

ABACUS Program: Evaluation of the Kiwanis ABACUS Program

Prepared for
Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club

In

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Executive Summary

This report was prepared by Research Associates from the McMaster Research Shop on behalf of The Boys and Girls Club of Hamilton (Kiwanis) – a longstanding community resource centre offering a variety of educational and social support systems to local youth. The objective of this project was to assist the staff with an evaluation of the ABACUS program's three intended outcomes:

1. Improved members' attitudes towards learning.
2. Increased members' interest in/commitment to postsecondary education.
3. Increased connection to the community by having positive mentors.

ABACUS had been collecting pre- and post-program survey data to evaluate their program from 2017-2019. However, due to limitations in the data, the team was unable to draw conclusions about the program's impact. Future evaluative practices will be important to determine the program's impact and identify opportunities to improve the program. To build Kiwanis's capacity for evaluation, the Research Team created an updated online version of the survey along with an updated survey administration process for pre- and post-program assessments to help the organization collect and analyze program data from participants. In addition, the Research Team developed a focus group guide and facilitation procedures to support mixed-methods data collection, along with a guide for synthesizing quantitative and qualitative data. By coupling pre- and post-program surveys with focus groups, staff leading the ABACUS program will be better equipped to evaluate the ABACUS program.

Introduction

This report was prepared by Research Associates from the McMaster Research Shop on behalf of The Boys and Girls Club of Hamilton (Kiwanis) – a longstanding community resource centre offering a variety of educational and social support systems to local youth. Currently funded by the Hamilton Community Foundation, ABACUS is a program offered by Kiwanis each school year (September to June) to students in grades six to eight who are potential first-time post-secondary attendees at risk of not graduating high school. The program provides academic support, mentorship opportunities, and community involvement opportunities to engage students in their academic journey.

The primary objective of this project was to assist Kiwanis with evaluating the ABACUS program's three intended outcomes:

1. Improved members' attitudes towards learning.
2. Increased members' interest in/commitment to postsecondary education.
3. Increased connection to the community by having positive mentors.

The secondary objective was to assist Kiwanis with evaluating the program's implementation and to look for opportunities to improve the program.

Scope of Project

Originally, the research team had planned to deliver the following:

- a. An analysis of paper survey responses administered by Kiwanis to ABACUS members at the beginning and end of the school year relating to its three intended outcomes.
- b. An updated and online version of the survey, including a data analysis template and accompanying training documents.
- c. Interviews with staff members in order to clarify intended program outcomes, frame the evaluation, and interpret findings from survey data described above.
- d. A focus group question guide for ABACUS staff to use with program members as well as an accompanying guide on how to conduct and analyze said focus group data. Training would also occur in-person with ABACUS staff.
- e. A guide for how to merge survey and focus group data findings and report findings to granting agencies.

Due to the self-isolation and physical distancing measures put in place due to the spread of COVID-19 coupled with staffing changes at Kiwanis, the original deliverables were re-scoped to focus on providing tools for evaluative capacity building. As a result, interviews with staff members and the in-person focus group training session were removed and deliverables focused on creating the necessary tools to collect, analyze, and interpret quantitative and qualitative data. This will help staff to complete ongoing program evaluation.

Report Structure

This report is made up of four sections. Section one will outline the findings related to the analysis of surveys administered to ABACUS members from 2017 to 2019. Section two will discuss the new online version of the survey as well as how its data output can be analyzed. Section three is dedicated to focus group training. Section four will offer guidance on how to bring these two pieces of data together and makes recommendations for future evaluation. Finally, Appendices with all of the resources referenced in this report are attached at the end of the document.

Section I: Analysis of 2017-2019 Survey Data

Overview

The first section of the report contains the analysis of previously collected paper-based survey data from 2017 to 2019 provided by Kiwanis. First, we describe the overall structure of the data as well as the survey measures included in the analysis. Next, we describe the sample for each year of data as well as the method of analysis and limitations associated with interpreting the data. Finally, we present a summary of the findings including final conclusions and recommendations for future data collection protocols.

