

A STUDENT-LED MODEL OF INVESTING IN URBAN SCHOOLING



Jonathan E. Collins, Ph.D. | Founder & Director | Brown University PAVED Research – Mary Tefft and John Hazen White Sr.
 Assistant Professor of Political Science, Education, and International and Public Affairs | Brown University
Kiyara Leis, Ph.D. | Research Coordinator | Brown University PAVED Research



POWER TO THE PUPIL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2023, Brown University hosted half of the entire 8th grade of Nathanael Greene Middle School (NGMS) in Providence, RI. The purpose of their trip was to determine how the University will invest \$100,000 towards improving the schools of the Providence Public School District (PPSD). Funded by Brown University's Fund for the Education of the Children of Providence and under the guidance of Professor Jonathan E. Collins and the PAVED Research Initiative team, the 8th graders participated in a multi-stage event, Power to the Pupil (P2P), where they engaged in a series of democratic discussions and voting activities to determine how Brown should make its investment.

Prior to students arriving on Brown's campus, P2P began with a school-based activity in which NGMS 8th graders identified the most pressing needs of PPSD students. The PAVED research team converted those ideas into ten broad but distinct categories of ways that Brown could invest the \$100,000. During a full day Townhall at Brown University, 112 8th graders engaged in small group discussions about the pros and cons of the 10 categories for students across grade levels and different needs. Through surveys and voting activities, students narrowed from the 10 categories down 3 and eventually to 1 (hands-on learning opportunities). During the deliberations, students also listed more specific ideas for ways in which Brown could invest in hands-on learning opportunities.

Following the townhall, a delegation of 19 8th graders from the larger group met with the PAVED research team on their campus. Our team facilitated a two-day summit through which to narrow from the broad category selected by their peers toward a detailed budget. The delegates worked in small groups to design different projects based on the ideas of their peers. After narrowing their ideas through deliberations and voting activities, the delegates reached the decision that Brown's investment in hands-on learning opportunities should go towards a combination of field trips and internships or what the students coined, "fieldternships." The delegates concluded the P2P process by creating a line-item budget for the "fieldternships" which includes operating costs, the cost of materials, and scholarships to support student internships.

After fleshing out the details of the different projects, pitching their ideas to their peers and voting, the delegates decided the money should be spent on a combination of field trips and internships – "fieldternships".





INTRODUCTION

What is the impact of having students at the center of decision-making processes aiming to facilitate the improvement of public schools in urban communities? School policy decisions are typically made based on the agendas and policy proposals of local elected (or appointed) officials operating under the constraints of state law and/or the incentives from federal policy. Yet, policymakers are not the ones sitting in the classroom seats every day. That responsibility is reserved for students. Yet, rarely are students at the center of education policy decision-making.

Power to the Pupil (P2P) builds on existing ideas of student empowerment. However, it offers, in its own right, a new innovative approach extending beyond more traditional models. With student empowerment models of education policy decision-making, we primarily see small numbers of students selected to serve in a leadership role to represent the broader interests of their peers. We see this, for instance, with the creation of student councils that may advise policymakers as well as with school boards that create (usually non-voting) board member seats for students. Rarely do we see mass student participation featuring the typical students, if not the most vulnerable students, at the center of an empowerment project. To the extent that we do see mass participation, it usually takes form through civic groups that mobilize students to engage in political organizing as outsiders influencing policy. Can mass participation generate from within the school district as an institution be what shapes policy decision-making? If so, what does such a model look like, and can it be effective?

These are the research questions driving the construction and implementation of P2P. **We design a process for student engagement that involves mass student participation, not just the voices of the self-identified student leaders.** That process centers around mass student assemblies held both at the students' school and on the campus of Brown University. Borrowing from the conceptual idea of participatory budgeting, we incentivize student participation by offering the promise of direct influence over funds invested in a public good (public schools in this instance). Students engage in small-group deliberations based on an agenda of topics constructed by students' individual ideas. Ultimately, they land on decisions for making real investments in their district schools. Through this process, we find that students experience an upward shift in feelings of empowerment, and they demonstrate an increased knowledge of programs Brown University offers to K-12 students.

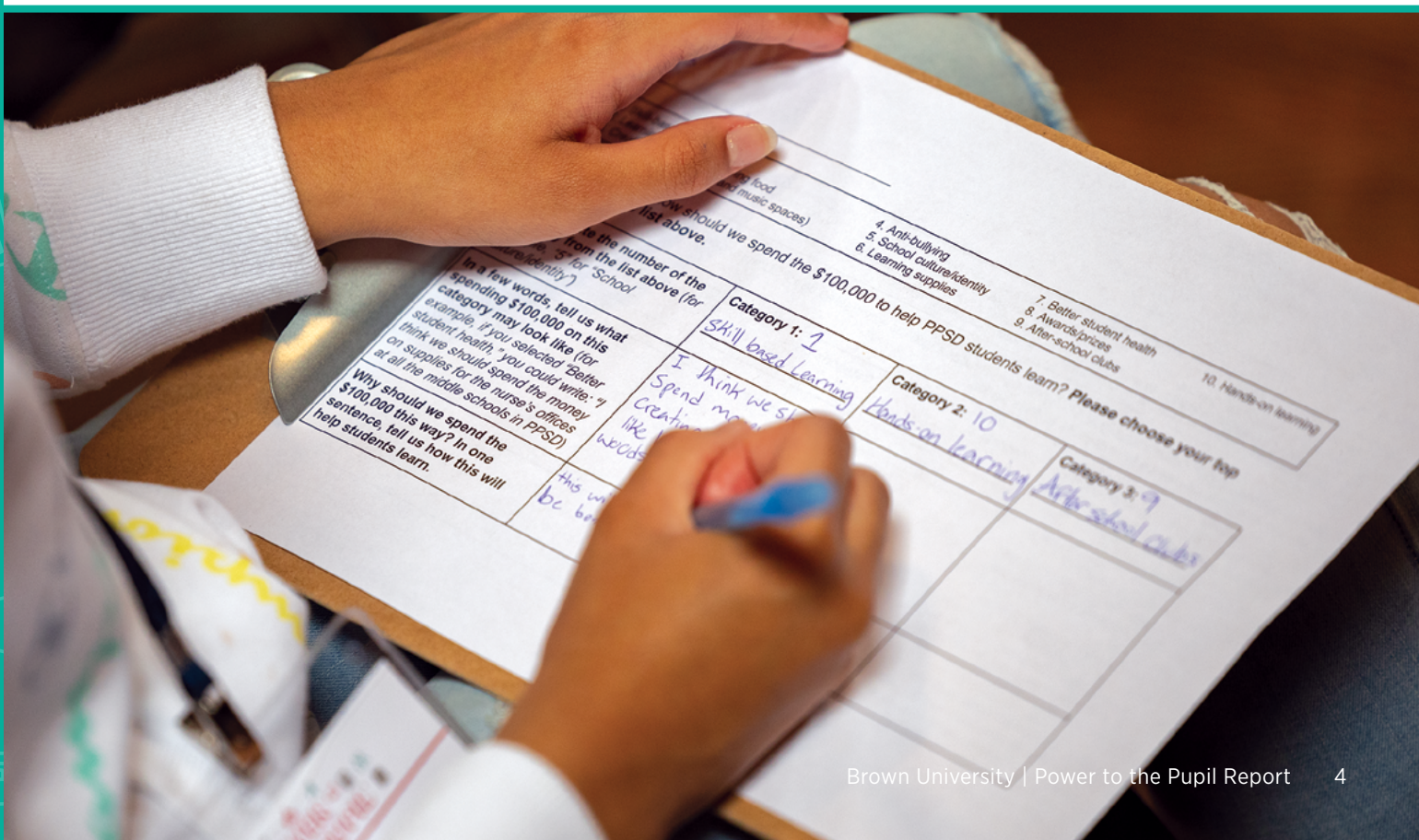
We design a process for student engagement that involves mass student participation, not just the voices of the self-identified student leaders.



