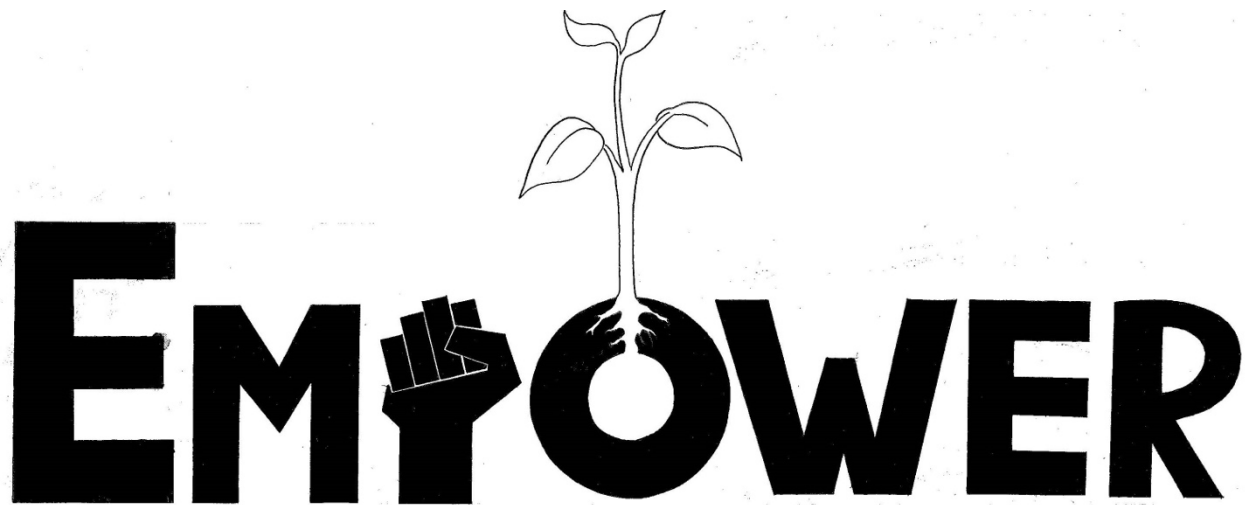


Youth Voices in Action

Youth Summit Report 2022

Created by Janelle Astorga-Ramos

Edited by Herminia Llamas



About Youth Voices in Action - VIA

Our Mission Statement

Youth of different ages collectively coming together to speak up, be heard and make a change in our education system to fit the needs of everyone.

Our Vision

We work to create student-led trainings and campaigns that will help eliminate inequities in the education system and incorporate Student Voices in Decision Making at Albuquerque Public School (APS).

Our campaigns are made by youth for youth. Learn more at YouthVoicesInAction.com

Thank you to our partners:

Learning Alliance of New Mexico

City of Albuquerque

Washington Middle School

Polk Middle School

George I Sanchez Community School

Albuquerque High School

Atrisco Heritage Academy

Tres Volcanes Community School

YUCCA

SWOP

What is the Youth Summit?

Youth Voices in Action, or VIA, has been empowering youth since 2015. VIA was founded after the Albuquerque PARCC walkouts by Albuquerque Public School students and has since been a part of building student's leadership skills in the area of social justice and specifically Education and Youth Rights. The main goal of the VIA Student Led Youth Summit is to provide students with trainings and workshops that will develop them as leaders, public speakers and students who understand the root causes of the inequities within the education system. The youth summit allows for a space where youth come together to speak openly about things they would like to see changed inside of their schools without being tokenized or ignored. VIA focuses on encouraging students, specifically students of color, who are not surrounded by academic or personal support, to be able to see their own potential and to develop the skills necessary to lead campaigns to make change in their schools because we believe those who are directly affected by an unjust education system have the ultimate power to create change. When youth are empowered, they can create changes, those changes work as a domino effect for other students to also become leaders. All they need is a space to do so. That's why VIA, as students, created the student-led youth summit.

This year, 2022 was the fifth year VIA coordinated a student-led youth summit for all Albuquerque Public Schools and the second year that the summit was virtual. VIA was fortunate enough to receive the *Equity in Albuquerque Mini Grant Program of the Office of Equity and Inclusion* and was able to stipend 3 youth interns to coordinate our summit, stipends for youth presenters and provide food for the students who attended the summit .

