

2018

Teen and Police Service (TAPS) Academy Columbus



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Introduction

This report presents the outcomes of the Teen and Police Service (TAPS) Academy which is a ten week program designed to reduce social distance between the police and teens. While locally funded through the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas Juvenile and Domestic Division and supported by the Columbus Department of Public Safety, the Columbus Division of Police, Columbus



City Schools, and Franklin University, the program pairs police mentors with teens in school settings. The mentoring pairs consist of one officer to five youth. Classes are convened once a week and cover topics ranging from gang violence and bullying to goal setting and drug prevention.



The TAPS Academy day is broken into three sections including 1) subject presentation, 2) small group sessions, and 3) reflection session. During the subject presentation, subject matter experts facilitate an interactive dialogue on the day's topic using group activities, videos, and discussions.

During the small group session, youth break into small groups to engage in a mentor/mentee dialogue about the day's topic with their officer mentors. During this time, rapport is established and communication is used to dismantle negative beliefs about the police and youth. During the reflection session, youth return from their breakout groups to present their findings and

conclusions to the larger group. At the conclusion of the program, youth participate in a graduation ceremony where they are provided with a medal and a certificate of completion for participating in the program.



(Wedgewood Middle School TAPS Academy Graduation)

Spring 2018

The Teen and Police Service (TAPS) Academy was held at Columbus Africentric Early College and Wedgewood Middle School from February 6, 2018 through April 19, 2018. Students were administered a 22 item survey that measured social distance on a four point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). Surveys were administered during week 1 (pre-test) and week 10 (post-test) of the program. This report provides a summary of the pre-test and post-test survey results.

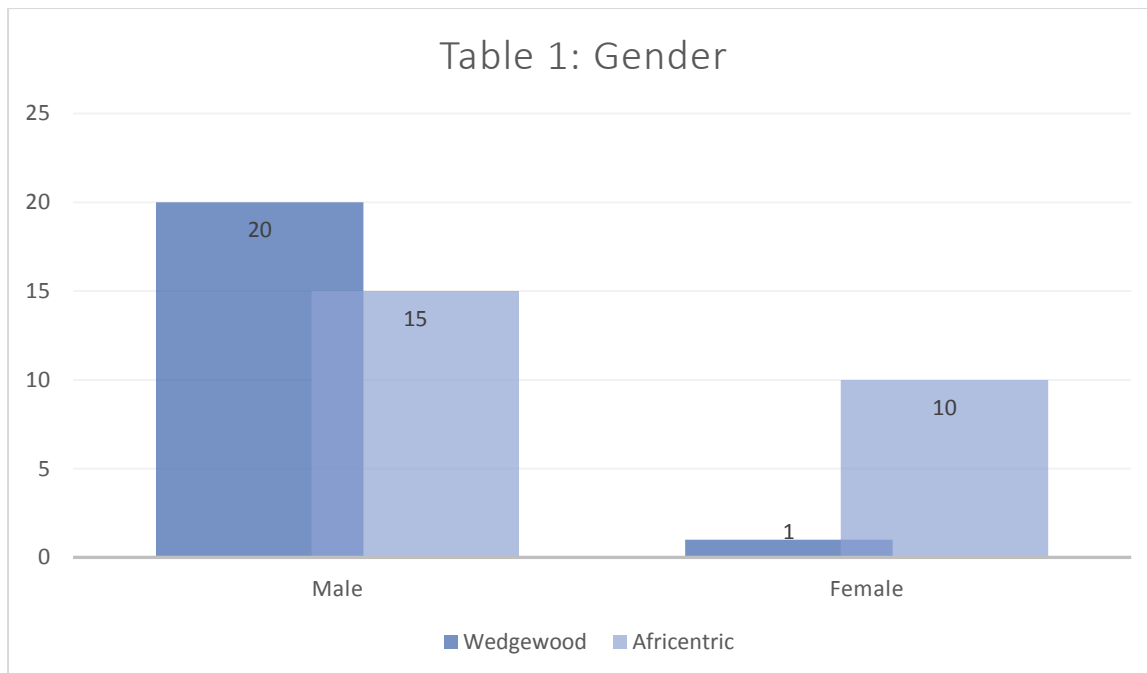
Results

While there were no statistically significant changes from pre-test to post-test, results from the survey indicate youth who participated in the TAPS program had slightly more positive perspectives of the police at the conclusion of the program than they did at the beginning of the program. Results indicate that the TAPS Academy is a promising program for reducing social distance between teens and the police.



(Director Robert Stewart Welcomes Students to TAPS)

Twenty-one youth completed pre-test and post-test surveys at Wedgewood Middle School. Twenty-five youth completed pre-test and post-test surveys at Columbus Africentric Early College. Majority of the student participants were male ($n=77\%$) (see Table 1).



Additionally, the aggregate average age of students participating in the program was 12.81, with students at Wedgewood Middle School having an average age of 13.25 and students at Columbus Africentric Early College having an average age of 12.48 (See Table 2).

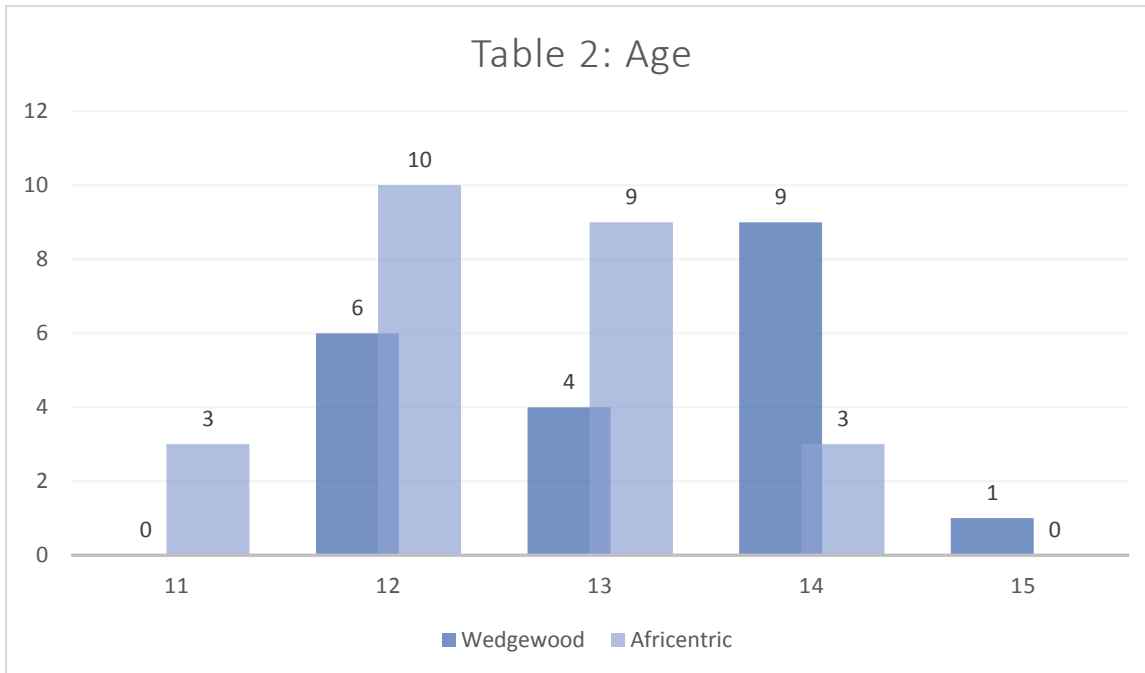
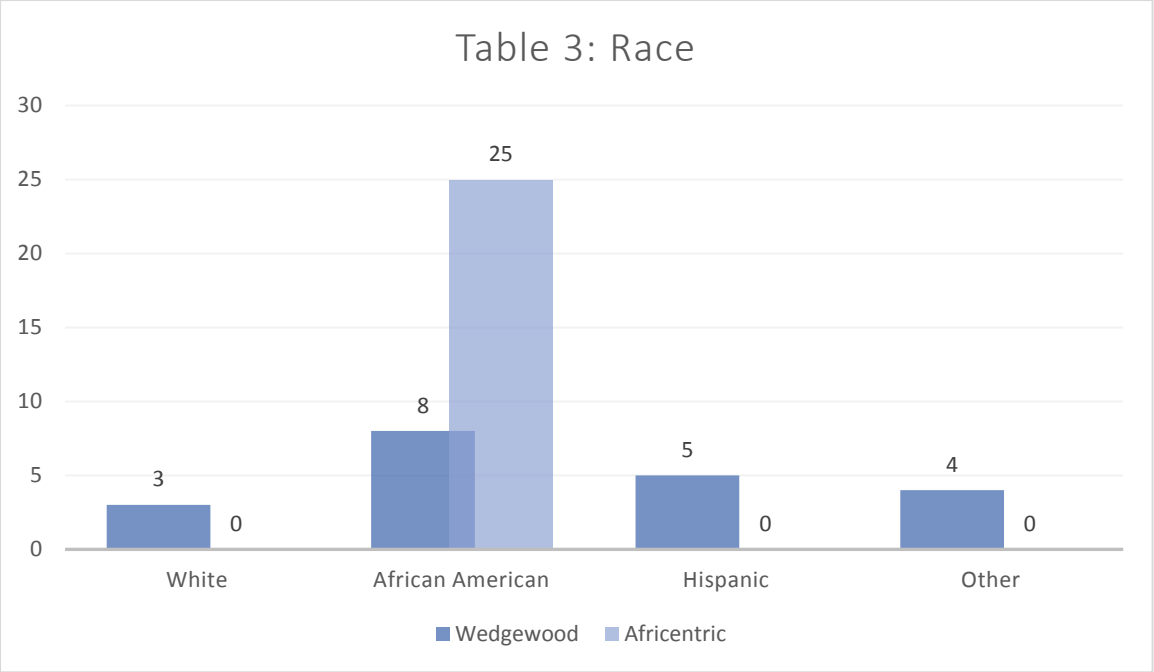
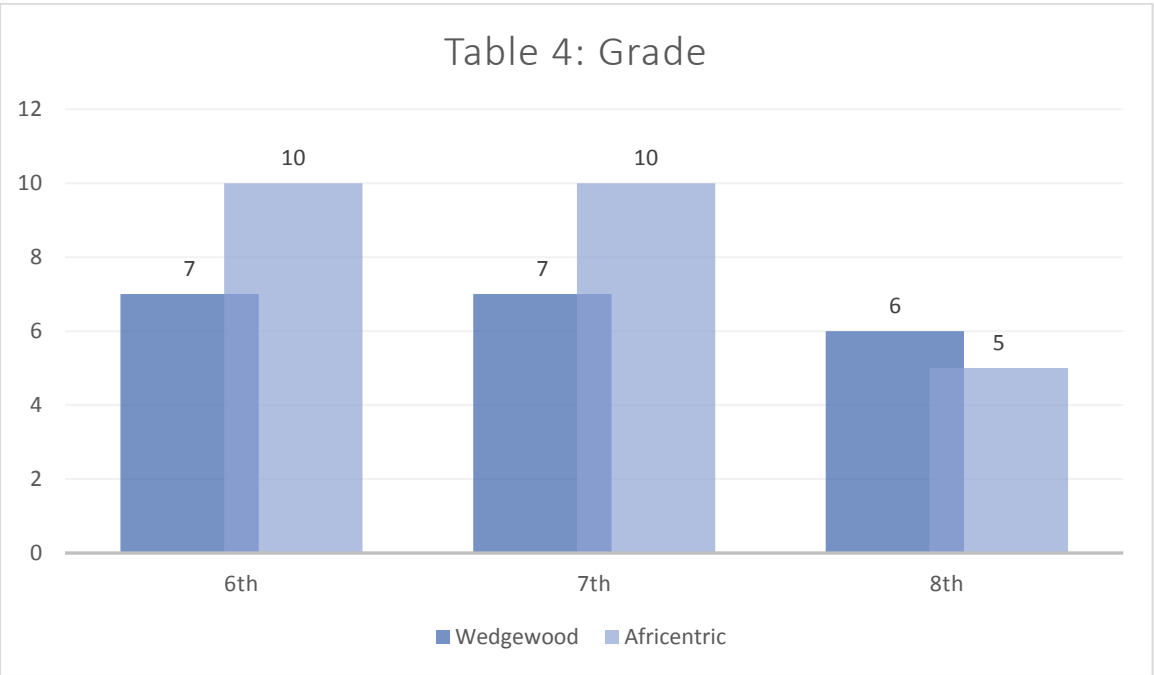