BACKGROUND

The **Power to the Pupil (P2P)** is a project designed to put students at the center of the process of deciding how Brown University will invest in the Providence Public School District (PPSD). The process itself is a design created by Professor Jonathan E. Collins and the PAVED Research Initiative team based on 3 years of exploratory research on participatory budgeting innovation in Providence-area schools and districts.¹ Participatory budgeting is a process developed in Brazil in late 1980s. On the heels of a military dictatorship a rising democratic regime began partitioning small amounts of public funds to be used on public projects decided directly by citizens. It was a true reallocation of power, with a delegation of everyday citizens gaining the ability to develop public works proposals for the projects that the larger citizenry then casts votes for to see implemented. P2P takes the PB model and opens the process of developing proposals open to entire mass publics of students.

Specific to P2P 2023, students came together to determine how to spend a \$100,000 grant. The grant is a part of the larger investment that Brown University has promised to make towards supporting PPSD. The ultimate goal of the PPSD-PRI project is to synthesize the ideas that stakeholders (students in this specific case) have for how to properly invest in PPSD. The process will produce a promissory document clearly outlining what that investment should look like. We plan to arrive at this synthesis by positioning stakeholders to collectively reason through what students need to succeed academically. To achieve the overarching goal, the PPSD-PRI has three main components: preparatory activities, a Townhall, and a delegate summit. Upon completing these three phases, Brown University will be presented with a spending agreement outlining the students' desires for how to spend the grant.





DESCRIPTION OF P2P

Funded by Brown's Fund for the Education of the Children of Providence, Power to the Pupil, or P2P, was a three-stage event where 8th graders from Nathanael Greene Middle School (NGMS), an urban public middle school in Providence, decided how \$100,000 should be spent to improve schools across the Providence Public School District (PPSD). In Stage 1 (preparatory activities), the 8th graders generated lists of the issues faced by PPSD schools. In Stage 2 (Townhall), the students spent the day discussing and voting on which broad category they wanted the money to be spent on. In Stage 3 (delegate summit), a delegation of 8th graders designed a project within the selected category and created a line-item budget.

1 STAGE 1: PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

Stage 1 consisted of a hour-long assembly at NGMS for the entire 8th grade. The 8th graders had previously participated in 3 years of annual assemblies on participatory budgeting with a focus on student empowerment. During the assembly, students were introduced to P2P and given an overview of its purpose. They were also provided with information about Brown's Fund for the Education of the Children of Providence. Students then engaged in a conversation about the needs faced by PPSD schools. In small groups, the students were asked to create lists of the problems they felt existed across PPSD schools and asked to propose possible solutions. The students' input was used to create 10 categories encapsulating the different problems described by the 8th graders. Examples of categories included creation stations, anti-bullying, and awards and prizes (for the complete list, see Appendix A, Table A.1).

2 STAGE 2: TOWNHALL

Stage 2 took place on June 8th, 2023. NGMS 8th graders (whose parents had returned signed permission forms) were invited to Brown University Campus for a Townhall. The Townhall was a full day event consisting of a morning and afternoon session, separated by a lunch period. The students spent the day in small groups facilitated by Brown University students. During the morning session, students discussed the advantages and disadvantages of spending the \$100,000 on the different ten categories before voting on the top 3 categories they would most like the money to be spent on. In the afternoon, the students discussed the pros and cons of the three categories that received the most amount of votes before voting for which category they wanted the money to be spent on.

3 STAGE 3: DELEGATE SUMMIT

Stage 3 took place the week after the Townhall during two consecutive days at NGMS. A portion of 8th grade Townhall attendees were nominated by their teachers to act as delegates for their peers in deciding how the \$100,000 should be spent on the chosen category. The delegates spent time learning about and discussing the needs of the district before creating and voting on specific projects they felt would best serve the students of PPSD. Finally, the delegates created a line-item budget for the project, describing how the \$100,000 should be spent.



TOWNHALL DESIGN

The P2P Townhall took place on June 8th from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm on Brown campus. The majority of events took place in Sayles Hall. Prior to their approval, NGMS 8th graders with signed-permission forms were sorted into nine small groups of between 12 and 14 students. Each group was assigned either one or two facilitators who spent the day, from picking them up at their bus to dropping them back off at their bus, with their group. Facilitators were Brown University undergraduate and graduate students from a range of disciplines who received three 1-hour trainings in preparation for P2P. Building trust between the facilitators and the students in their small groups was considered an essential element of P2P. Students were assigned to their groups by last name. Each group was assigned to a circle of chairs in Sayles Hall where they sat for both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Upon arrival, after brief introductions to P2P, facilitators took attendance and collected student IDs (sIDs). sIDs are unique numbers given out by NGMS to each student and were used throughout P2P as a means of tracking students' data while also protecting their privacy. All materials were provided in both English and Spanish. Students began the day by filling out a five-minute pre-survey.

After completing the pre-survey, facilitators brought their students on 30 minute tours of the main green. Each tour was individually designed by the facilitator to introduce their group to the experience of being a student at Brown. Facilitators pointed out different buildings to their groups and explained their purposes. They also talked about their unique experiences of being students by talking about their daily lives (living in dorms, eating in on-campus cafeterias, using the gym, etc), classes they had taken and clubs and organizations that they were a part of. Facilitators also used this time to answer any questions the students in their group may have had about life as a Brown student.

Following the tour, students were re-seated in Sayles Hall and introduced to the 10 categories that summarized the PPSD issues they had highlighted during the preparatory activities. To ensure that the descriptions were consistent across groups, facilitators were provided with handouts of each category containing descriptions and illustrated examples of possible projects within the category (Appendix A, Table A.1). Students were then encouraged to talk about why they thought the \$100,000 should or should not be spent on each category, to make suggestions about alternative projects within the category that they would like the money to be spent on, and to think about how spending the money

in this way could improve learning outcomes. Facilitators were asked to only step-in if students became distracted or conversation lagged but to otherwise let the discussion be student-led and directed. This discussion was followed by students filling out Ticket 1, where they identified their top 3 categories, described specific projects within them and explained their benefits to student learning.

After writing down their thoughts about the different categories, students were asked to use popsicle sticks to vote for the three categories that they would most like the money to be spent on. Group-by-group, students were given the opportunity to drop their sticks into ballot boxes representing each of the 10 categories. This process was overseen by a staff member and students were asked to vote for 3 different categories. The popsicle sticks were then counted and the 3 categories with the highest number of votes were identified. These categories were: skill-based learning, better student health and hands-on learning.

After voting, half the students departed for lunch while the other half remained in Sayles Hall for the 45-minute Equity Workshop, led by a member of Brown's Swearer Center. The remaining students then headed for lunch while the first group participated in the Equity Workshop.

Following the 90-minute break, students were re-seated in their small groups. The afternoon session began with the announcement of the 3 top categories. Students then worked with their group members to create pro-con lists for each of the three categories on a large sheet of paper recorded by the facilitator (for an example, see Appendix A, Figure A.2). After the pro-con discussion, students were asked to fill out Ticket 2. Unlike with Ticket 1, students selected only one of the 3 top categories that they would most like the money to be spent on. Students then raised their hands to vote. Hands-on learning was selected as the category that the NGMS 8th graders most wanted to see the \$100,000 spent on.



TOWNHALL MEASURES

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Out of the 250 students in the 8th grade, only 112 were able to attend the Townhall. It was important to determine whether these students were representative of their entire grade or if they were more likely to be the students typically characterized as high performers (i.e., students who are high in participation in different areas of school and who hold very positive views of both their school and district).

Participation was measured through two questions on the pre-survey: 1) "When you are in class, how much do you raise your hand to answer the teachers' questions?" Responses were scored on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 ("Never") to 3 ("A lot"). 2) "Are you a part of any school clubs, teams, or organizations?" Responses were dichotomous and either 0 ("No") or 1 ("Yes"). If students selected "Yes," they were also asked to list their favorite one.

Students' positive views towards their school and district were also measured with two questions on the pre-survey: 1) "How much do you like going to school?" Responses were scored on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 ("Never") to 3 ("A lot"). 2) "What do you think of all of the schools in Providence as a whole?" Responses were scored on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 ("Very Bad") to 4 ("Very Good").

