

Quotes: THE POWER OF AUTHENTIC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

“Fostering student voice —empowering youth to express their opinions and influence their educational experiences so that they feel they have a stake in the outcomes is one of the most powerful tools schools have to increase learning.”

—*Toshalis & Nakkula*

“What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered in the introduction and implementation of reform in schools? If meaning matters to the success of teachers and principals, it doesn’t take much imagination to realize that meaning is central to student success.”

—*Michael Fullan*

“There is no better engine to pull the train of school reform than student voice, and once it picks up steam it is difficult to derail — a fact that will be unmistakable as this work unfolds.”

—*Nelson Beaudoin*

“When young people discover they can be agents of change, wonderful things happen. They start to serve in the neighborhoods, learn about public issues, create innovative solutions to tough public challenges and eventually become the voters, community project builders and leaders in our communities and nation.”

—*Alma Powell*

“If the central goal of schools were to prepare students to engage productively in a democracy, then students would be working on the concerns of their immediate and future life and on the concerns of their immediate and extended communities.”

—*Carl Glickman*

“There is something fundamentally amiss about building and rebuilding an entire system without consulting at any point those it is designed to serve.”

—*Alison Cook-Sather*

“Motivation to engage wholeheartedly in a task is reinforced when people feel they have had some choice in selecting the task/and or understand its rationale. Children, as well as adults, are more likely to resist an activity that holds little meaning or relevance for them or they feel was arbitrarily imposed. It has been my experience that if most members of a school community perceive that they have limited input into what transpires in that community, the motivation to teach and to learn will be compromised.”

—*Robert Brooks*

“There’s a radical —and wonderful —new idea here . . . that all children could and should be inventors of their own theories, critics of other people’s ideas, analyzers of evidence, and makers of their own personal marks on the world. It’s an idea with revolutionary implications. If we take it seriously.”

—*Deborah Meier*

“There are numerous reasons to believe that engaging students is a critical step in improving schools. Foremost, engagement will almost certainly improve learning outcomes.”

—*F. Jowlsowsky*

“Hope is something shared between teachers and students... [when] we can learn together, teach together, be curiously impatient together, produce something together, and resist together the obstacles that prevent the flowering of our joy.”

—*Paulo Freire*

“The natural outcome of having high expectations for youth, for viewing youth as resources and not as problems, is the creation of opportunities for them to be contributing members of their community.”

—*Bonnie Bernard*

“There are a growing number of organizations that pointedly recruit and develop young people as key players in problem solving for organizational functioning, community development, and larger social change. In these settings, young people are asked to assume responsibility for trying to improve the organizations and environments they will inherit.”

—*Karen Pittman*

“The stories that youth tell us in the meetings change the decision making in ways that are totally unexpected. They tell us things like, ‘we are the statistics,’ and ‘we are living the life so listen to what we are saying.’”

—*adult board member of a youth-serving organization*

“Youth leadership that is not only allowed but encouraged by adults leads to new discoveries.”

—*student participant in collaborative peer review*

“Kids will rise to the occasion. Give them more responsibility and they’ll take it.”

—*student participant in Collaborative Peer Review*