Table 3).

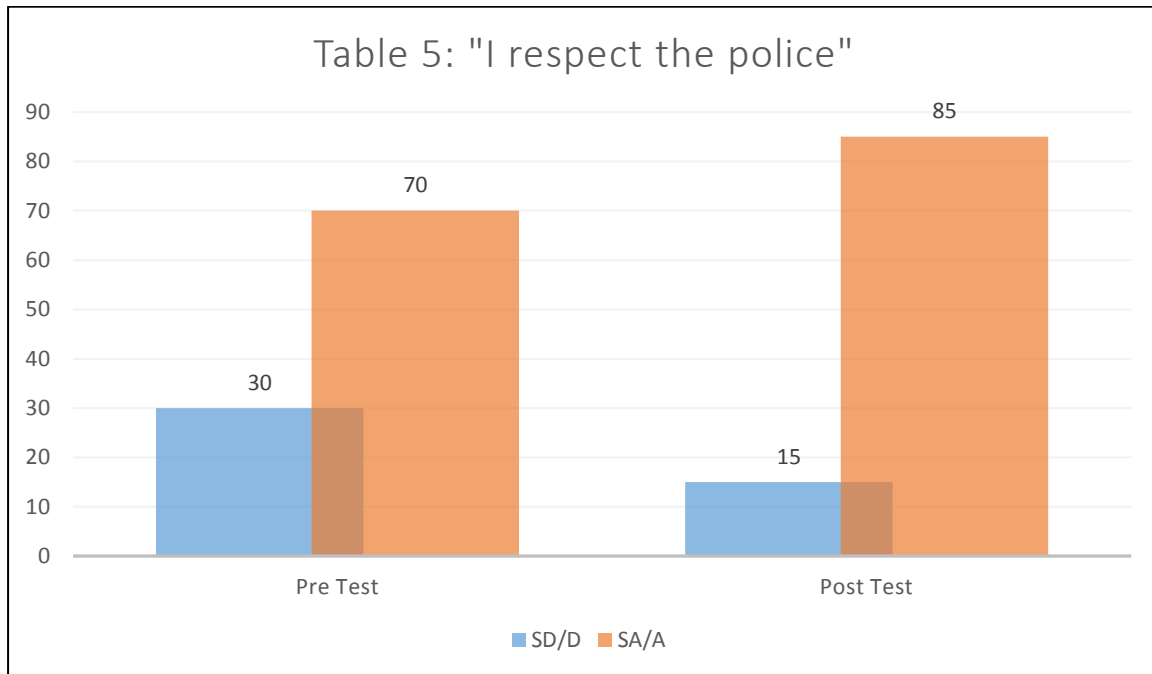
All of the students who participated in the TAPS Academy at Columbus Africentric Early College identified as African American. However, racial demographics of participants varied at Wedgewood Middle School to include White, African American, Hispanic/Latino, and other (See



Students participating in the TAPS Academy were in grades 6th through 8th (see Table 4).

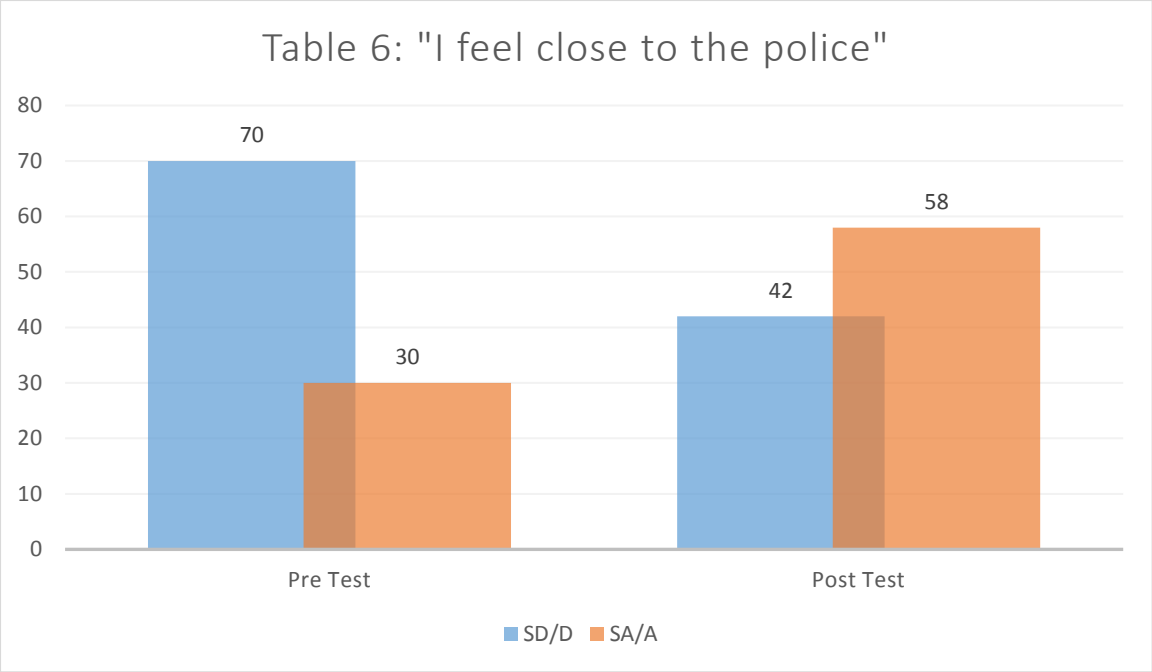


Students were administered a pre-test and a post-test to assess social distance. The results below detail their responses on the survey. Table 5 indicates there was a 15% increase of students reporting that they respect the police at the conclusion of the program.