STUDENT DECISION-MAKING

Students were asked about their opinions on whether students should be involved in decisions about how schools spend money on both the pre and post survey. This was measured through two questions. 1) “Do you think students should help decide how schools in Providence spend the money?” Students could respond either “Yes or maybe” (1) or “No” (0). 2) “Do you think that students will decide to spend the money on the wrong things?” Students could respond either “No or maybe” (1) or “Yes” (0)

The selection of the category the **\$100,000** should be spent on was made through a vote.

STUDENT PREFERENCES (CATEGORIES)

On Ticket 1, students were asked to indicate which three categories (out of 10) they would most like the \$100,000 to be spent on. Each category was given a numerical value (1-10), which students were asked to write on their tickets. Beneath each category, students were asked: “In a few words, tell us what spending \$100,000 on this category may look like.” To guide students towards thinking about specific projects, examples were provided. There were ten variations of this survey distributed to the students, each with an example from a different category, such as: “If you selected “Skill-based learning,” you could write: “I think we should spend the money on a program teaching video editing skills for middle schools in PPSD.” Finally, students were asked to explain “Why should we spend the \$100,000 this way? In one sentence, tell us how this will help students learn” for each category. To see an example of a student’s responses on Ticket 1, please see Appendix A, Figure A.1.

On Ticket 2, students were asked to indicate which one of the top 3 categories they would most like the \$100,000 to be spent on. They could select either [1] Skill-based learning; [7] Better student health; or [10] Hands-on learning. They were then asked to “In one or two sentences, give us a detailed idea for how to use the \$100,000 to build up this category.” Finally, they were asked “In one sentence, tell us how this will help students learn.” For an example of a student’s responses on Ticket 2, please see Appendix A, Figure A.3.

The selection of the category the \$100,000 should be spent on was made through a vote. Within each group, facilitators had their students close their eyes and raise their hands to vote for which category the students felt should receive the money. If there was a tie between categories for first place, the entire group re-voted on just those two categories.

PARTICIPANTS’ EVALUATIONS OF TOWNHALL ACTIVITIES

Students were asked on the post-survey to evaluate the different aspects of the Townhall. Students were asked to rate each activity as either “negative or neutral” (0) or “positive” (1). The list of activities included the democratic processes (the morning and afternoon discussions, popsicle stick voting, and filling out the tickets), the activities designed to introduce the students to life on campus (talking to the facilitators, the campus tours, and lunch) and the Equity workshop.

BROWN PROGRAMS

Participants’ knowledge of Brown programs designed for high schoolers was measured on both the pre- and post-survey. Students rated their knowledge of programs that Brown University has for high school students as either “Nothing to not much” (0) or “A little to a lot” (1). In addition, students were asked to list a Brown University program.



TOWNHALL RESULTS

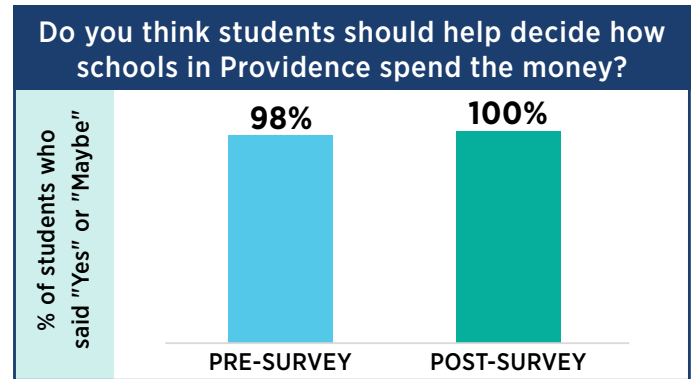
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

We designed P2P to engage the typical student, who may not opt into (or be selected for) leadership-focused models of student engagement. We assessed students' positionality in multiple ways. We collected self-reported information about their engagement in the classroom. Only 26.73% of the students indicated that they raised their hands a lot in the class, with the remaining students stating that they did not raise their hands often or ever (Appendix B, Figure 1). Inquiring about extracurricular activities, we find that less than half of the students reported being part of any school clubs, teams or organizations (Appendix B, Figure 2). The students also expressed moderate levels of enthusiasm for school, which is consistent with the typical adolescent middle schooler. In response to being asked about how much they liked going to school, the majority of students (66.99%) responded "only a little" or less (Appendix B, Figure 3). Similarly 62% of the students rated Providence schools as "OK." (Appendix B, Figure 4). Our process engaged students who were not predisposed to unusually interested in an academically-focused project.

STUDENT DECISION-MAKING

A concern with student-driven decision-making processes at the middle school level is that adolescents may lack the efficacy needed to believe they should be contributing to a democratic process. However, when asked whether students should decide how money gets invested into the district, the majority of students responded yes or maybe on both surveys, with a slightly higher percentage indicating agreement on the post-survey (100% to 98.21%).

Participants were also asked whether they thought their peers were likely to make the decision to spend the money on the wrong things on both the pre and post survey. The majority of students indicated no or maybe on both surveys, with a higher percentage indicating disagreement on the pre-survey (90.18% to 86.54%) (Appendix B, Figure 5). Students participating in the P2P project demonstrated clear collective maturity.



STUDENT PREFERENCES (CATEGORIES)

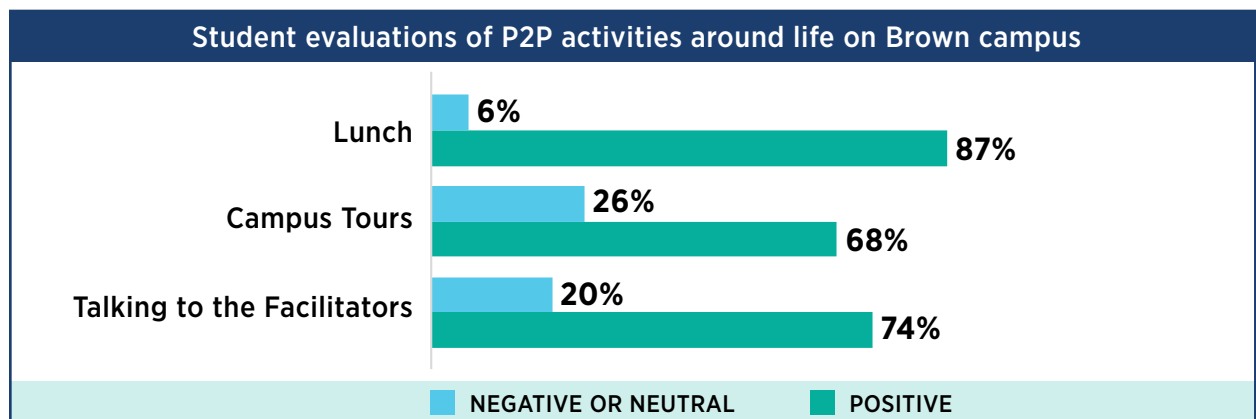
Students put their decision-making agency to work by adjudicating between the pre-established options. They indicated their preferences for which category should receive the \$100,000 on Ticket 1 (3 votes) and Ticket 2 (1 votes) before a final vote within the groups. On Ticket 1, the percentage of votes for skill-based learning ranged from 1% (Group 2) to 26.83% (Group 3). The percentage of votes for better-student health ranged from 3.33% (Group 2) to 24.24% (Group 8). The percentage of votes for hands-on learning ranged from 5.56% (Group 1) to 29.27% (Group 3) (Appendix B, Table B.1 and Figure B.6). On Ticket 2, the percentage of votes for skill-based learning ranged from 0% (Groups 2, 4 and 8) to 66.67% (Group 2). The percentage of votes for better-student health ranged from 7.14% (Group 7) to 66.67% (Group 9). The percentage of votes for hands-on learning ranged from 8.33% (Group 9) to 72.73% (Group 4) (Appendix B, Table B.1 and Figure B.7). On both Ticket 1 and 2, the groups with the smallest percentage of votes for hands-on learning were still greater than the groups with the smallest percentage of votes for other two categories. Similarly, on both Tickets, the groups with the highest

percentage of votes for hands-on learning were greater than the highest percentage of votes received for the other two categories. As expected, when the final votes for categories were tallied, hands-on learning received the highest percentage of votes. 45.61% of the students voted for hands-on learning (52 votes) compared to the 29.82% who voted for skill-based learning (34 votes) and the 24.56% who voted for better student health (28 votes) (Appendix B, Figure B.8).

PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATIONS OF TOWNHALL ACTIVITIES

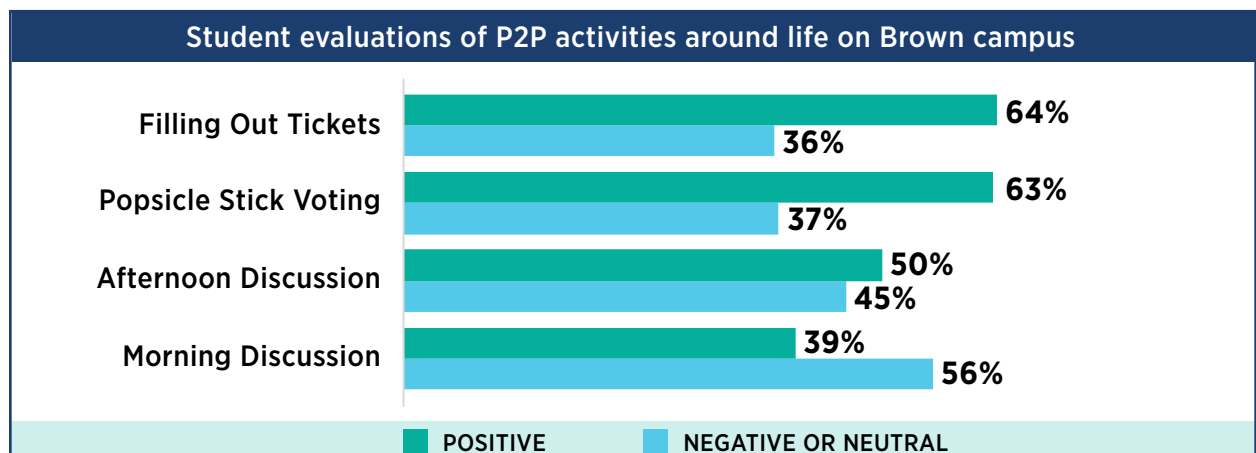
Along with engaging in democratic discussions over the \$100,000 investment, we also asked for students to rate different aspects of the campus visit. Students expressed an overall enjoyment of the event. However, participants were most enthusiastic about the components of the day that exposed them to life on Brown campus. This included talking to the Brown facilitators (74.30% of the students rated this experience positively), the facilitator-led campus tours (68.10% rated this positively) and lunch in the cafeteria (86.70% rated this positively). Students enjoyed the experiential components the most.

FIGURE 2



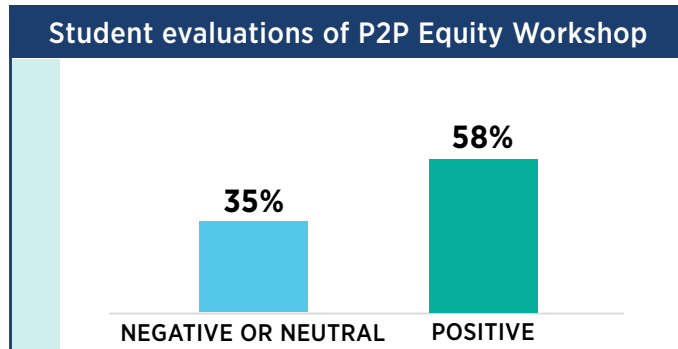
Students responded positively to democratic decision-making components of the model. More than half of the students expressed positive opinions about the aspect of selecting from the categories (i.e., 63.70% rated the experience of filling out the tickets positively and 63.20% rated the experience of popsicle stick voting positively). The deliberations bred slightly mixed, but overall positive results. Less than half of the students (39%) offered a positive rating of the initial deliberation session in the morning. However, we see an increase to where half of the students evaluated the afternoon discussions positively.

FIGURE 3



In between the morning and afternoon deliberations, students participated in an equity workshop. Led by a university community engagement specialist, the equity workshop helped the students grapple with the systemic nature of everyday inequalities. The workshop also instructed the students of ways in which identity is an asset to address inequity. Over half of the students (58.40%) positively evaluated the equity workshop.

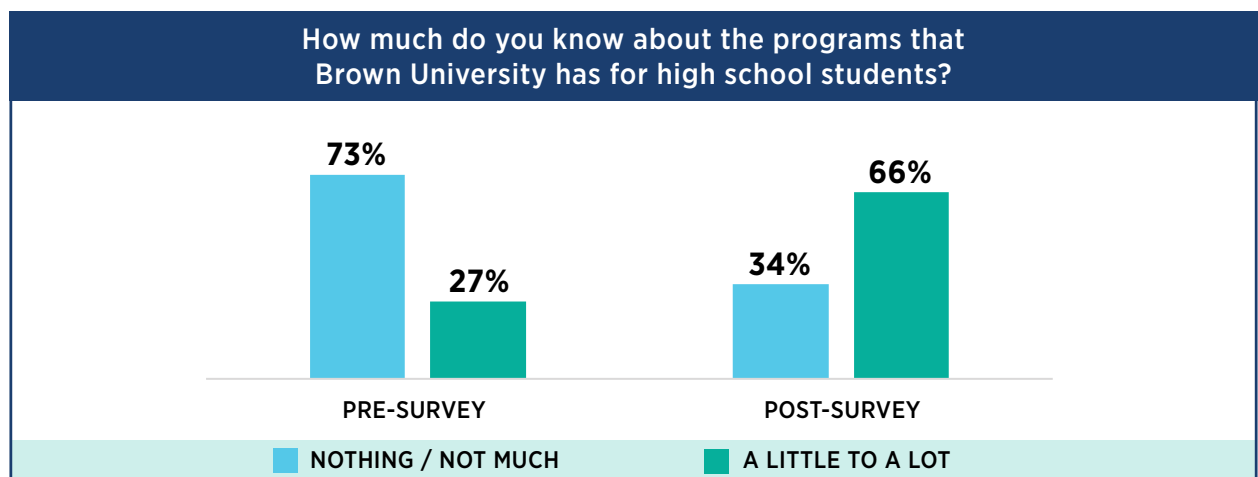
FIGURE 4



BROWN PROGRAMS

We coupled the physical exposure to campus with an effort to disseminate information on the kinds of programs that Brown offers to K-12 students. Participants were asked about their knowledge of Brown University programs for high school students on both the pre and post surveys. As we see on Figure 5, the pre-survey, almost three-quarters of the students (72.57%) indicated that they knew either nothing or not much about the programs. Only 27.43% of the students stated that they knew a little or a lot about the programs. However, after participating in the Townhall activities, the percentage of students who continued to know not much or nothing went down to 33.64%. More than half of the students (66.36%) indicated that they now knew at least a little or a lot about the programs.

FIGURE 5





DELEGATE SUMMIT DESIGN

We designed the delegate summit for the students to convert the winning category from the Townhall into a practical, tangible line-item budget. The delegate summit took place on June 12th and 13th from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Five facilitators who had participated in the Townhall helped with the event. 19 students, all of whom attended the Townhall, were selected by their teachers as delegates based on their perceived interest and enthusiasm for being a representative of their grade, and their interest in making decisions for the district and learning about, and practicing, budgeting. Students, in four groups, created pitches for different potential projects that fell within the umbrella of hands-on learning. After presenting these pitches to their peers, the delegates voted for their top two projects, internships and field trips. The students then created plans for how these projects could be applied to different school levels (elementary, middle and high schools). After deciding to combine the two projects into a project they called “Fieldternships,” the students created a line-item budget.

BRAINSTORMING (DEVELOPING FOUR IDEAS FOR HANDS-ON LEARNING)

Delegates were provided with a document describing the four projects within hands-on learning that had been put forward by the most students during the Townhall (i.e., Internships and programs to help students in the future; materials for science experiments in math class; physical materials and activities for specific lessons; and field trips). The delegates were divided into four groups and assigned one of the project areas. They were then asked to think about what the project could like at different school levels and to think about what materials would be needed to make the project possible. They were then asked to put together a pitch to present to their classmates about why this was the project the money should be spent on.

