

“Student Development, Leadership and Voice: Reframing the Conversation”

Prepared by:

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**What do we really want for our young
people?**

Prevention Outcomes

Prevention Outcomes are described in terms of ***what we do not want*** young people to do or become. They seek to prevent young people from engaging in destructive lifestyles:

- School failure
- Bullying
- Pregnancy
- Drug and alcohol use
- ?

Problem free is not fully prepared.

- Karen Pittman, Founder and CEO, Forum for Youth Investment

Achievement Outcomes

Achievement outcomes are things *we do want* youth to obtain or achieve:

- Graduating from high school
- Attaining a post-secondary credential
- Getting a job
- Winning a class office or an award
- ?

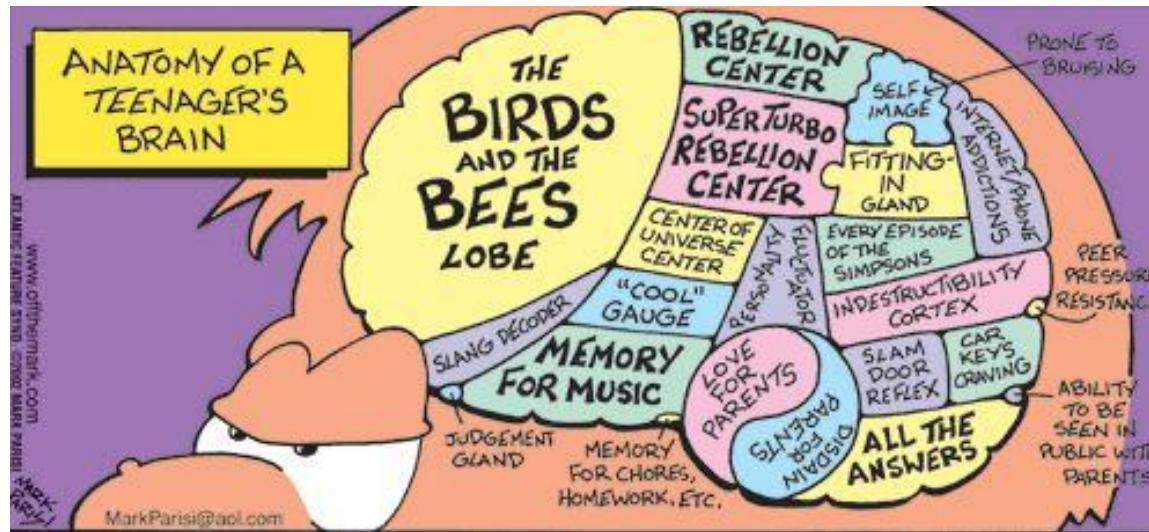
Social and cultural achievement are not synonymous with personal well-being or healthy development.

Developmental Outcomes

Developmental outcomes are the abilities, personal attributes, sense of self, and connection to others that young people need to be healthy and succeed:

- Academic and social competence
- Confidence and character
- Connectedness, healthy relationships with community, friends and family
- Caring and compassion, empathy

The Teen Brain



The Teen Brain

- During adolescence, the brain begins its final stages of maturation and continues to rapidly develop well into a person's early 20s, concluding around 25.
- The prefrontal cortex, which governs the “executive functions” of reasoning, advanced thought and impulse control, is the final area of the human brain to mature.
- Adolescents commonly experience “reward-deficiency syndrome,” which means they are no longer stimulated by activities that thrilled them as younger children. Thus, they often engage in activities of greater risk and higher stimulation in efforts to achieve similar levels of excitement.
- Adolescents must rely heavily on the parts of the brain that house the emotional centers when making decisions, because the frontal regions of their brains are not fully developed.

Coalition for Juvenile Justice: Emerging Concepts Brief: “What are the Implications of Adolescent Brain Development for Juvenile Justice?”