*“I am really
going to miss
this program...”*

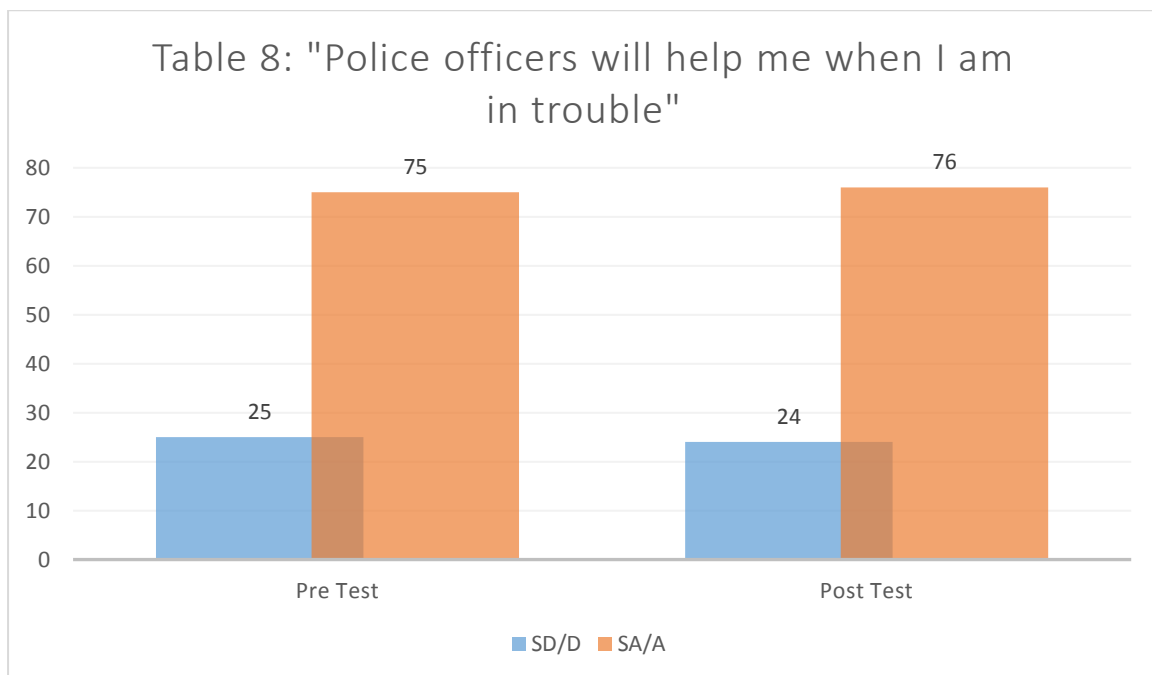
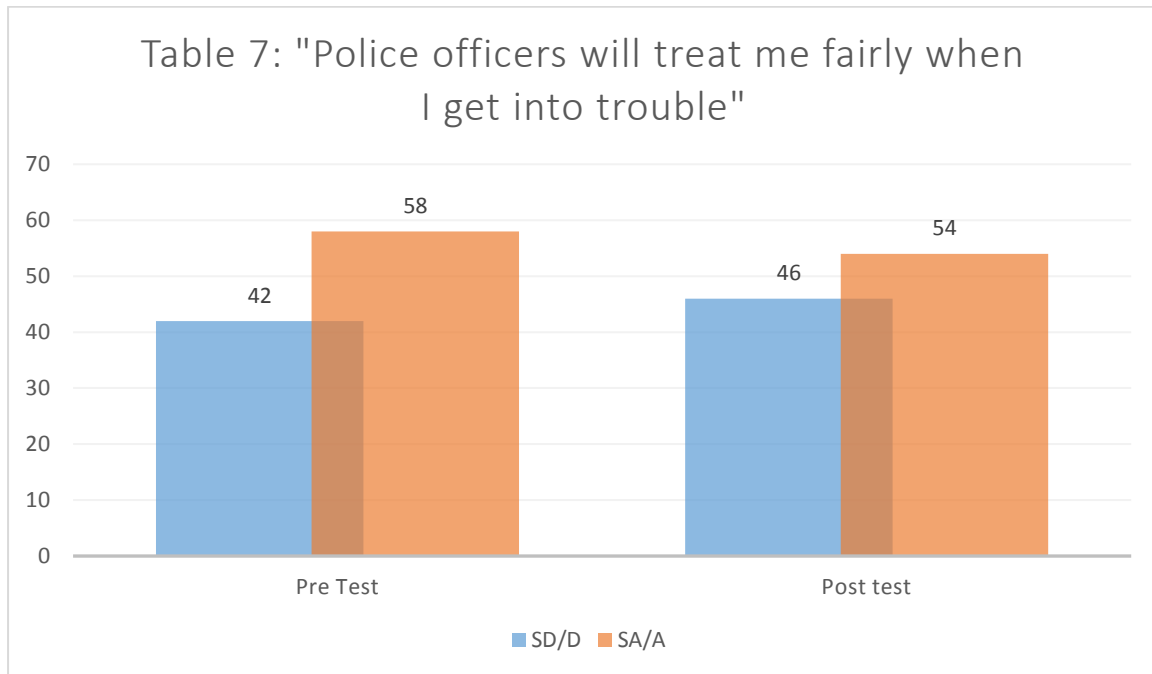
– C. Gibson, TAPS Spring 2018



There was a 28% increase from pre-test to post-test of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I feel close to the police” (See Table 6).

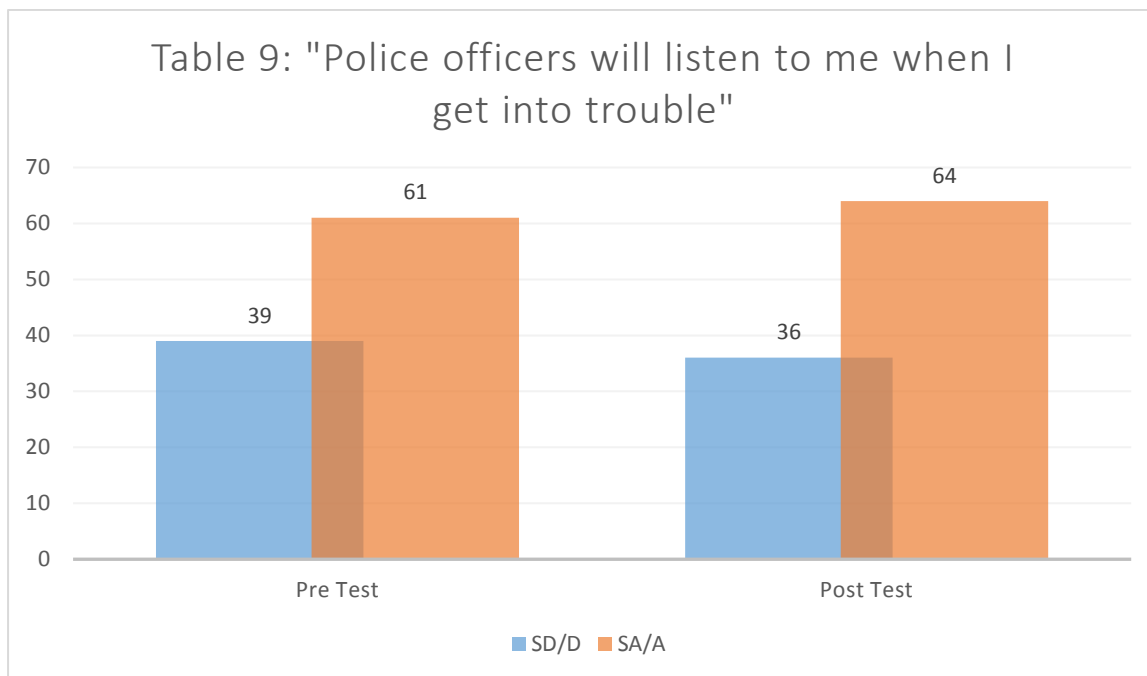


Table 7 and Table 8 indicate little to no improvement from pre-test to post-test on participant's belief that police officers will treat them fairly and/or help when they are in trouble. This is an area that future TAPS Academies can explore further.



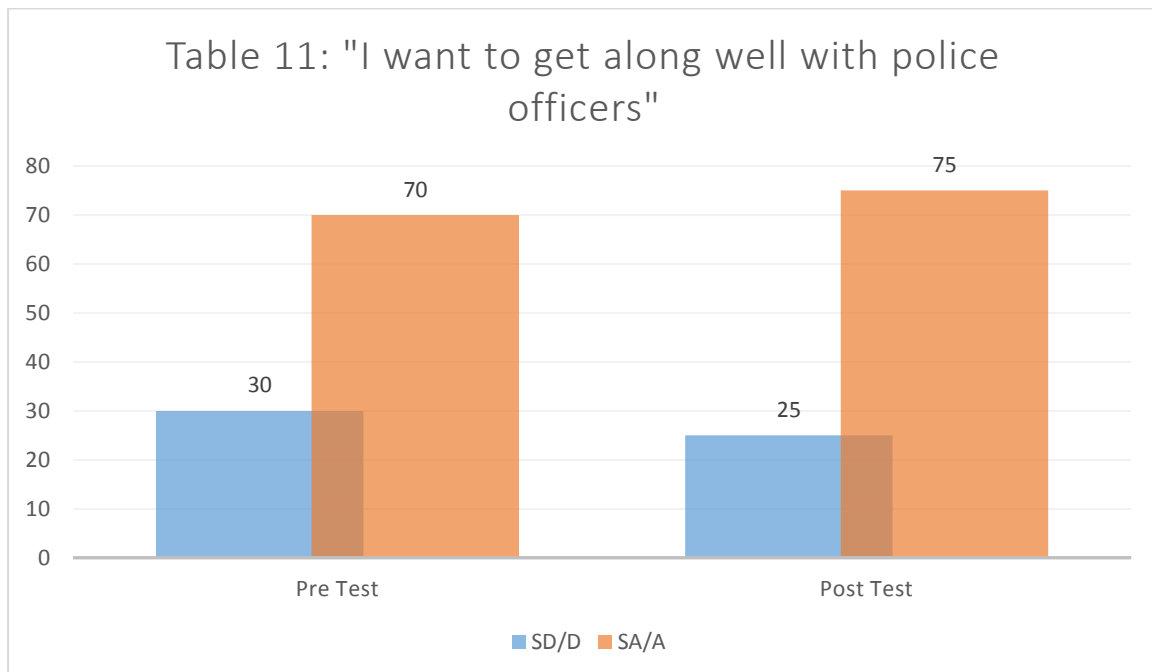
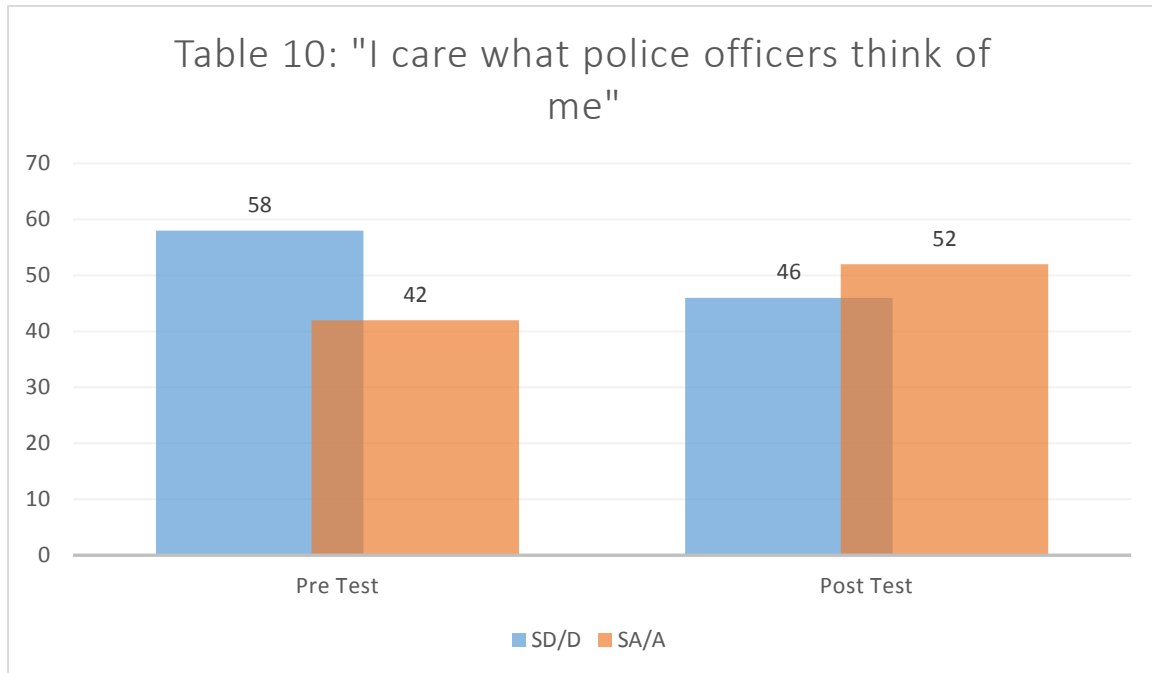


