The background is a collage of images. On the left, there are several stacks of books, one in purple and one in green. On the right, there is a large, semi-transparent clock face. The clock is yellow and red, with black hands and numbers. The overall background is divided into colored quadrants: purple (top-left), pink (top-right), green (bottom-left), and yellow (bottom-right).

The Henry Middle School Paradox

By Project VOYCE

They've been called the "Can but Won't"
group

They could if we would...

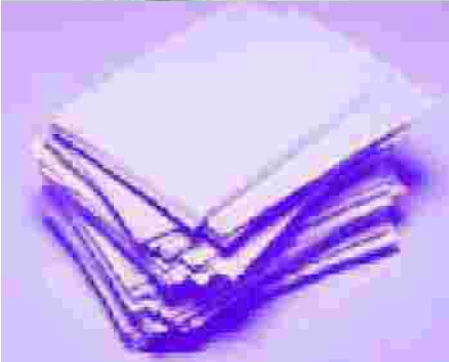
What is Project VOYCE?

- n The acronym **VOYCE** stands for:
 - | **V**oices **O**f **Y**outh **C**hanging **E**ducation

- n Our mission is to make youth voice real in school renewal through
 - | Action Research
 - | Leadership Development
 - | Community Partnerships

- n We believe that your voice gives you a choice

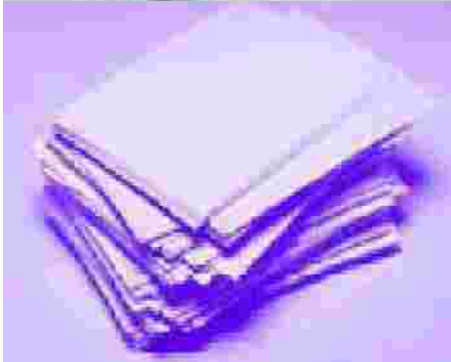
- n We promote and encourage the youth to give their opinions and speak on behalf of school reform





Overview

- n Project VOYCE was asked by the administration at Henry Middle School to help find out:
 - | Why about 36% of the students were failing 2 classes or more, while 47% were excelling
 - | *How the growing “Can but Won’t” group can become engaged in their education*



What?

n Finding out the problem

l We found that the first groups of students we worked with were considered the “Can but Won’t” group which consisted of 14 students. We met with them twice and found that:

- n The students claim that their biggest issues are:
 - l The absence of a positive teacher-student relationship
 - l The lack of support at home
 - l The lack of parent involvement within school
 - l The lack of school involvement opportunities
 - l The lack of motivation



Statistics for “Can but Won’t” Group

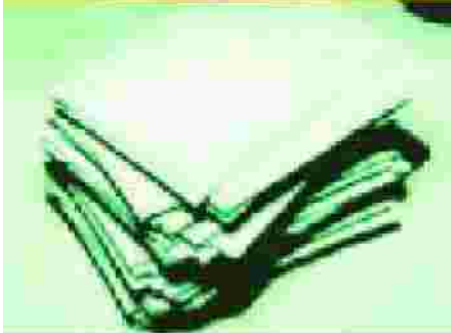
n “Can but Won’t”

- | 0% of the students were involved in after-school activities
- | 100% recognized the significance of their education
- | 71% had something negative to say about the teacher-student relationship
 - n 79% claiming that teachers were disrespectful
- | 79% were hands-on learners while 14% were visual learners and the other 7% were auditory learners
- | 36% of the students’ parents were dropouts, while another 36% of their parents dropped out but went back, and then 7% had parents that went to college (21% of the students were non-responsive)
- | 50% said that their parents didn’t care about their schoolwork, 43% said their parents actually did care (7% were non-responsive)
- | 100% of the students said that they only come to school to socialize and be with their friends

What Else?

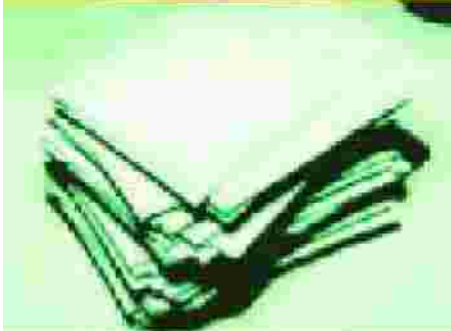
n Getting their opinion

- | We interviewed 18 “Above Average” students and came to find:
 - n They had very different opinions
 - | They enjoy coming to school not only for friends, but for teachers also
 - n They all liked their teachers
 - | They are all very, *very* involved in after-school activities
 - | They have involved parents
 - | They have educated parents
 - | Many of them are members of student council



Statistics for the “Above Average” Group

- n 94% of the students expressed positive feedback about the teachers
- n 100% of students claimed their parents were involved with their education
- n 100% of the students were involved in 2 or more after-school activities
- n 100% of the students’ parents graduated from high school and 75% graduated from college
- n 100% of students have plans to go to college
- n 83% said that were hands-on learners, 33% said they were auditory learners, and 44% said they were visual learners



Recommendations

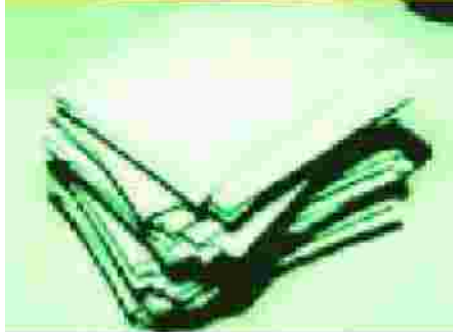
- n Have a real conversation with the students
- n Create programs in the school that promote discussions about the school between the students and teachers
- n Give youth - led programs full support both in the school and community
- n Ask students' advice on issues you are having trouble with
- n Create more programs to get students involved closer with the school and with each other
- n Create active programs that let the students make changes in their community and school
- n Show students the same amount of respect as you would show to a fellow adult
- n Use more active and hands-on learning methods



Recommendation (cont'd)

- n Make resources available to students that do not have them
- n Post student concerns in classrooms and in board meetings
- n Sponsor a committee of students to write a letter to the administration
- n Advocate student voice in society
- n Make classrooms as safe and comfortable as possible for students, create a good atmosphere
- n Raise funds for students to start an organization within the school focusing on school issues
- n Listen specifically to the opinions of students that are normally quiet
- n Let students know what you expect from them early on





Speak Out and Be Heard

Your Voice Gives You A Choice