Strategies That Work/Don't Work for the Teen Brain

PERMISSIVE

- Few rules
- Few consequences
- Endless negotiation
- Limited or erratic leadership
- Emphasis on individuality
- All opinions are equal

DON'T WORK

AUTHORITARIAN

- Rigid rules
- Strict enforcement
- No negotiation
- Autocratic leadership
- Emphasis on conformity
- Only the adult's opinion counts

STRUCTURED

- Firm rules
- Firm enforcement
- Limited negotiation
- Stable leadership
- Balance between individuality and conformity
- Opinions respected

From: *Why Do They Act That Way: A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You and Your Teen*, by David Walsh

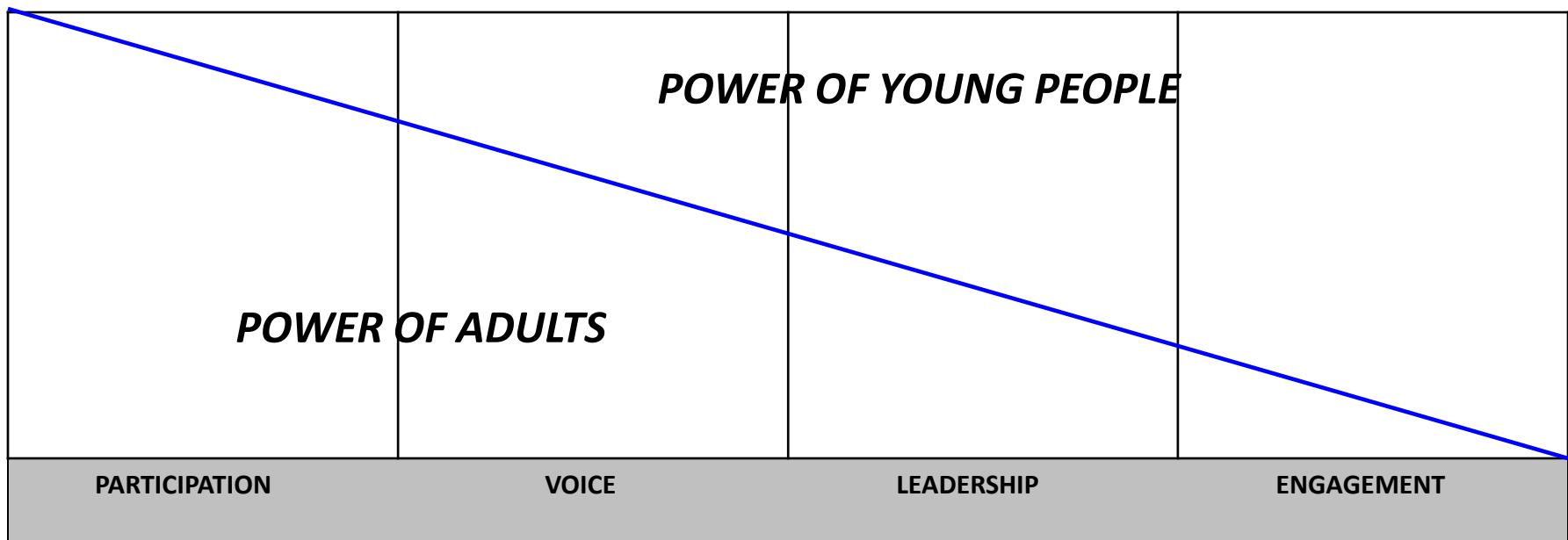
**What do we mean when we say
“engagement”?**