(Sgt. Cartwright from the K-9 unit presents to the students at Wedgewood Middle School)



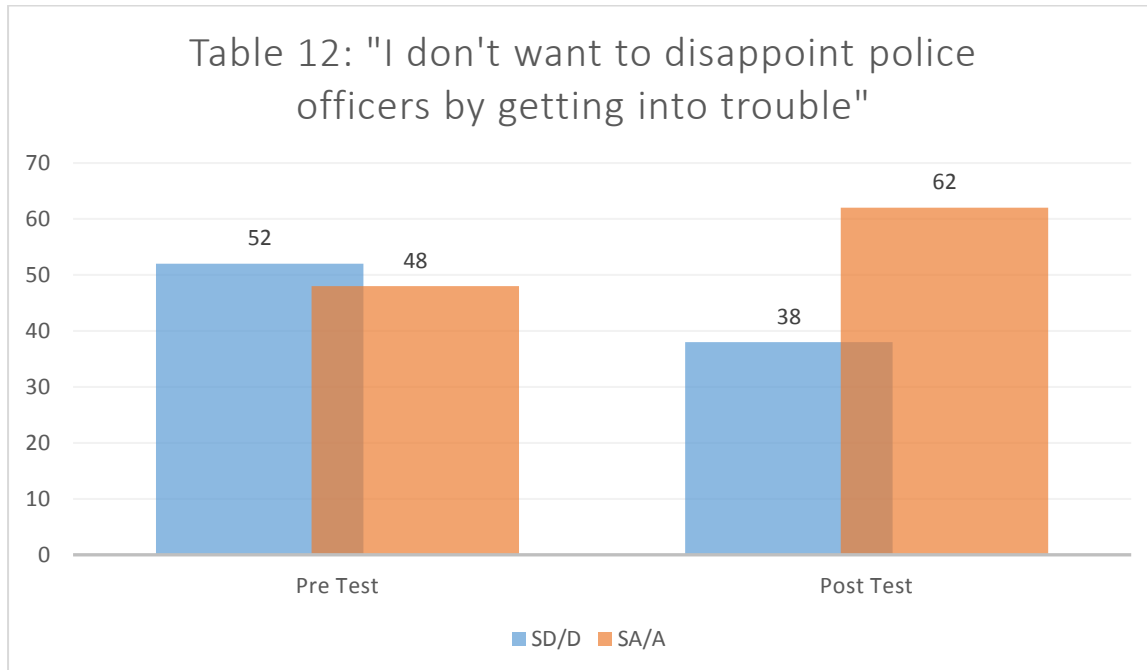
There was a 4% increase from pre-test to post-test among students who believed police officers will listen to them when they get into trouble (See Table 9).

Table 10 indicates a 10% increase in youth who care what officers think of them and Table 11 indicates a 5% increase in youth who want to get along well with police officers (See Table 10 and Table 11).



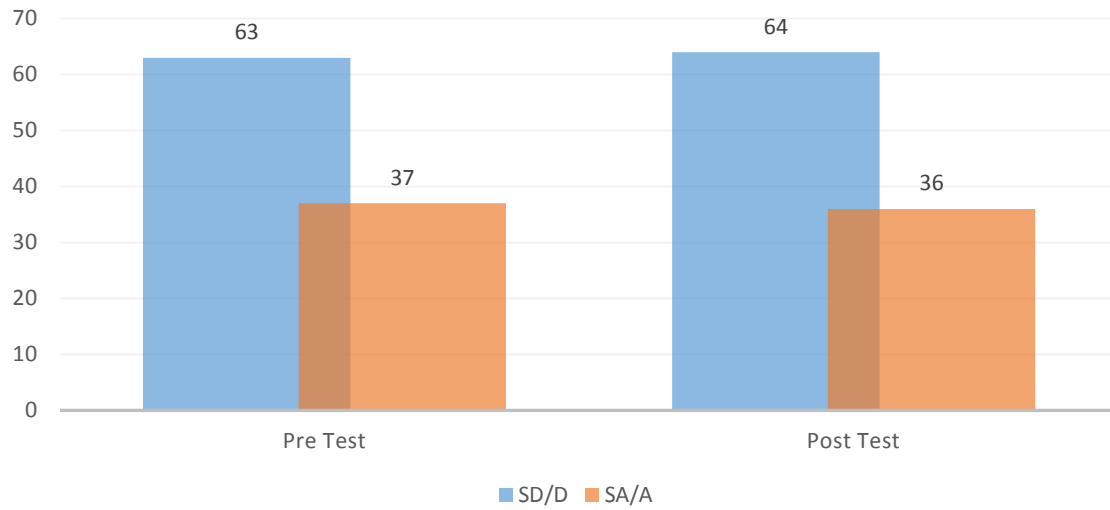


There was a 14% increase from pre-test to post-test among students who indicated they did not want to disappoint police officers by getting into trouble (See Table 12).

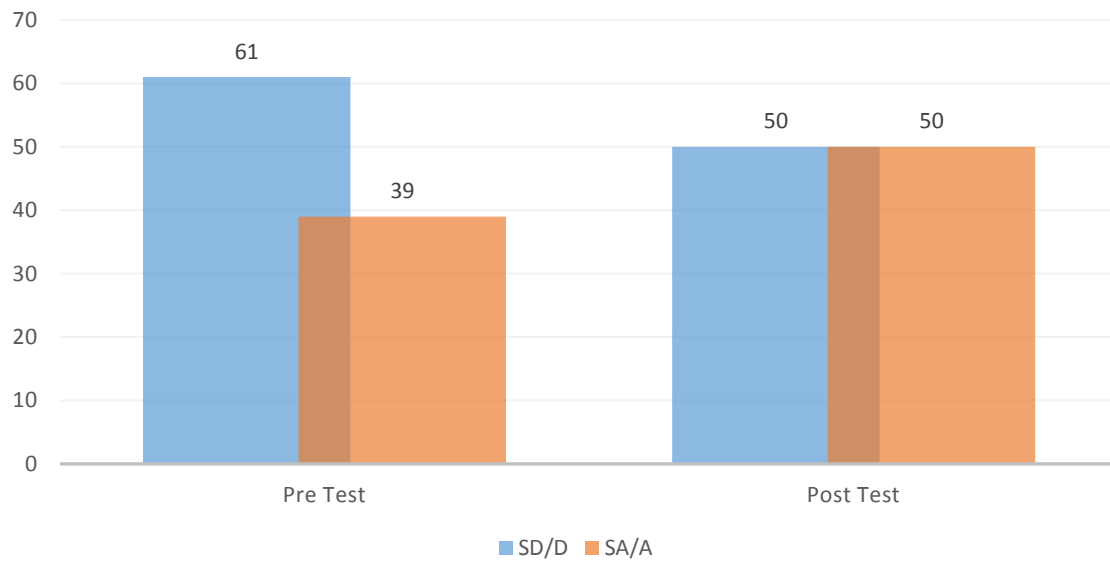


Although some students reported feeling connected to the police in their community, most reported that they did not feel connected to the police in their community (See Table 13). Results could be due (in part) to the fact that TAPS officer mentors do not live in the communities of their student mentees at Wedgewood Middle School and Columbus Africentric Early College.

Table 13: "I feel connected to the police in my community"



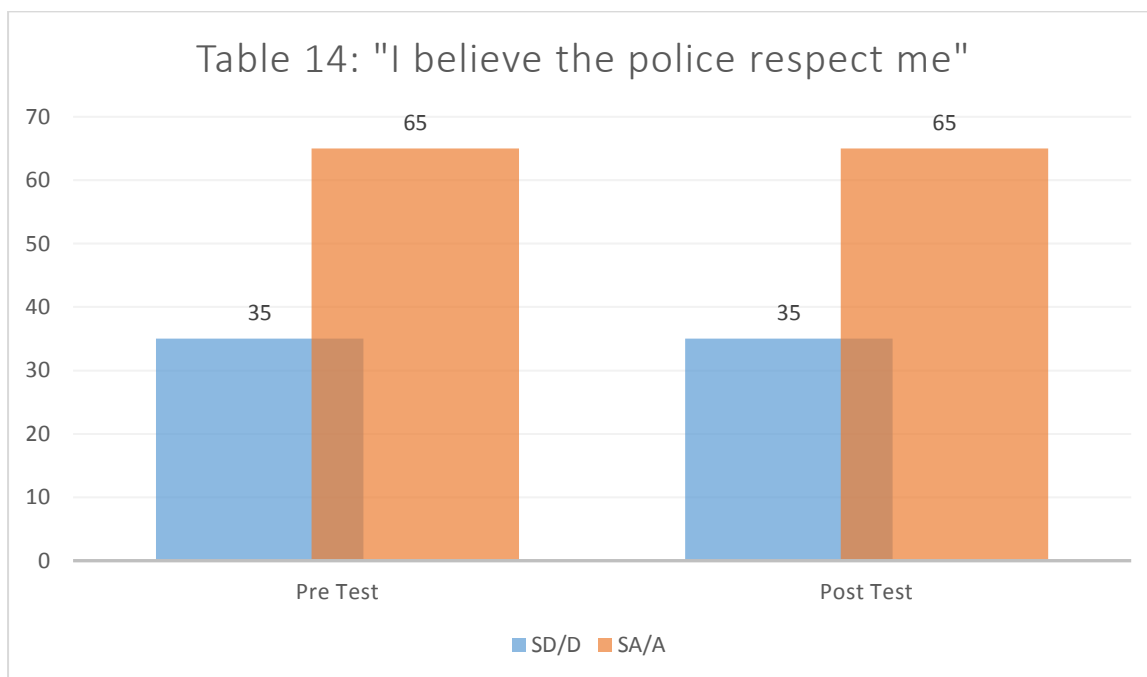
"I get nervous around the police"