PITCHES AND VOTING (NARROW DOWN TO TWO PROJECTS)

After representatives from each group presented their pitches, the delegates from the other groups had the opportunity to ask questions about the projects, such as why the group felt that their project was better than others, or how their projects benefited learning and growth for all students across different schools and grade levels.

The Q and A session was followed by a vote for the top two categories. The delegates were asked to consider which project was the most persuasive for addressing the needs and wants of the district and ensuring the learning and growth of the students when casting their votes. The students selected internships and field trips as the projects they were most interested in having the money spent on.

PLANS

The delegates were re-sorted into four groups, two were assigned to work on plans for field trips and two were assigned to work on plans for internships. Each group was given a large piece of paper to use for their notes (see Appendix C, Figure C.1). First, students were asked to write down ideas about what the project could look like (for example, within the field trip plan, “going to the Boston Children’s Museum”). Next, students were asked to list the items that they felt would be necessary to make the project happen (for the prior example, a sample items could include buses, museum tickets, and lunch).

EXPERT MEETING

To provide the delegates with the information they would need regarding the possibility of different projects and the costs, an expert, PPSD’s Deputy Superintendent of Operations, was brought in to talk to the delegates. Prior to his arrival, the students worked on developing specific questions to ask about the plans they had previously developed.

The expert began by talking about some changes that the district has, or is planning to, implement. Next, each group of delegates gave an overview of their projects and were given the opportunity to share something they were stuck on that they felt they needed to know in order to be able to make sure their proposal benefited the students they were representing as the delegates. The expert then met with each group of delegates, giving them the opportunity to ask the questions they had prepared and to assist in refining the plans.

DELIBERATION

Following the meeting with the expert and the refinement of the plans, students were asked to re-form into two groups based on whether they preferred spending the \$100,000 on field trips or internships. The groups discussed within their groups their reasons for choosing that specific project, and they chose which arguments they felt would be most persuasive to share with their peers to convince them to select that project. The two groups then presented their arguments to one another and gave members of the other group an opportunity to ask questions and for more clarification. The students decided that, rather than voting for one or the other project, they wanted to combine field trips and internships, naming this hybrid “Fieldternships.”





FINAL BUDGET

Having decided upon a project, the delegates were next tasked with creating a budget for Fieldternships. In addition to thinking about the specific costs of the materials that would be needed, the delegates were asked to think about which grade levels would participate in Fieldternships, and what it would look like for the different levels.

The delegates decided that middle schoolers and high schoolers would be the grade levels that would most benefit from participation in Fieldternships. Specifically, they felt that the middle schoolers would be best served by going on field trips while high schoolers would be assisted in moving towards their future careers. The delegates broke the school levels down even farther into grade levels. In terms of middle schoolers, the delegates decided that 6th and 7th graders should be brought to the PUD Natural History Museum and Planetarium while 8th graders should be brought to the Boston Science Museum. In terms of high schoolers, the delegates thought that students in 9th through 11th grade should be given career days that rotated across the different high schools in PPSD. In addition to the career days, the delegates want some 12th graders to receive \$500 scholarships to allow them to participate in internships.

In addition to describing the specifics of what the projects would look like across school and grade levels, the delegates created a budget for the different items that would be required for 'Fieldternships.' Given the complexity of their project, the delegates focused on broad categories that they felt would be required to address the wide range of student needs across schools and age groups. Table one displays the full produced by the student delegates.

TABLE 1

A STUDENT-DERIVED BUDGET FOR 'FIELDTERNSHIPS'	
ITEM	COST
TRANSPORTATION	\$30,000*
TICKETS (6TH & 7TH GRADERS)**	\$5,900
TICKETS (8TH GRADERS)**	\$12,500
FOOD	\$32,600
INDIVIDUALIZED TRANSPORTATION (E.G. TAXI, BUS FAR)	\$10,000
CAREER DAY	\$5,000
SCHOLARSHIPS	\$4,000
TOTAL	\$100,000

Notes: Students also made the following specific recommendations:

6th and 7th graders: PUD Natural History Museum/Planetarium

8th graders: Boston Science Museum

9th - 11th graders: Free informational, career day (rotating)

12th graders: Career day, scholarship (\$500), free informational

*\$220/bus (40 kids/bus): 5,450 middle schoolers, 7,000 high schoolers

**Look into days where tickets cost less; look at group rates



CONCLUSION

The P2P project took the broad general ideas of an 8th grade body of students and turned them into a clear agenda and a plan for practical investment in the Providence Public School District. Student voice is the fulcrum of this project. Students' responses to preliminary surveys shaped the agenda for the Townhall discussions. The discussions, which took place on Brown University's campus, featured mass participation for half of an entire 8th grade of a middle school that, by accountability metrics, is considered "low-performing." In our project, however, students showed an advanced intellectual ability by generating creative ideas and collectively reasoning through how to improve Providence Public Schools. Their brilliance transcended the limited and biased narrative told by standardized test scores.

The experiential component of the project seems to be an important part of its success. Although lower than anticipated, 50% of the entire 8th grade body submitted completed parental/guardian forms to receive permission and therefore took part in the P2P Townhall on Brown University's campus. During the discussions and voting processes, students landed on hands-on learning opportunities as the preferred area for the Brown University Education Fund's investment. Beyond just the topic area, students rated the campus experiences the highest: eating the university cafeteria, getting to interact with Brown University students, and receiving a mini-tour of the campus. In the post-surveys, students were more knowledgeable about programs that the university offers to K-12 students. The subset of students who were tasked with putting together a more detailed budget created a line item expenses for "fieldtrips" that give students exposure to careers and opportunities to discover academic concepts through real world experiences. The visceral components of the model seem to be the catalyst of its success.

The P2P project featured mass participation by 8th grade middle schoolers that are considered "low-performing."

However, these students showed an advanced intellectual ability by generating creative ideas and collectively reasoning through how to improve Providence Public Schools.

How do we build on the success of the pilot initiative? P2P should be integrated into Brown University's larger infrastructure for collaborating with the Providence community, particularly the Providence Public School District. P2P should become an annual initiative sponsored by that collaboration. Executing P2P depends on this. It requires the right authorization both in terms of transporting and supporting the K-12 students and making the purchases that they request through the decision-making process. This successful execution of this project was made possible through staff support from the Brown University Annenberg Institute for School Reform and the Brown University Swearer Center for Public Service. That kind of support is vital to the continuity of P2P.

With the support in place, what should P2P look like moving forward? We propose a rotating model. One of the most innovative components of P2P is its participatory nature. We brought half of an entire grade to campus for a day-long experience. This also means that a mass group of students, not just a few student leaders, determined how Brown's funds should be invested. The primary weakness of this approach is that the decision only featured the ideas of students of a single school. We account for this issue by framing the discussion around the district as a whole and prompting students to think about the other schools and needs kids face across schools. However, more kids from different schools need the opportunity to provide input and experience a day on Brown's campus.

Future iterations of P2P should rotate participation to different schools. I propose the initiative happen at two levels - the middle school and the high school level. Each level should have their own day on campus. The selected school should also rotate each year. This ensures that, over time, the proposals made to the University reflect the full district student population. The rotating model also spreads the positive effects of the experience to schools throughout the district. In addition to rotating the model to different schools, there could also be versions of P2P designed specifically for teachers as well as parents. Spreading P2P is a pathway to further strengthening the civic infrastructure of the city and district.

There is a note of caution. The success of the P2P pilot interacts with the trusting relationship that was established between us as a research team and the pilot school beforehand. P2P was not the first point of contact between us and the participating student body. This was built on the heels of three years of community building work. Most of the students attending had attended mass forums that we have organized at their school site. As a result, the preparatory work done in future iterations will likely have to supersede the preparatory activity done in the pilot. This work is not impossible, but is arduous and must be done strategically, thoughtfully, and with care.

If done properly, P2P has the potential to revolutionize what it looks like for resource-rich institutions to invest in their surrounding communities. Brown University has a complicated history with the city of Providence, particularly its lower-income communities of color. That complicated history is a part of the impetus for the creation of the Brown University Fund for the Education of the Children of Providence. However, Brown is not alone in having said history, and P2P could be a significant piece of a larger portfolio that helps to reconcile past with present. The beauty of P2P is not just the investment in the district - money allocation could happen without the voices of students. The more important dynamic is using the investment as a process for giving students on the wrong side of racial and economic disparities meaningful say, and - for at least a day - letting them know that they belong on Brown's campus.

