an increase in **decision-making** skills
- 84% report increase in **communication** skills
- 83% report an increase in **learning** skills
- 82% report an increase in **getting along with others** or people skills

Leading Across Difference

YLSL students indicate that leading across difference is an important factor in improving our community and building relationships. Survey results illustrate that YLSL leaders embrace diversity, will leverage diverse perspectives to devise innovative solutions to problems and are comfortable with others that are different from how they identify.



Civic Readiness and Understanding

Survey results indicate that as a result of participating in YLSL, students have built capacity as civic leaders who demonstrate an understanding of the regional civic landscape, have a greater desire to become more civically involved and have a greater sense of commitment to see our region thrive.

- 94% of students that responded to the survey indicated that as result of YLSL, I have a **better understanding of the civic issues** (criminal justice, education, health, political, and social service) affecting the St. Louis region.
- 91% of students that responded to the survey indicated that as a result of YLSL, I have a **greater desire to become more involved in my community**.
- 91% of students that responded to the survey indicated that as a result of YLSL, I have a **greater sense of personal commitment and responsibility to the region**.

Select YLSL Participant Testimonials

"Over the past 7 months of YLSL, I have come to understand so many perspectives of critical issues in our society. The environment has been extremely facilitating and I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to speak with juniors from different school districts and different backgrounds. I feel that this aspect was what made the experience truly unique, because not only did I get to learn about healthcare, criminal justice, discrimination, education, etc., I had the opportunity to facilitate and participate in conversation with these peers!"

"YLSL has given me the opportunity to hear perspectives other than my own, and converse with people from different backgrounds than my own. This is one of my few regrets about my current school, especially as we traverse through so many momentous social moments in history. It is helpful to be able to hear what people who are different than I am think about these things, and it gives me a more well-rounded world view."

"YLSL is a safe place to share ideas, converse with people who have different perspectives than yourself, and open up and examine why you think the way you do."

"YLSL has been the place where I have learned to be comfortable sharing my ideas and opinions about various topics. YLSL has taught me so much about different topics, It has also taught me many skills to becoming a better leader."

"YLSL was a great opportunity for me. Personally, I've always been engaged with social issues but conversing with others that are my age made the experience better! The conversations were great, and I enjoyed them. Thank you YLSL!"

"YLSL has been a place to be able to express my ideas and opinions and where differences and diversity are encouraged."

"To me, YLSL has symbolized an environment to both develop as a student and grow as a leader, pushing me to expand beyond my comfort zone into new areas."

"YLSL has really taught me what it means to be a good and productive leader in my school and in my community."