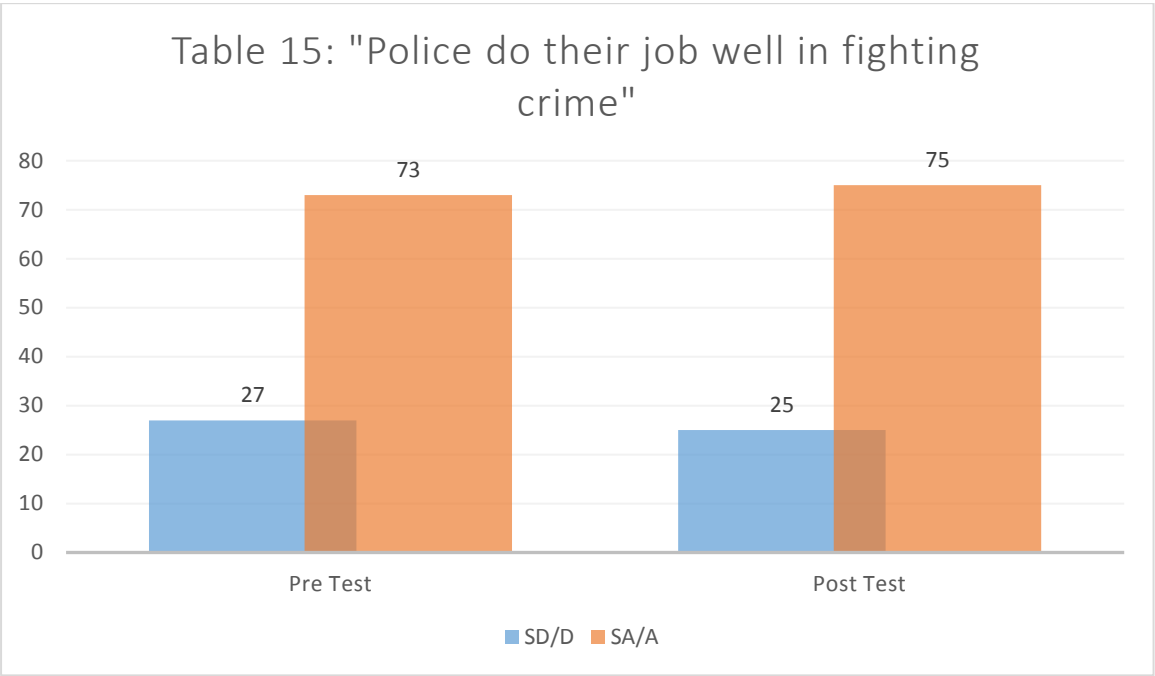


(Missing pieces exercise at Wedgewood Middle School)

Majority of students believe the police respect them (See Table 14).

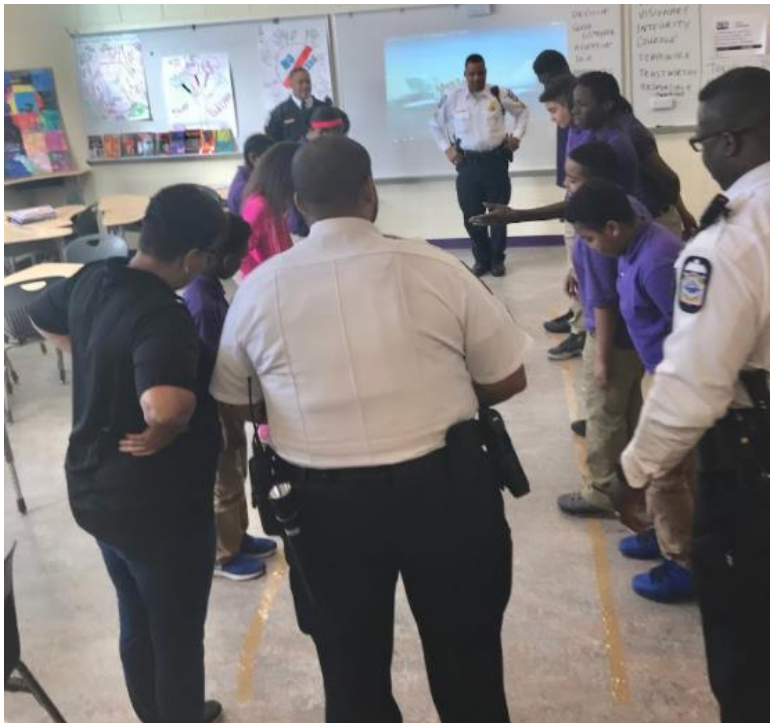
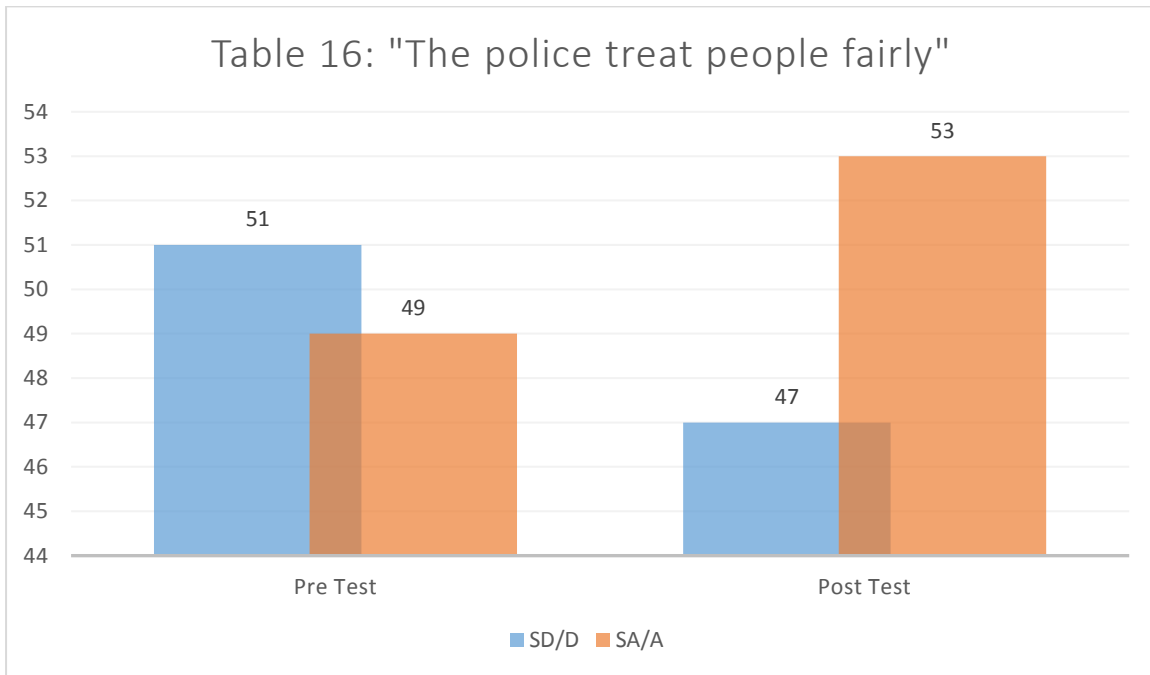


Most students also believe the police do their job of fighting crime well (See Table 15).

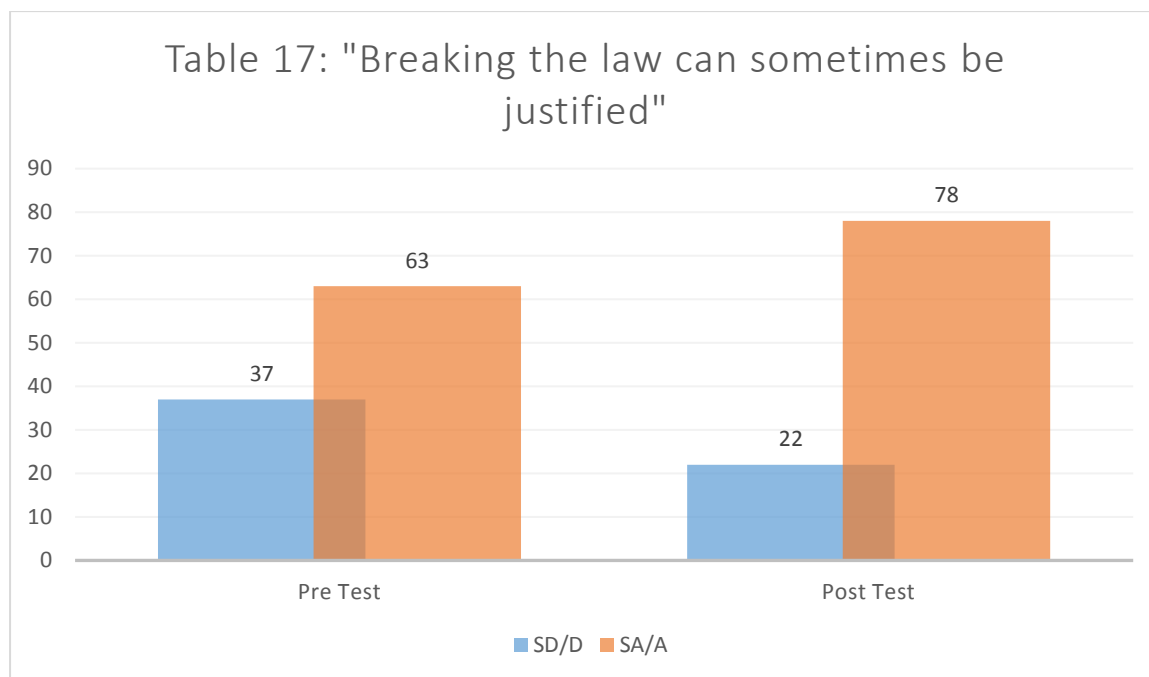


(Students at the Wedgewood TAPS Academy graduation)