If done properly, P2P has the potential to revolutionize what it looks like for resource-rich institutions to invest in their surrounding communities.

APPENDIX A

TABLE A.1: The descriptions and examples of the categories provided to students to help them choose how to spend the \$100,000

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
SKILL-BASED LEARNING	Skill-based learning is all about hands-on activities, working on projects, trying out experiments, and having discussions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to build • Clothing design • Create computer programs
LEARNING THROUGH IMPROVING FOOD	Learning through food improving food is all about students stepping up, finding problems, and coming up with solutions to improve the food they eat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math-based cooking class • Food congress • Educational Food Tastings
CREATION STATIONS (ARTS AND MUSIC SPACES)	Creation stations are special areas in schools where students can use their creativity to explore the world of art and music.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual art spaces • Music rooms
ANTI-BULLYING	Anti-bullying is about keeping school safe and fun for all kids. It means to solve disagreements in healthy ways without abuse or violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space for talking out problems • Student club that helps kids end conflict • Stress relief toys
SCHOOL CULTURE/IDENTITY	School culture and school pride are all about what makes each school unique and special.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed student IDs • Student-led school safety • School spirit programs
LEARNING SUPPLIES	School culture and school pride are all about what makes each school unique and special.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom games • Flashcards • Computer games
BETTER STUDENT HEALTH	School culture and school pride are all about what makes each school unique and special.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health programs • Healthy eating programs • Feminine products
AWARDS/PRIZES	Awards and prizes are special things given to students who do positive things.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards for being nice • Report card prizes • Competitions between schools
AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS	After-school clubs are groups that give students a chance to do things they enjoy doing outside of regular class time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports clubs • Gaming clubs • Book clubs
HANDS-ON LEARNING	Hands-on Learning is all about doing things in class instead of just listening or reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computers and robotics courses • Courses on how to save money • Career internships

FIGURE A.1

A student's responses on Ticket 1

Group: 5
 sID: _____

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Skill-based learning | 4. Anti-bullying | 7. Better student health | 10. Hands-on learning |
| 2. Learning through improving food | 5. School culture/identity | 8. Awards/prizes | |
| 3. Creation Stations (arts and music spaces) | 6. Learning supplies | 9. After-school clubs | |

In your opinion, how should we spend the \$100,000 to help PPSD students learn? **Please choose your top three from the list above.**

Please write the number of the category from the list above (for example, "5" for "School culture/identity")	Category 1:	Category 2:	Category 3:
In a few words, tell us what spending \$100,000 on this category may look like (for example, if you selected "Better student health," you could write: "I think we should spend the money on supplies for the nurse's offices at all the middle schools in PPSD")	9 I think we should spend the money on after-school clubs because there are many activities we can do after school that can help us in the future.	6 I think we should spend the money on learning supplies for us to do more hands on work and not have to write everything on paper.	2 I think we should spend the money on improving food because if we eat a meal it could help us focus better in class but no one would want to eat if the food is bad.
Why should we spend the \$100,000 this way? In one sentence, tell us how this will help students learn.	This will help students learn more than just the subjects in school and we can learn about things that can help us in the future.	This will help students learn in different ways and make it fun.	this will help students focus better in class.

FIGURE A.2

Group 3's pro-con list for each of the top 3 categories

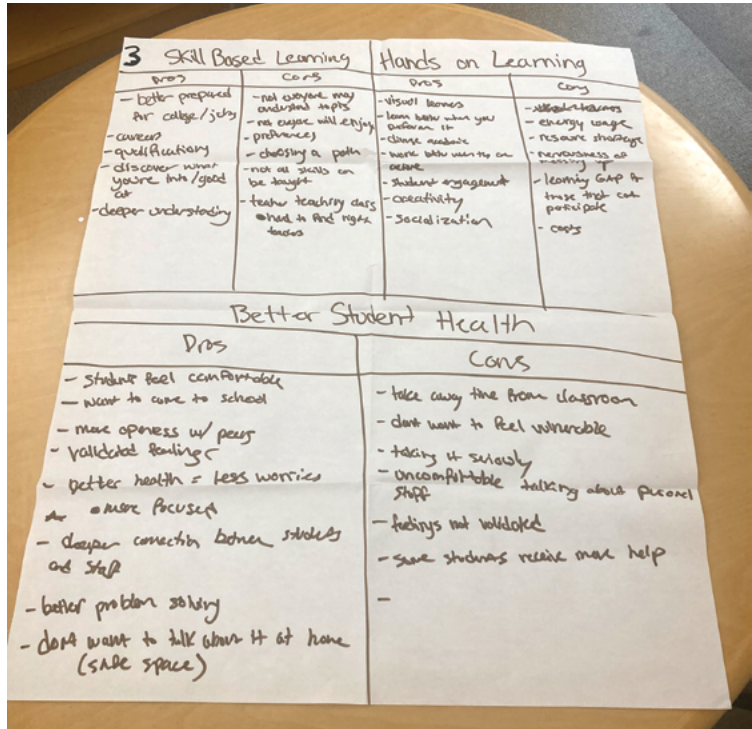


FIGURE A.3

A student's responses on Ticket 2

Group: 5
sID: _____

Please circle the three categories in the box below that were voted as the **top three categories** by you and your classmates.

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Skill-based learning | 4. Anti-bullying | 7. Better student health | 10. Hands-on learning |
| 2. Learning through improving food | 5. School culture/identity | 8. Awards/prizes | |
| 3. Creation Stations (arts and music spaces) | 6. Learning supplies | 9. After-school clubs | |

In your opinion, which **one** of these three categories should we select to spend the \$100,000 on? Which one is best for helping PPSD students learn?

Choose the **one** category from the three we circled above. Write down your favorite one below.

Skill-Based Learning

In one or two sentences, give us a detailed idea for how to use the \$100,000 to build up this category.

We can use the \$100,000 to build up this category by taking it a step at a time and first letting students choose what skills outside of school that they want to learn.

In one sentence, tell us how this will help students learn.

This will help students learn by letting them have an opportunity to learn a different skill of their choice.