Data Description

Kiwanis provided the data for this analysis. Kiwanis staff administered a survey to members in June of 2019, March and June of 2018, and January of 2017. The analysis, summarized in Table 1 below, focuses on the survey measures associated with ABACUS' three intended outcomes they wish to evaluate: improving student (a) attitudes towards learning, (b) interest in attending secondary and post-secondary school, and (c) community engagement levels. The table below lists the survey questions associated with each outcome. The majority of the survey items (12 of 15) used in the analysis are measured on a self-reported scale ranging from one to five, as follows: (1) Not at all true, (2) Not really true, (3) Sort of true, (4) True, and (5) Very true. For 3 of the 15 survey items used in the final section on community engagement levels (*noted in the table below with a star**), the scale is described as follows: (1) Not at all, (2) A little, (3) Somewhat, (4) Very much, and (5) Totally.

Table 1: Survey items used to evaluate intended outcomes

INTENDED OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING SURVEY ITEMS USED IN ANALYSIS
A. Attitudes Towards Learning	Q4a) I enjoy being at school Q4b) I do well in school Q4c) I have goals to do better in school Q4d) Doing well in school is important to me Q4e) I think the things I learn at school are important
B. Interest in Post-Secondary	Q4h) I think that I will go to college or university
C. Community Engagement Levels	Q3d) I feel like I belong when I'm in my neighbourhood or community Q4g) My school is an important part of my community

	<p>Q5b) I have friends who encourage and support me</p> <p>Q5c) I get along well with other kids my age</p> <p>Q5d) I can ask my teachers for help when I need it</p> <p>Q5e) I know where to go to get help with problems I might face</p> <p>*Q6c) How comfortable do you feel telling the instructors what you wanted to do, or when you don't like certain things?</p> <p>*Q6f) Do you feel like the staff or instructors are caring and supportive of the kids in your group?</p> <p>*Q6g) I would recommend this group to friends or others</p>
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Sample Size

The total sample size across all three years of data includes 39 unique members, including four members with unknown identities because they did not record their name on the survey. 7 of these 40 members completed surveys in multiple years. Broken down by year, the total number of surveys analyzed for 2019 was 12 (all completed in June), for 2018 was 28 (14 completed in March and then June), and for 2017 was 18 (all completed in January). Therefore, a total of 58 surveys were analyzed. Eleven of these surveys had missing responses or participants who did not fill a question out correctly, in which case the response item was omitted.

Methods

We analyzed each year of data independently. For the June 2019 and January 2017 data, we tallied the frequency of each response and calculated the mean. The data for 2018 was unique in that it included data at two time points, March and June, where the same set of members submitted surveys in both months. Therefore, we were able to compare the results across the time points.

Limitations

The survey data and analysis, summarized above, comes with various limitations, some specific to this dataset and others commonly recognized for self-reported, survey-based research:

1. **Conclusions about the effectiveness of ABACUS cannot be made.** This data does not allow us to make any conclusions as to whether the ABACUS program is responsible for any change in member outcomes. In order to do so, surveys would need to be completed before and after a set of members completed the program. For 2019 and 2017, data was only available at one time point - June and January, respectively. For 2018, though data is available at two time points for the same set

of members, the first survey was administered in March, several months into the program, rather than before the program began. Thus, its results do not provide a true baseline measure allowing us to assess the real effect of the program.

2. **Cannot compare data across the years.** Comparing data across the three years would lead to inaccurate interpretations for several reasons. First, the data collected across the three years are not taken at the same point in time during the program year. Second, the type of data available for each year is not consistent such that 2018 offers data from the same set of members across two time points, whereas 2019 and 2017 do not. Third, seven of the members completed surveys in multiple years, whereas the rest did not, leading to further annual inconsistencies in the data across the years. The result is that the data in 2017, 2018, and 2019 is not comparable. There would be no way of determining, with this data, whether any differences in responses across the years was the product of ABACUS, the groups themselves being inherently different (e.g. the 2017 group being unusually pessimistic about school), or some other outside factor(s) affecting the results.
3. **Reliability issues with self-reported measures.** The use of surveys where members self-report their responses has its own limitations:
 - a. False or Inaccurate Responses. It's possible that individuals may record false responses. This could be due to a desire to manage how one comes across, or what one shares with authority figures, especially considering that members' names are attached to their responses. Self-reported surveys also rely on the respondents' capacity for self-knowledge and introspection. Therefore, it is possible that an individual could be unintentionally inaccurate with their response depending on how well they understand and can articulate their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.
 - b. Question & Response Interpretations. Respondents' interpretations of a questions' meaning could vary from each other as well as from the survey creator's intended interpretation. Thus, while it may seem as though all of the respondents are answering the same question, based on varying interpretations of that question, this may not be the case. The less concrete a topic is, the more of a concern this would be. For example, the concept of 'community' can refer to many different aspects of one's life. Respondents could also have varying interpretations of the response scales used to answer the questions. For example, a group of individuals may feel the same way about how important school is to them but vary in the value they assign to it on the scale based on their differing interpretations of what the values on the scale represent.