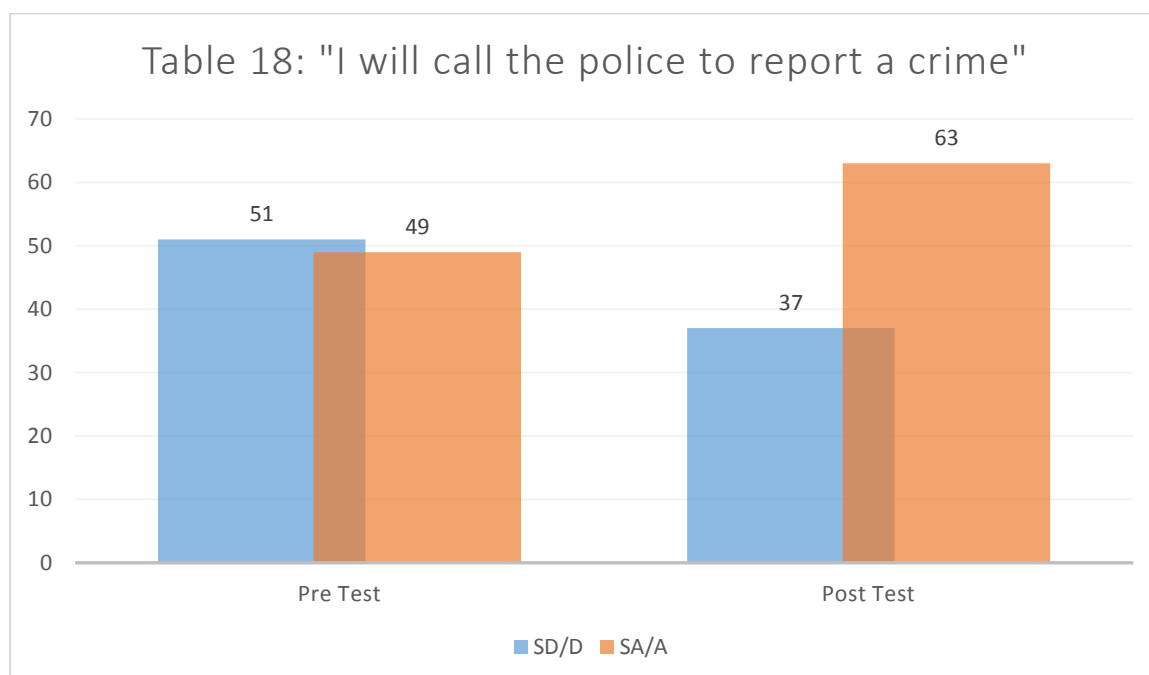
There was a 4% increase from pre-test to post-test among students who believe the police treat people fairly (See Table 16).



(Team building exercise at the Columbus Africentric Early College TAPS Academy)



Although several students reported that breaking the law can sometimes be justified (See Table 17), there was a 14% increase in the number of youth who indicated they would call the police to report a crime (See Table 18).





There was also a slight increase in the number of youth who indicated they would call the police to report a suspicious activity (See Table 19) and who would call and give the police information to help solve a crime (See Table 20).

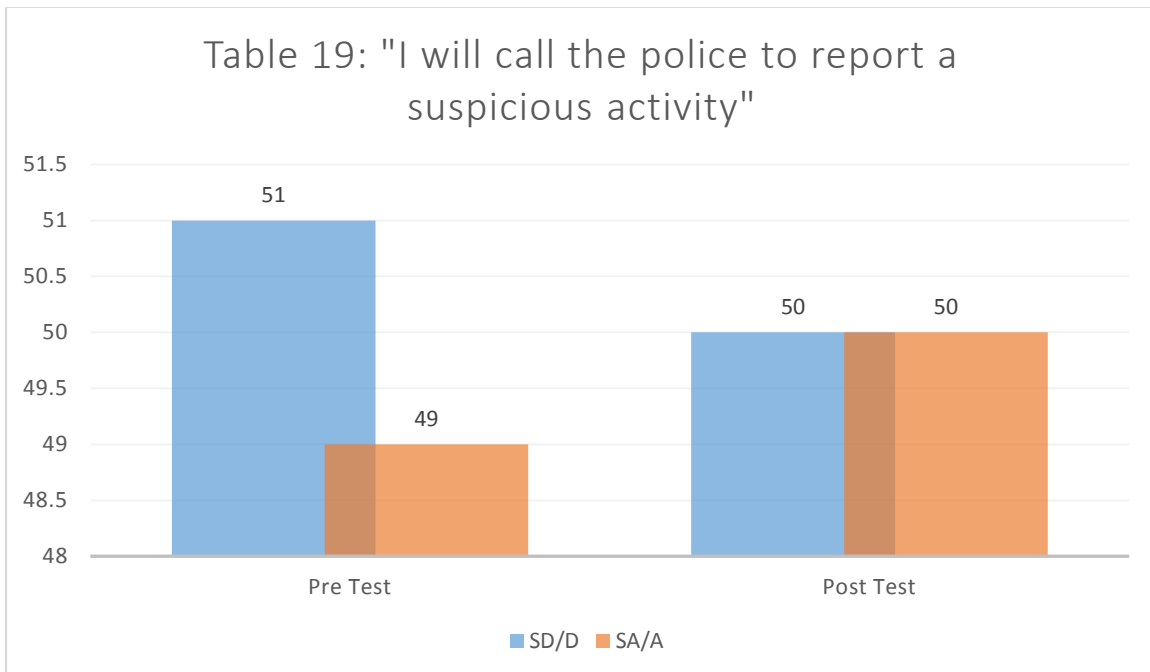


Table 20: "I will call and give the police information to help solve a crime"



There was a 5% increase in the number of youth who would volunteer in police activities to prevent crime (see Table 21).

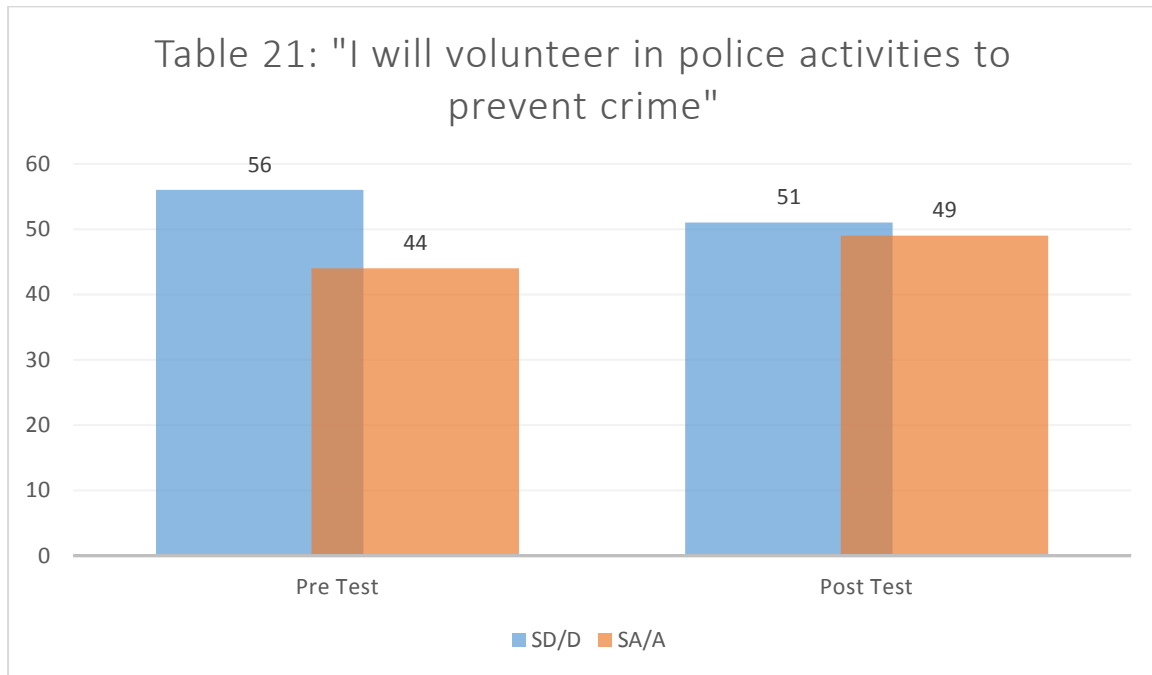


Table 22 and Table 23 reflect students' knowledge of compliance on the street. From pre-test to post-test, there was an 8% increase in the number of students who would accept the decision of police even if they think they are wrong, and an 11% increase in the number of students who would do what police tell them to do even if they do not like the way they are



treated. Responses reflect the students' knowledge of their ability to report incidents to internal affairs, which many did not know prior to their involvement in the TAPS Academy.