APPENDIX B

DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

FIGURE B.1

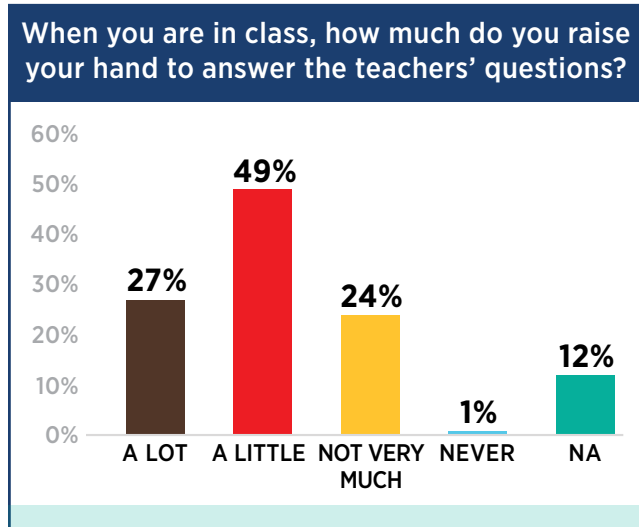


FIGURE B.3

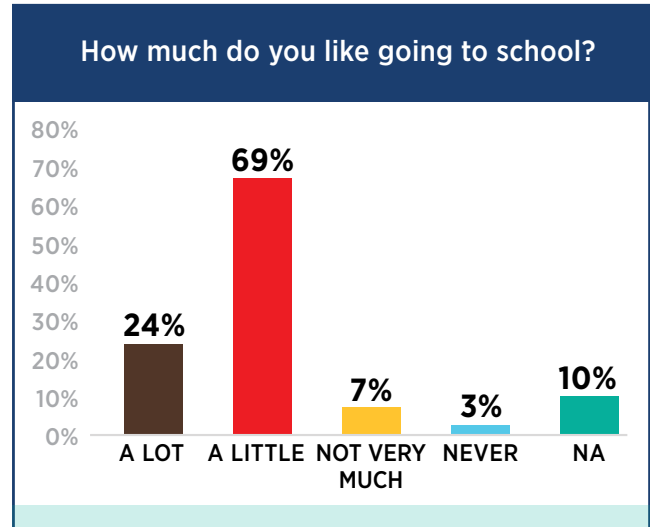


FIGURE B.2

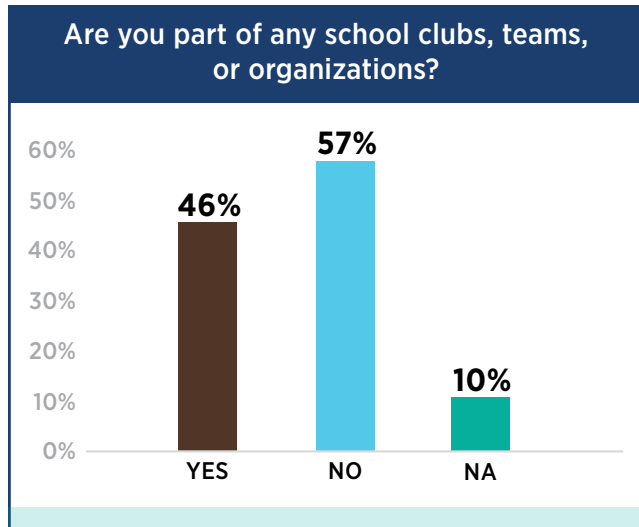
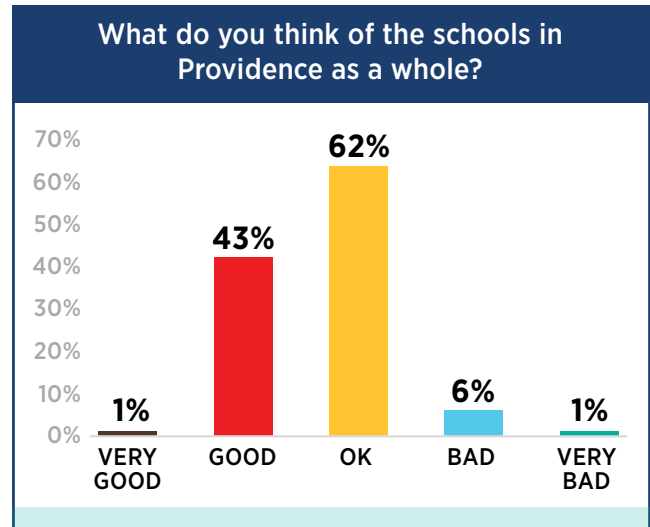
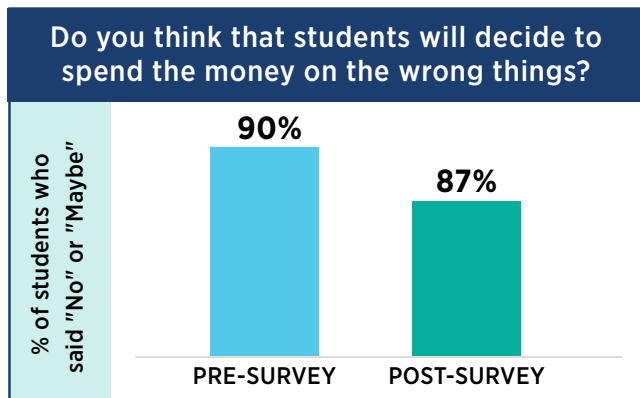


FIGURE B.4



STUDENT DECISION-MAKING

FIGURE B.5

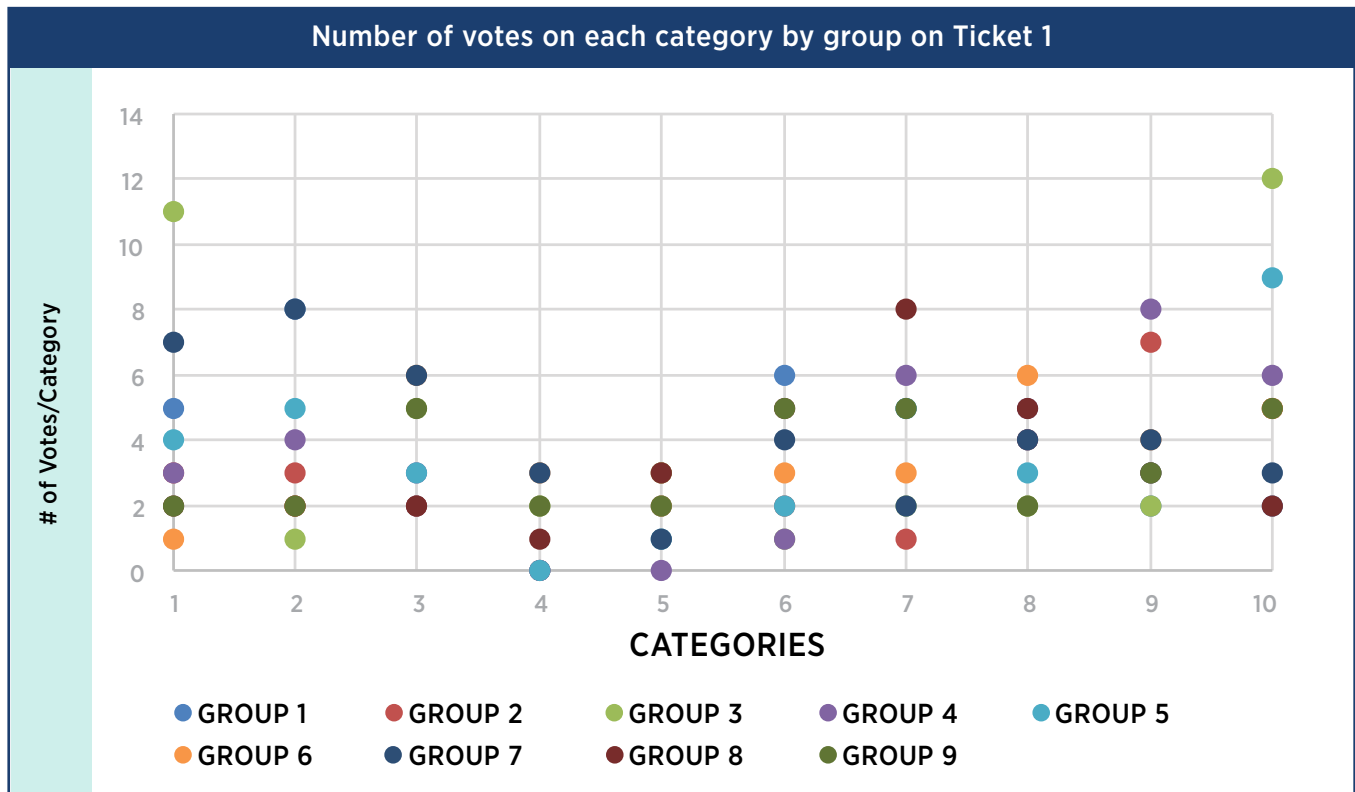


STUDENT PREFERENCES (CATEGORIES)

TABLE B.1

PERCENTAGE OF VOTES FOR EACH CATEGORY ON TICKET 1 AND 2 BY GROUP				
GROUP	TICKET	% of votes for Cat 1 (Skill-based learning)	% of votes for Cat 7 (Better Student Health)	% of votes for Cat 10 (Hands-on learning)
1	1	14%	14%	6%
	2	67%	17%	17%
2	1	1%	3%	17%
	2	0%	30%	70%
3	1	27%	5%	29%
	2	43%	21%	36%
4	1	8%	17%	17%
	2	0%	27%	73%
5	1	16%	14%	26%
	2	45%	18%	36%
6	1	3%	9%	14%
	2	33%	33%	33%
7	1	17%	5%	7%
	2	50%	7%	43%
8	1	6%	24%	6%
	2	0%	30%	70%
9	1	6%	15%	15%
	2	25%	67%	8%

FIGURE B.6



Note: Category 1 = “Skill-based learning.” Category 2 = “ through Improving Food.” Category 3 = “Creation Stations (arts and music spaces).” Category 4 = “Anti-bullying.” Category 5 = “School culture/identity.” Category 6 = “Learning Supplies.” Category 7 = “Better student health.” Category 8 = “Awards/prizes.” Category 9 = “After-school clubs.” Category 10 = “Hands-on learning.”