Understanding the Continuum of Youth Involvement

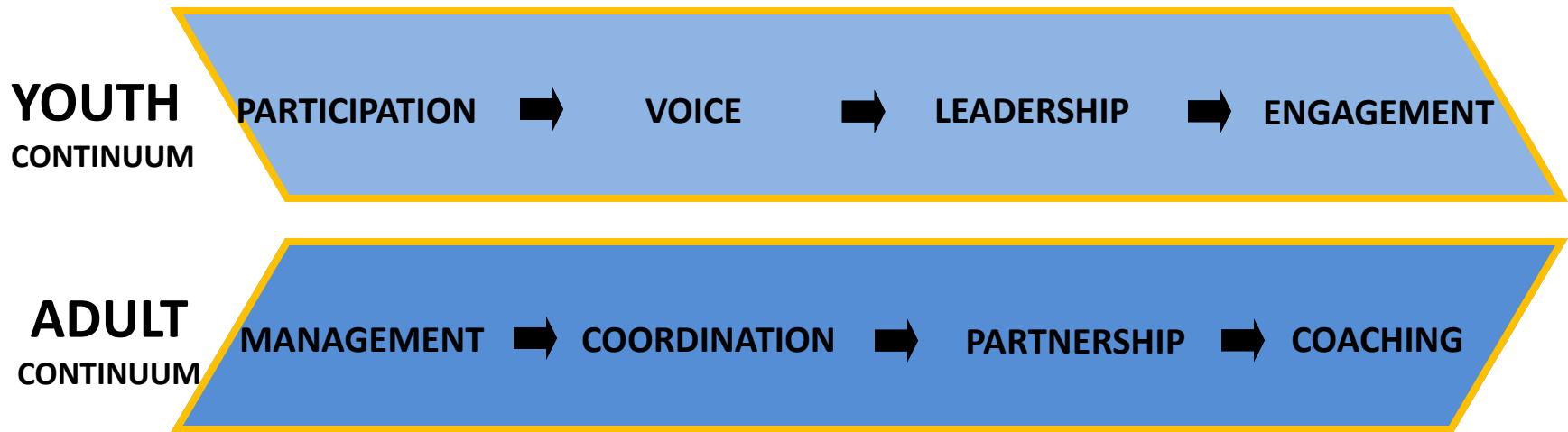
PARTICIPATION → VOICE → LEADERSHIP → ENGAGEMENT

YOUTH ROLES	Youth are involved in the “doing” of the activity but not in the planning, development or reflection.	Youth are part of conversations regarding planning and implementing an idea. Their input is considered, but they may or may not have an official “vote”.	Youth are involved at all levels of idea or project development and have formal and informal leadership roles in the process.	Youth are the primary drivers of the work from conceptualization to implementation and reflection. Youth “own” and understand the work deeply.
ADULT ROLES	Adults develop the idea, plan and organize all aspects of the activity or event which a cadre of young people will actually carry out.	Adults develop and set the agenda and facilitate the process. Adults include the input of youth in this process. This can be through consideration of youth input via focus group or meeting or through youth being involved in and having a formal vote.	Adults are involved in the full process and support the development of individual youth and the flow of the process, but in a way that balances power and leadership with youth. Adults allow youth to struggle and make mistakes in a safe environment.	Adults provide a support role and share ownership and commitment but with some deference to the youth. Adults hold one “vote” on the team.
DECISION-MAKING	Adults make all decisions.	Adults ultimately make the decision with the consideration of youth input. If youth have a vote, they are typically outnumbered or adults have ultimate veto power.	Youth and adults share decision-making power often requiring a specific and mutually agreed upon decision-making process.	Youth ultimately make the decisions with the inclusion of adult input and “vote”.

A Model for Understanding the Continuum of Youth Involvement



The Challenge of Moving Along the Continuum



...is changing the way adults approach their work.

Change Formula

The Harvard Change Model suggests the likelihood of change increases exponentially as any of these factors gets stronger.