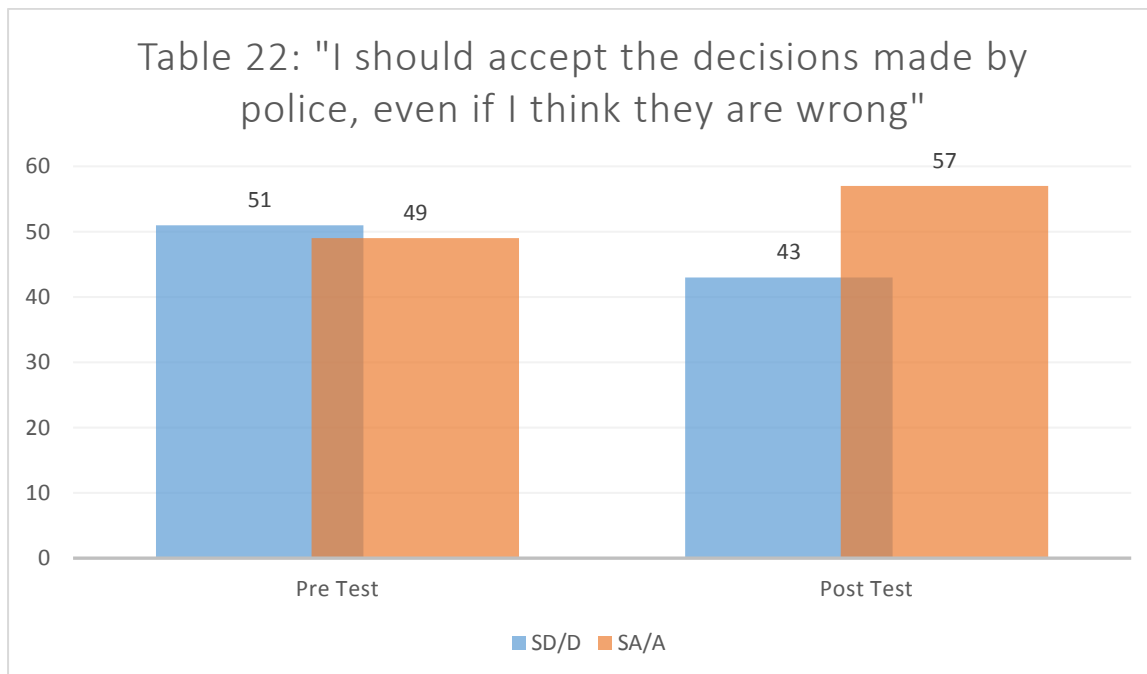
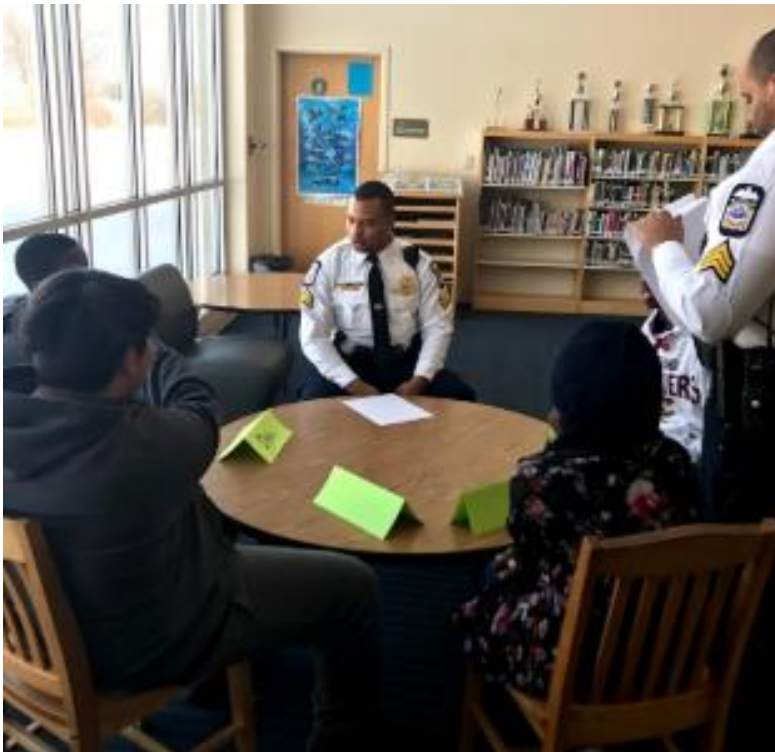
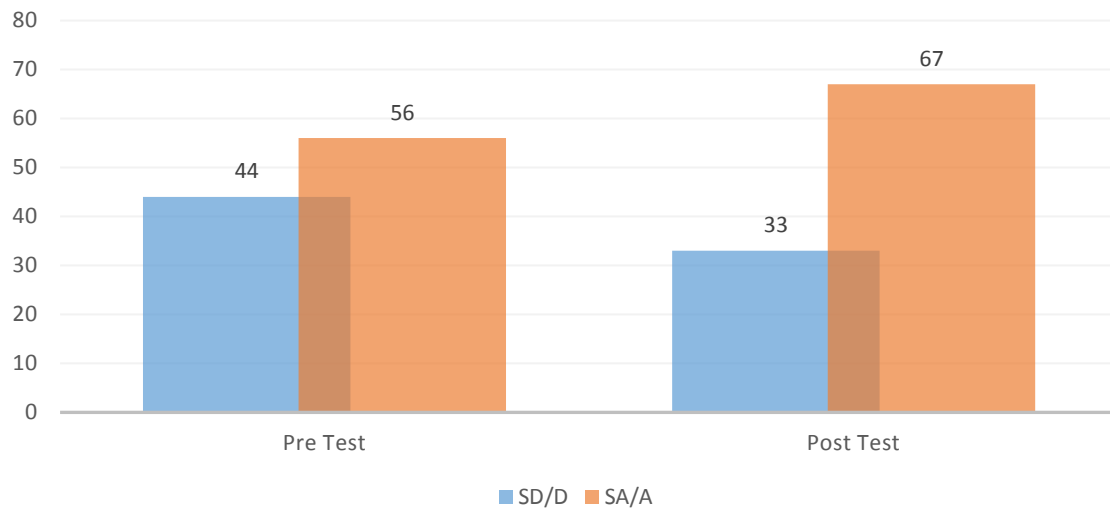


Table 23: "I should do what police tell me to do, even if I do not like the way they treat me"



The last two survey questions focus on the importance of obeying and following the law. Students indicate a slight increase from pre-test to post-test on their belief of obeying the law (+5%) and following the law (+2%) (See Table 24 and Table 25).

Table 24: "People should obey the law even if they think its not right"

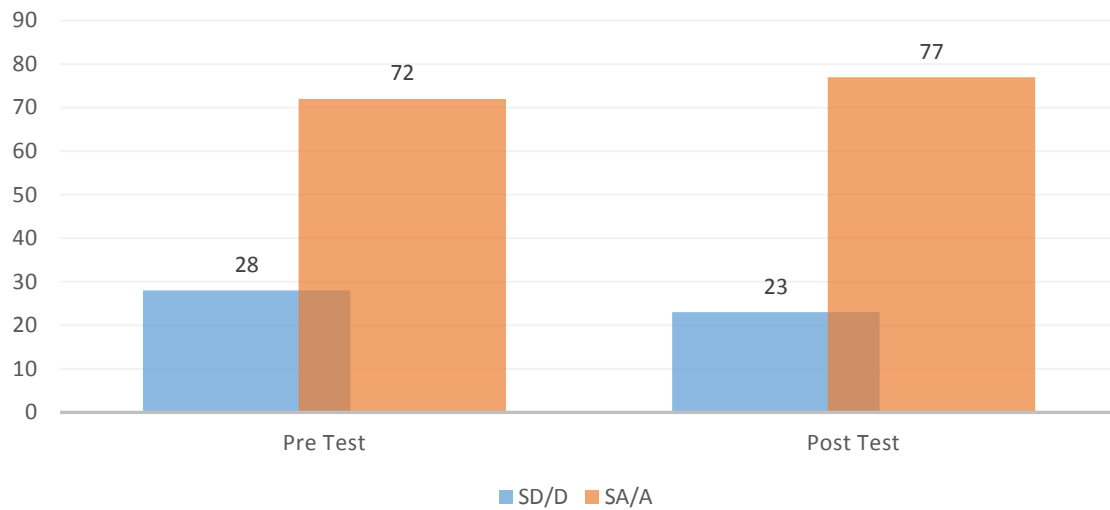
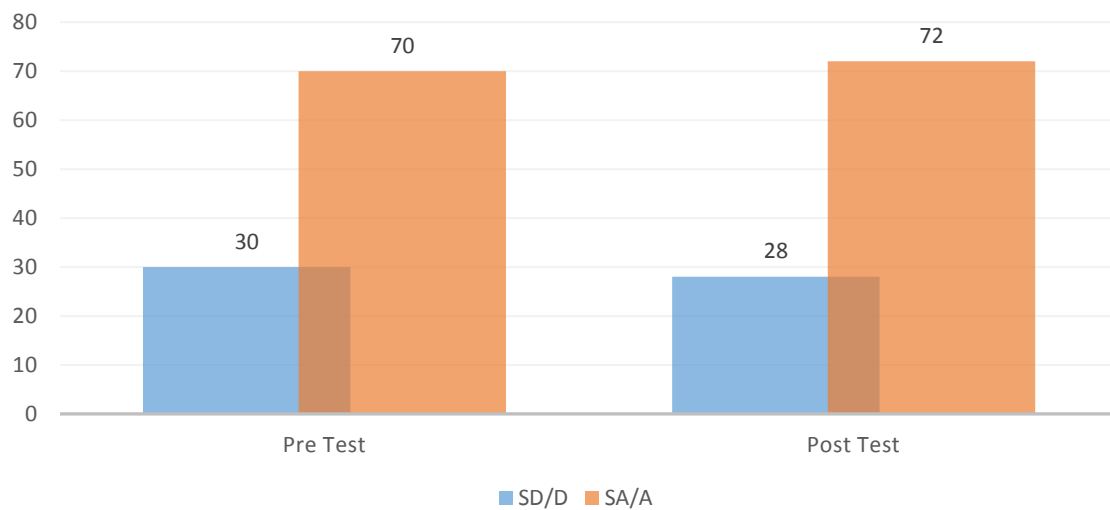


Table 25: "I always try to follow the law, even if I think its wrong"





(Columbus Africentric Early College TAPS Academy graduation)

Disaggregated Results

In addition to the aggregate results presented above, survey results for each TAPS Academy (Wedgewood Middle School and Columbus Africentric Early College) are presented below. Like the aggregate results, there were no statistical differences in survey responses from pre-test to post-test but, there were percentage increases indicating the TAPS Academy is a promising program for reducing social distance between teens and the police (See Table 26 and Table 27).