FIGURE B.7

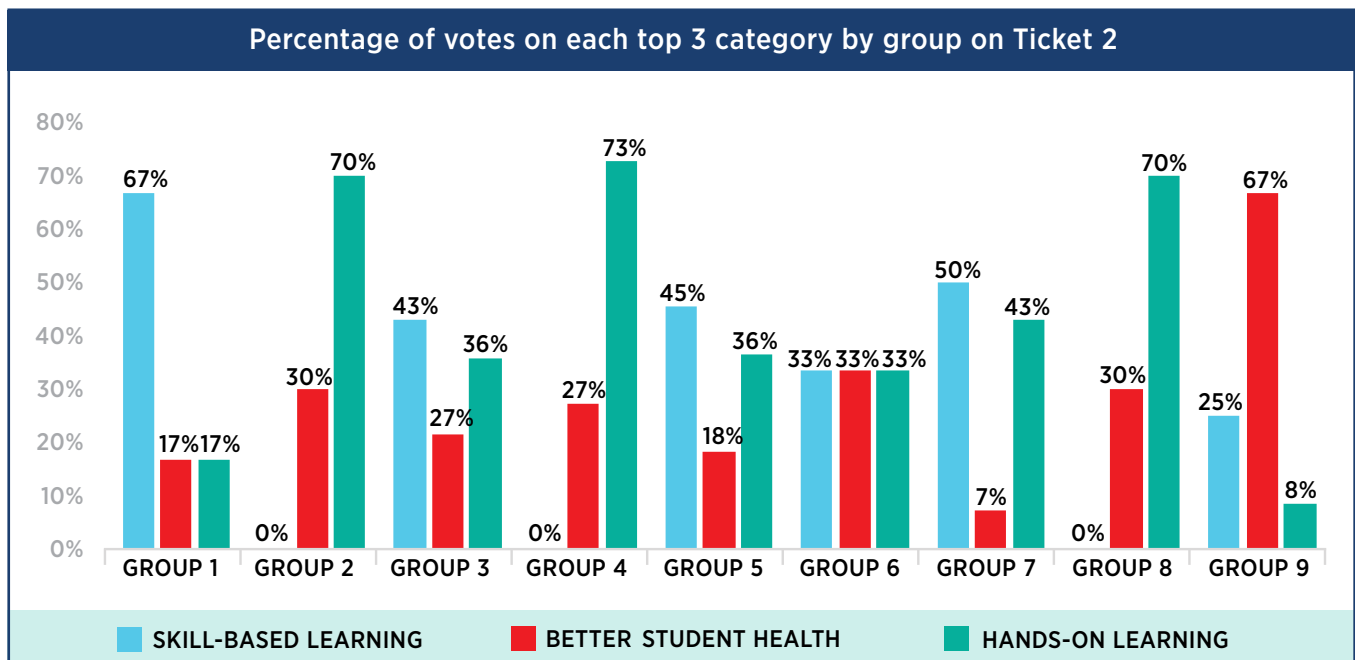
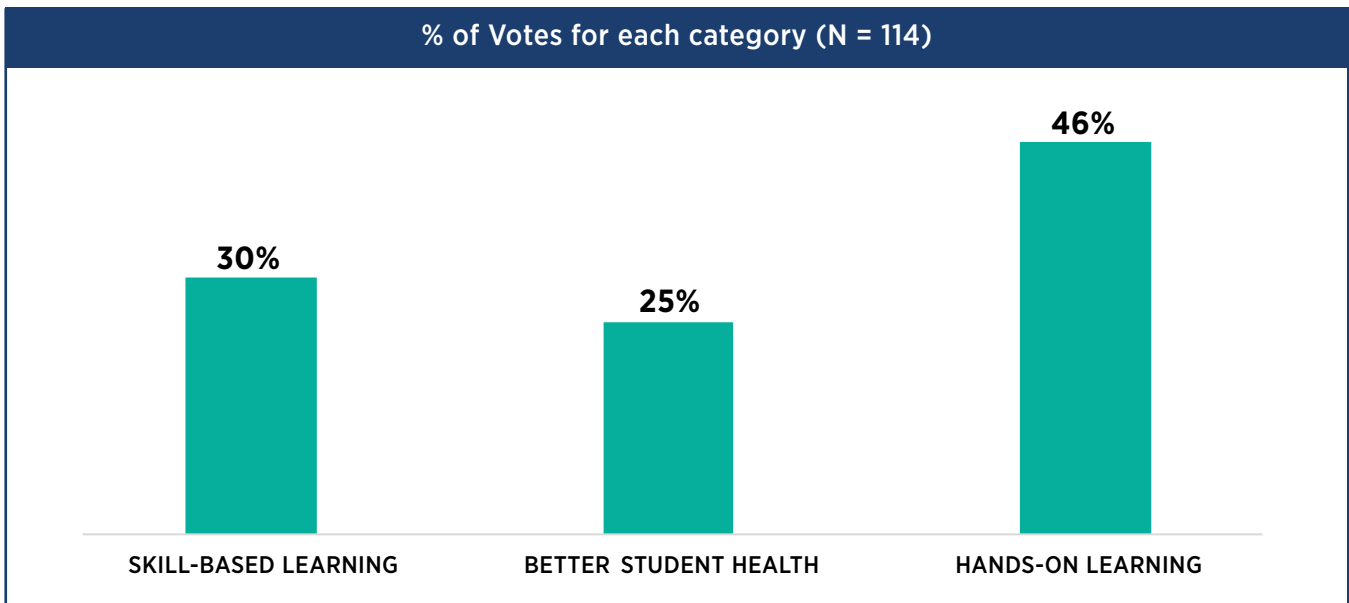




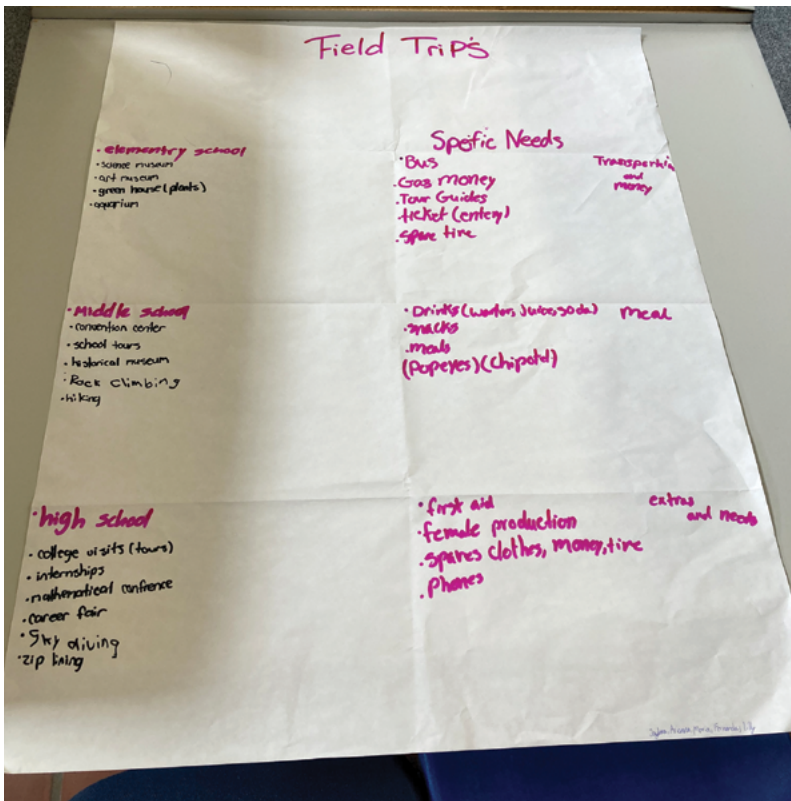
FIGURE B.8



APPENDIX C

FIGURE C.1

An example of one of plans created by a group of delegates





For more information: paved.brownu@gmail.com