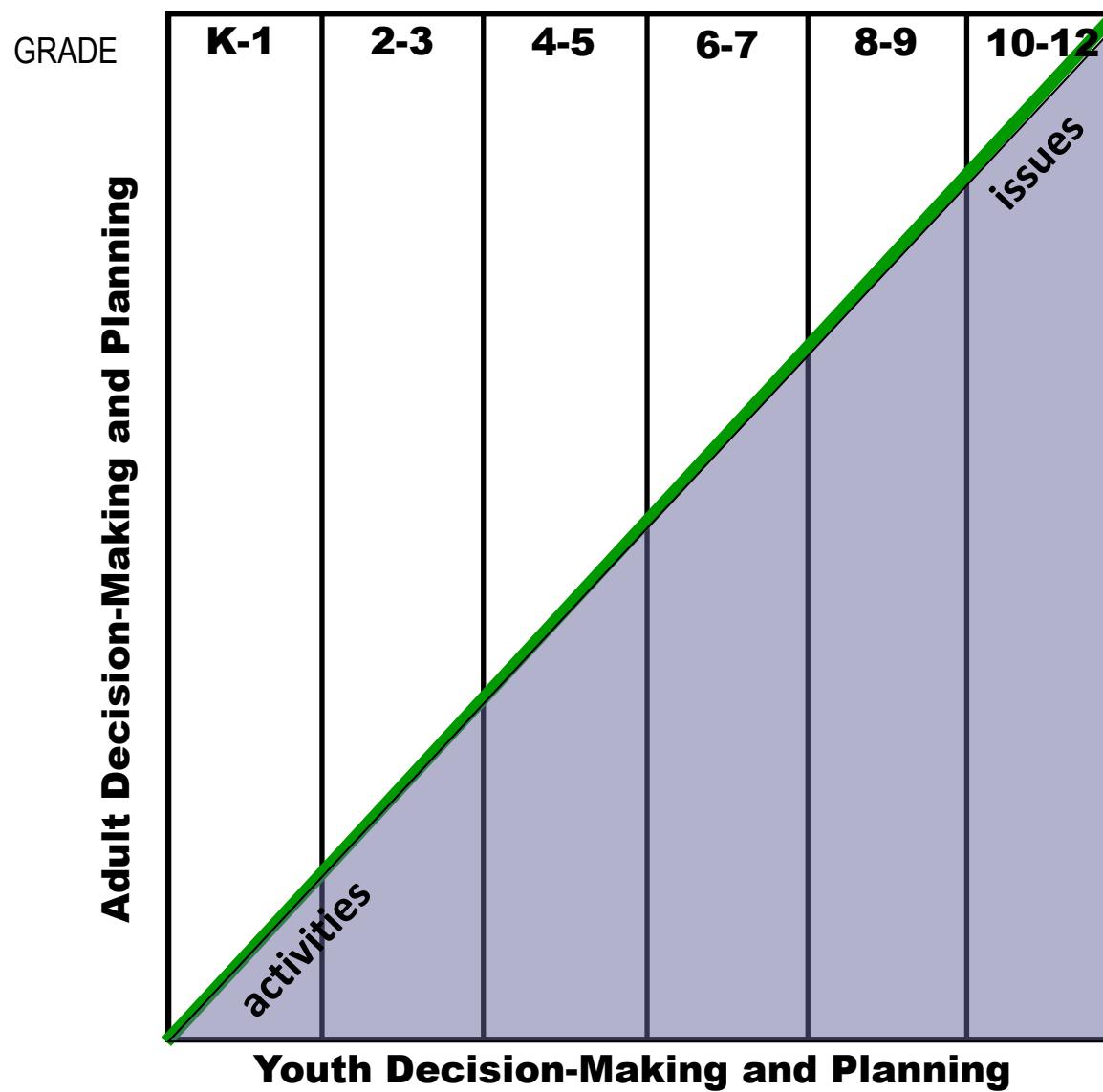
But disconnected efforts may actually dissipate energy for change.

$$C = D \times V \times P$$

Change = Dissatisfaction x Vision x Plan

the more we focus (on narrow pieces of the “big picture”),
the more we fragment (our responses),
the more we fail (our children and youth).

Youth Decision-Making and Planning Progression



Youth Organizing for Educational **CHANGE**



By Anderson Williams, Deniece Ferguson and Nicole Yohalem

<http://www.forumfyi.org/content/youth-organizing-educa>

the
forum
FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT

Final Words

“Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is violence. The means used are not important; to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects. “

- Paulo Freire

“There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction. “

- John F. Kennedy

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