Table 26: Wedgewood Middle School Pre Test/Post Test Comparisons

		Mean				% Change
		n	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
I respect the police	Pre	2.33	12	.778	.22	+10%
	Post	2.58	12	.99	.28	
I feel close to the police	Pre	2.00	12	.739	.21	+20.5%
	Post	2.41	12	.90	.25	
Police will treat me fairly	Pre	2.18	11	.751	.22	+4%
	Post	2.27	11	1.10	.33	
Police will help me	Pre	2.83	12	.718	.20	+2%
	Post	2.91	12	.79	.22	
Police will listen to me	Pre	2.75	12	.754	.21	+3%

	Post	2.83	12	.83	.24	
I care what officers think of me	Pre	1.75	12	1.13	.32	+18%
	Post	2.08	12	1.37	.39	
I want to get along well with officers	Pre	2.58	12	.90	.26	+3%
	Post	2.66	12	.98	.28	
I don't want to disappoint officers	Pre	1.91	11	.944	.28	+23%
	Post	2.36	11	.92	.27	
I feel connected to the police	Pre	1.75	12	.96	.27	+9%
	Post	1.91	12	.90	.25	
I get nervous around the police	Pre	2.17	12	1.33	.38	+11%
	Post	2.41	12	1.31	.37	
I believe the police respect me	Pre	2.42	12	.99	.28	+9%
	Post	2.66	12	1.07	.30	
The police do their job well in fighting crime	Pre	2.42	12	.99	.28	+24%
	Post	3.00	12	.85	.24	
The police treat people fairly	Pre	2.17	12	.83	.24	+15%
	Post	2.50	12	.90	.26	
Breaking the law can sometimes be justified	Pre	2.50	12	.90	.26	+23%
	Post	3.08	12	.51	.14	
I will call the police to report a crime	Pre	2.17	12	1.03	.29	+15%
	Post	2.50	12	1.08	.31	
I will call the police to report suspicious activity	Pre	2.00	12	.85	.24	0%
	Post	2.00	12	1.04	.30	
I will call and give the police information to solve a crime	Pre	1.83	12	1.03	.29	+18%
	Post	2.16	12	1.11	.32	
I will volunteer in police activities to prevent crime	Pre	2.17	12	.93	.27	-4%
	Post	2.08	12	.99	.28	
I should accept the decision made by police even if I think they are wrong	Pre	2.33	12	.98	.28	+7%
	Post	2.50	12	1.00	.28	
I should do what police tell me to do even if I do not like the way they treat me	Pre	2.08	12	.99	.28	+27%
	Post	2.66	12	1.07	.30	
People should obey the law even if it goes against what they think is right	Pre	2.42	12	.99	.28	+20%
	Post	2.91	12	.90	.25	
I always try to follow the law even if I think it's wrong	Pre	2.50	12	1.08	.31	+13%
	Post	2.83	12	1.11	.32	

Table 27: Africentric Pre Test/ Post Test Comparisons

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	% Change
I respect the police	Pre	3.09	22	.52	.11	+5%
	Post	3.27	22	.45	.09	
I feel close the police	Pre	2.43	21	.67	.14	+9%
	Post	2.66	21	.73	.15	
Police will treat me fairly	Pre	2.86	22	.56	.11	-6%
	Post	2.68	22	.77	.16	
Police will help me	Pre	3.14	21	.47	.10	+4%
	Post	3.28	21	.56	.12	
Police will listen to me	Pre	2.86	21	.79	.17	+1%
	Post	2.90	21	.76	.16	
I care what officers think of me	Pre	2.73	22	.98	.21	-8%
	Post	2.50	22	.91	.19	
I want to get along well with officers	Pre	3.14	22	.64	.13	+2%
	Post	3.22	22	.52	.11	
I don't want to disappoint officers	Pre	2.91	22	.81	.17	-3%
	Post	2.81	22	.79	.16	
I feel connected to the police	Pre	2.48	21	.87	.19	+3%
	Post	2.57	21	.92	.20	
I get nervous around the police	Pre	2.18	22	.95	.20	+12%
	Post	2.45	22	1.05	.22	
I believe the police respect me	Pre	2.95	22	.78	.16	-4%
	Post	2.81	22	.73	.15	
The police do their job well in fighting crime	Pre	3.00	22	.75	.16	0%
	Post	3.00	22	.81	.17	
The police treat people fairly	Pre	2.64	22	.65	.14	0%
	Post	2.64	22	.65	.14	
Breaking the law can sometimes be justified	Pre	2.73	22	.70	.15	+%
	Post	2.86	22	.88	.18	
I will call the police to report a crime	Pre	3.00	21	.70	.15	-6%
	Post	2.80	21	.92	.20	
I will call the police to report suspicious activity	Pre	2.77	22	.75	.16	0%
	Post	2.77	22	.97	.20	
I will call and give the police information to solve a crime	Pre	2.73	22	.70	.15	-3%
	Post	2.63	22	.90	.19	

I will volunteer in police activities to prevent crime	Pre	2.68	22	.78	.16	+1%
	Post	2.73	22	.88	.18	
I should accept the decision made by police even if I think they are wrong	Pre	2.73	22	.70	.15	-1%
	Post	2.68	22	.77	.16	
I should do what police tell me to do even if I do not like the way they treat me	Pre	2.91	22	.68	.14	0%
	Post	2.91	22	.92	.19	
People should obey the law even if it goes against what they think is right	Pre	3.14	22	.56	.11	-7%
	Post	2.91	22	.92	.19	
I always try to follow the law even if I think it's wrong	Pre	2.91	22	.61	.13	-3%
	Post	2.81	22	.58	.12	



(Wedgewood Students hugging TAPS Coordinator Yvonne Jordan at graduation)

Qualitative Results

In addition to the quantitative results above, students were asked to describe the police on both the pre-test and post-test surveys. Their responses are below in Table 28 and Table 29.

Table 28: Wedgewood Responses

Pre-Test	Post-Test
1. They disrespect the law, they could be brutal at times, rude, and they arrest people	They can sometimes be unfair to others
2. Mean, rude, and bossy	They are cool
3. I don't really know, but they could be more reasonable	They are some bullies and they are annoying
4. Pigs	N/A
5. I don't like them and I describe them as OK people	N/A
6. Low-key mean	N/A
7. N/A	N/A
8. I describe the police by not doing their job all of the time	I would describe the police as people that have a gun and try to help people and solve crimes
9. The other side/ the OPS	N/A
10. Mean, rude, and bossy	Mean, bums, bullies
11. They treat us bad	N/A
12. N/A	N/A
13. People who don't have feelings	Someone in a uniform that arrest bad people that cause problems and stuff but are mean
14. Police officer bully me in the neighborhood, they take my lunch money	N/A
15. Police officers bully on the streets	The police are nice
16. Mean, nice, and wrong	N/A
17. They treat us bad, and probably shoot us	N/A
18.	N/A
19. I don't like them, they are mean to people, and they treat some people different	N/A
20. Cool and respectable people	N/A
21. N/A	Good
22. N/A	They are good people that protect other people

23. Police officers bully me in the street sometimes. Some of them are nice.	I respect them
24. Y'all are some punk a** n*. I don't f* with the police. Y'all some b*.	N/A
25. N/A	N/A
26. N/A	They are cool, they are wonderful people
27. N/A	Not all police lie to us but some police will give you time to explain yourself

Table 29: Africentric Responses

Pre-Test	Post-Test
1. Nice people but when you do something, they can be very mean. They are nice people and they can help you with anything.	Nice people when you do good, but mean when you do bad but also can just be mean all the time but only some police officers.
2. The police are people who can help you. Most police are nice good people. If you break the law, they can kind of be mean to you because you broke the law.	The police are men and women that wear suits. They are regular people inside and outside of their suits. Some police are ok and others are not so good. Some are nice and some are bad.
3. People that put bad people in jail	I think that the police are nice but some of them are still the same.
4. People, some good, some bad	Some good, some bad.
5. White police (Don't treat people right). Black police (Cool and nice).	Sometime nice and mean and sometimes unfair.
6. I feel like the police are people who stop crimes and put people in prison. So they can try to make the world a better place.	The police are well and some people are good cops and good people
7. I would describe the police as scary because where I live the police are out there all the time. So, I really don't like the police, well some are nice and some are mean.	I feel like there are some good police and there are the bad one's but you can't look at everyone the same. They aren't that bad but where I live they don't like us out there
8. White coats, black tie, and bald or blonde mean and different	Nice
9. I describe the police as people who help citizen with different problems and also to protect them	The police are people who protect people who can't protect themselves. They also make sure people follow the rules.
10. I would describe the police as heroes at some point, but it's like they need to step their game up a little bit	I would describe the police as good people
11. N/A	I believe that the police are ok until you do something wrong or not obey there laws. the police are human's just like us

12. I would describe their face, the color of their suit, hair, eyes, and things like that	They are nice and loving people
13. I feel like the police are men/women to help and protect the community. They sometimes lose or forget what they're supposed to do. I would sum it down as protectors who lost their morals	People in an officer suit
14. They are so nice to help us	Police are big and happy
15. I would describe the police as helping out on crimes and the will to help other police officers	They are good and nice to me
16. N/A	N/A
17. N/A	
18. N/A	
19. I would describe the police as they are strong and hardworking. What they do is good for our country and helping crimes.	I would describe the police as nice individuals, especially Pierfler because he is cool.
20. N/A	N/A
21. N/A	N/A
22. Black pants, black shirt and black shoes with a gun	They are nice and show respect at all times
23. Police are helpful in certain moments and are ugly any other time	Police are nice sometimes but really crazy and always mad
24. I would describe the police as well respected men or women	The police are good people
25. The police are people who stop crimes and help with a lot of other things	The cops sometimes arrest people for no reason. Some of them are heroes, some are just mean, but I like cops because they can be funny sometimes.
26. The police sometimes treat people fairly, but sometimes they do not. I have never been in a situation with the police, so I wouldn't know how to describe them.	I don't know how I feel about police
27. N/A	Some police are nice. Others are disrespectful and rude, but most are nice.
28. N/A	The police are protective people
29. N/A	They don't care about black kids from the hood

Conclusion

While the results are promising that TAPS Academy is an effective program for reducing social distance between teens and the police, it is important to note a few distinct characteristics between Wedgewood Middle School and Columbus Africentric Early College. During the pretest, there was a significant difference in social distance between the two schools. Students at Wedgewood Middle School reported more negative feelings and perceptions of the police in comparison to students at Columbus Africentric Early College. However, during the post-test, the two schools revealed fairly similar responses that reflected more positive feelings toward police officers. Such findings indicate that Wedgewood showed greater improvement in reducing social distance from pre-test to post test in comparison to Columbus Africentric Early College. Additionally, there were racial differences between the students involved in the TAPS Academy at both schools. While students at Wedgewood were racially diverse, the students at Columbus Africentric Early College were primarily African American. Such racial differences could have confounded the results of the study. Lastly, the student populations shared different neighborhood backgrounds. While majority of the students attending Wedgewood Middle School were primarily from the west side of Columbus, students attending Columbus Africentric Early College reside in various neighborhood across the city of Columbus, and are typically bused to school from their neighborhoods. The neighborhood variations among the students participating in the TAPS Academy could account for some of the variations in the results of the study. Future studies should examine the impact of race and place on students' responses to social distance. Future studies should also include a control group to compare social distance among students involved in the TAPS Academy to students who did not participate in the program. However, despite the aforementioned areas of future study, the present study provides support that the TAPS Academy is a promising program for reducing social distance between teens and the police.