- c. Tendency to Select Neutral Responses. Respondents may hold an unconscious towards a certain type of response. For example, this could include a tendency to generally steer away from answering in the extremes and instead respond more conservatively (e.g., ‘neutral,’ or ‘agree’ instead of ‘strongly agree’) on an item response scale.

Summary of Findings

The following section presents mean responses by year to measures associated with each of the program’s three intended outcomes. Please see Appendix A to view a full question-by-question breakdown of response item frequencies and overall means for all of the survey measures included in the analysis.

Program outcome #1: Attitude towards learning

JUNE 2019: As seen in Table 2, members reported that school, as well as the content of their learning, was important, with the majority feeling that they did well in terms of their academics while also having goals to do better. Notably, it was only when members were asked whether they enjoyed being at school that their average response was lower than True (4/5 on response scale), with a mean score of 3.5 (Sort of True).

MARCH/JUNE 2018: Members in both March and June of 2018 reported doing well in school, having goals to do better in school, and that school was something they deemed important. Members also reported that they enjoy being at school and felt that the things they learn at school are important. We observed increases in mean responses (an average of 0.22 points) between March and June on all but one measure: “I think the things I learn at school are important” (decrease of 0.21).

JANUARY 2017: In January of 2017, members only ‘sort of’ agreed with the statements outlined above. Therefore, they felt that it was only moderately the case that they did well in school, had goals to do better, enjoyed school, and found doing well in school and what they learned there to be important.

Table 2: Mean responses by year to questions measuring “attitude towards learning”

Questions	Mean Response			
	<i>June 2019</i>	<i>March 2018</i>	<i>June 2018</i>	<i>January 2017</i>
	<i>(n=12)</i>	<i>(n=14)</i>	<i>(n=14)</i>	<i>(n=18)</i>

Doing well in school is important to me	True (4.41)	True (4.77)	True (4.79)	Sort of true (3.50)
I think the things I learn at school are important	True (4.30)	True (4.64)	True (4.43)	Sort of true (3.88)
I have goals to do better in school	True (4.19)	True (4.29)	True (4.79)	Sort of true (3.78)
I do well in school	True (4.15)	True (4.36)	True (4.57)	Sort of true (3.61)
I enjoy being at school	Sort of true (3.90)	True (4.36)	True (4.50)	Sort of true (3.06)

Program outcome #2: Interest in post-secondary

JUNE 2019: As seen in Table 3, on average, members reported that the statement “I think that I will go to college or university” was True.

MARCH/JUNE 2018: In both March and June of 2018 the majority of members thought they would attend college or university. Between March and June, the average response and therefore level of agreement with this statement increased by 0.07 points on the scale.

JANUARY 2017: On average, members felt that it was only sort of true that they would attend some form of post-secondary school.

Table 3: Mean responses by year to questions measuring “interest in post-secondary”

Question	Mean Response			
	<i>June 2019</i>	<i>March 2018</i>	<i>June 2018</i>	<i>January 2017</i>
	<i>(n=12)</i>	<i>(n=14)</i>	<i>(n=14)</i>	<i>(n=18)</i>
I think that I will go to college or university	True (4.83)	True (4.57)	True (4.64)	Sort of true (3.71)

Program outcome #3: Community engagement levels

JUNE 2019: As seen in Table 4, the majority of members felt that school was an important part of their community where they had encouraging and supportive friends, got along well with other kids their age, and had teachers they could ask for help when needed. In terms of their connection to the ABACUS community, most members felt that the staff/instructors were caring and supportive and felt comfortable communicating their activity preferences with them. Generally, the members felt that they knew where to go for help when faced with a problem and experienced a sense of belonging when in their neighbourhood or community. Finally, members would recommend the ABACUS program to others.