This year's summit theme was **EMPOWER**. Students chose this theme because we believe that every young person should be empowered to be a leader in their community. When youth have the resources and support to become leaders then they are able to create real long lasting change. Students who empower and uplift other students help our communities grow and stay safe.

WORKSHOPS

The workshops presented at the youth summit were chosen by our youth summit committee and are issues that the students believed were relevant to their educational and personal experiences. All of the workshops were led by young people ages 12-24.

The workshops that were presented were:

Food Justice (Bilingual)

This workshop was our first fully bilingual workshop in Spanish and English and taught students about Food Justice and what it means to not only have culturally based and healthy school lunches but also, where our food comes from, how it is processed in APS and why school gardens and food sovereignty is important. Students identified solutions to certain food issues and were excited to learn more about their own school gardens.

Is the education system racist/discriminatory?

Students learned the history of the education system and issues students have had to overcome throughout generations of cycles of oppression for students of color. They also were given a timeline of student advocacy and policy change that was led by young people. They also learned about ways they can create a more equitable education system for their own communities.

History of youth organizing

This workshop taught students the history of youth organizing and the different ways that students can be involved in their communities. This workshop focused specifically on how to be a community organizer and why it's important to speak up.

Civic Engagement & Climate Change

In this workshop students learned about civic engagement and how to be an advocate for climate change. The workshop taught participants the struggle New Mexico youth face around climate change and what YUCCA and other youth organizations are doing to help change policies.

WALL OF BURNING ISSUES

During the Summit we did an activity “The Wall of Burning Issues” where students write on a sticky note any issue they’re passionate about Using JamBoard. Then, we read all the sticky notes and put them in categories of campaigns that we, as VIA can work on in the future. The following table are the future campaigns students would like VIA to work on. We also included a picture of some of the other issues that were brought up.

fundraisers	Bullying	access to tech during lunch	Food in schools	school-wide activities	Fighting	snacks available to buy throughout the days	Dress code	more lunch activities	Longer lunches	longer club times
dress code	more food options	yellow water	bring back snack bars	lies/rumors	temperature in the buildings	short day once a week	more sports	more clubs	recycling bins	no masks
remodeling the schools	being able to order food	Disciplines	consistency with teachers	dirty school	metal detectors -why?	Field days (waterguns)	more sports tournaments	more teamwork excercises		
student related activities	water bottle fountains	No school fridays	Taco tuesday	more AVID strategies school wide	cultural/holiday themed foods	Spirit days	No uniforms	NO HATERS	phone days	
Freedom to chose your schedule	fake chicken	more rooms / patios	nicer teachers	more support for teachers for the students who struggle in their classes	better water	more field trips	culinary arts / food culture	more plays	Bad behavior	
longer sports seasons	longer passing periods	affordable drinks/food	bring back Home EC and Shop, More Field Trips, More community orgs working with our students	Bus trips	Food venues	sensitivity trainings? / being less sensitive	Change start/end time of school			

Area of Issue	Issue	Campaign
Funding	School Garden equipment and classes	Events and fundraising for awareness and educating community on the importance of school gardens
	Budget Cuts/How to keep away from hurting education and sports	Making a report for APS on how more effectively fund programs when dealing with budget cuts. What's important to students?
	Lack of funding for new classes/ electives	Helping to discover more funding for classes and electives or finding more effective ways to spend funds
	Lack of training for school officers	Funding trainings for officers in mental health and not using excessive force while not being racially biased
Student Rights	Suicide awareness and prevention	Workshops and discussions inside schools
	Stopping discrimination, sexism, racism, genderism etc. between students & students and students & teachers	Workshops and student forums to determine what's really going on/ More teacher trainings
	Gang violence prevention	Restorative justice measures and student forums

Area of Issue	Issue	Campaign
	LGBTQ Rights and solidarity	Workshops and student forums
	Rights for undocumented Students and protecting those right	Building awareness of classes and getting more classes involved
	Poverty, Violence and drug use	Workshops and student forums
	Stop using dress code as a form to discriminate against girls and students facing poverty	Student led school wide campaigns
	Cafeteria Food	Starting school gardens to have fresh food and holding school board accountable for the food they are serving to students
	Zero Tolerance Policies	Campaigns around restorative justice and how teachers and students can work together
	In School Suspension is not an adequate way to hold students accountable	Building awareness that students shouldn't miss class if they are minutes late etc.
	Testing	High stakes standardized tests do not reflect every students knowledge/competency. Funding should go to better use.

Area of Issue	Issue	Campaign
Mental Health	Training teachers on how to react towards mental health incidents	More support for struggling teachers
	Connecting Testing and Mental Health	Workshops/data collecting on how testing can disrupt mental health
Environment	Water Contamination inside schools	Water data and awareness
	Pollution	
	Environmental Racism	Student forums and awareness workshops
		Workshops and forums

Students also suggested the following ideas:

JamBoard Focus Points for Future Organizing

- Fundraisers
- No Misogynistic Dress Codes
- Remodeling Infrastructure
 - Temperature quality
- Bullying (6)
- Clubs
 - Longer Duration
 - More Clubs
- Food and Lunch
 - Longer Duration
 - Activities to do during lunch
 - More Food Options
 - Access to tech/equipment during lunch
 - Being able to order food from outside of campus
 - Removal of poor quality food/water
 - Price Affordability
 - More Snack Bars
 - Taco Tuesday
 - More cultural and holiday food
 - More culinary arts
 - Food Venue Options
- Freedom to change and choose schedule
- Sports
 - Longer seasons
 - More Options
 - More tournaments
- Longer Passing period
- Water Bottle Fountains
- 4 Day School Week
- More Patios and Places for leisure
- Consistency amongst teachers along with being more empathetic
- Cleaner Campus
- Home EC and Shop
- More Field Trips
- More community orgs working with our students
- Promote AVID strategies
- Short day once a week
- More Recycling Bins/Options
- Phone Days
- More Theater
- More spirit days and field days
- No Uniform
-

A huge thank you to all the schools involved!!

School

- Albuquerque High School
- George I Sanchez
- Polk Middle School
- Tres Volcanes Middle School
- Washington Middle School

Amount of Students

- 44 students
- 99 Students
- 32 students
- 15 students
- 15 students

FEEDBACK:

Students were eager to share some of their thoughts throughout this summit...

Questions From Participants	Comments From Participants
Where would Hispanics and Latinos end up in segregation? Why are metal detectors suggested for safety?	Student shared how they were suspended for defending I, this was made in regards to the zero policy system
why don't schools have more funding for specific programs that support learning for specific topics not normally talked about in school?	GIS learned that dress code was created for a way to make society "white" / assimilation
who is the school board comprised of?	I learned about racism and my favorite part was how to make the food better
Can student vote in those elections? (School Board Elections)	I liked that we talked about the problems of the schools. And I learned about the 60s and the racism taking place in that time period -Uriel Melgar
Who or what is creating an issue and how do we prevent it? (General organizing question)	

Suggestions	Criticisms
Why are standardized test so common instead of independent test per school or class that truly focus on a certain style of teaching?	Why are dress codes in place despite the fact that it mostly does not affect education?
Capstone of alternatives to the test: Senior Portfolios, Bilingual Seal Presentations.	"The struggle of budgeting issues regarding ethnic studies, having to seek help through grants and government support. A contradiction I see was there was funding for sports but not for cultural education"- Attendee
	Sometimes the system is not always in favor of the people who keep it standing

Appreciations

"Everyones opinion was amazing, I love the new ideas !!"- Attendee

I loved the first part, which I think was youth? It really made me feel a way that I don't think most students would have come to mind! -Reyna

I learned that were helping the community and its good and my favorite part was that we meet new people and new ideas- lonso

we loved the topics and the engagement activities. Thank you!

Loved that you guys asked for our opinions

I liked the workshops they were fun, I also learned many things about racism

I like how everyone was in the meeting and I learned a lot about the school

I liked that we got to talk about the school problems From millie green

Sherlee – I liked that you guys took the time to teach us thank you

samara – I liked that you guys gave us money for food

Ryan – I liked that you guys helped us learn about things and thank you

I like that we gave are thoughts on the jam board and I learned about the black panther

I enjoyed talking about school issues and ways to solve them.

I liked that we learned about school problems about how we can make it better and your presentation was really cool- isabella

I learned that there is a lot of other things I haven't learned in history, and it interests me even more to learn about how resilient people especially younger people who really went far with their goals. It really makes me feel like someone as young as me can do something so big that people would be inspired by and have kids be taught about it as well, which kinda making it history. 😊 I also learned about racism, and how strong it really is affecting colored people. -Reyna

Thank you to the City of Albuquerque Office of Equity and Inclusion for funding this project.