MARCH/JUNE 2018: Similar to June 2019, participants reported positively on measures relating to their level of community engagement and we observed small increases between March and June (an average of 0.38 points on the scale).

JANUARY 2017: In January of 2017, members’ levels of community engagement were more moderate. Therefore, school was only a somewhat important part of their community where it was only ‘sort of’ the case that they had supportive friendships, got along well with other students their age, and could ask teachers for help. Further, it was only moderately true that members knew where to go to get help in times of trouble. In terms of their feelings towards the ABACUS program, most members felt the staff and instructors were somewhat caring and supportive as well as approachable if they wanted to express their activity preferences. Members felt that it was somewhat true that they would recommend the program to others. Finally, members on average responded, “A Little” (2.94) when asked whether they felt they belonged in their neighbourhood or community.

Table 4: Mean responses by year to questions measuring “community engagement levels”

Questions	Mean Response			
	<i>June 2019</i>	<i>March 2018</i>	<i>June 2018</i>	<i>January 2017</i>
	<i>(n=12)</i>	<i>(n=14)</i>	<i>(n=14)</i>	<i>(n=18)</i>
I would recommend this group to friends or others	True (4.91)	True (4.42)	True (4.64)	Sort of true (3.87)
Do you feel like the staff or instructors are caring and supportive of the kids in your group?	Very much (4.64)	Very much (4.58)	Very much (4.93)	Somewhat (3.73)
My school is an important part of my community	True (4.58)	True (4.29)	True (4.64)	Sort of true (3.53)

I have friends who encourage and support me	True (4.58)	True (4.00)	True (4.36)	Sort of true (3.47)
I know where to go to get help with problems I might face	True (4.50)	True (4.29)	True (4.71)	Sort of true (3.71)
I get along well with other kids my age	True (4.50)	True (4.14)	True (4.57)	Sort of true (3.53)
How comfortable do you feel telling the instructors what you wanted to do, or when you don't like certain things?	Very much (4.45)	Very much (4.00)	Very much (4.43)	Somewhat (3.29)
I can ask my teachers for help when I need it	True (4.33)	True (4.36)	True (4.64)	Sort of true (3.47)
I feel like I belong when I'm in my neighbourhood or community	Very much (4.18)	Very much (4.14)	Very much (4.71)	A little (2.94)

Conclusions

Overall, particularly in 2018 and 2019, members, on average, expressed a positive attitude towards learning, an interest in attending post-secondary school, and engagement with their community. The limitations associated with this data means we cannot make any conclusions as to whether the ABACUS program is responsible for this impact.

Section II: Updated data collection and analysis procedures for member surveys

Overview

This section of the report outlines the changes made to the pre-existing survey tool including the development of an online survey using Google Forms. This form was shared with Kiwanis, via email, titled **ABACUS – Member Survey**. Additionally, we provide instructions for how to administer the online version of the survey, how to extract data, as well as recommendations for future data management. Lastly, instructions are provided outlining how staff members can use a pre-made template to assist with the analysis and interpretation of data that is collected before and after the

program in the future. This excel workbook was also shared via email, titled **ABACUS – Survey Data Analysis Formula Sheet**.

Changes to survey questions and format

The Research Shop team reviewed the existing survey and made several modifications and additions to the questions. Minor changes were made to the order of the survey items so that questions targeting similar outcomes were grouped together and to clarify some questions (for example, “*Do you feel like there is a good range or variety of things to do, or topics covered, in the group?*” was altered to “*I feel like ABACUS covers a good variety of topics*”). Two additional questions were added to better address members’ interest in/commitment to secondary education (“*I plan to continue the ABACUS program until I graduate from elementary school*” and “*I plan to join the Raise The Grade program when I am in high school*”). Additionally, two closed-ended questions were added at the request of Jordan Anastasiadis (Supervisor, Youth & Education) (“*I enjoy the ABACUS program*” and “*I feel like the staff are mentors to me*”) and one open-ended question (“*Is there anything else you would like to add*”). A full list of the updated survey questions can be found in Appendix B.

In addition to making changes to the survey questions, the Research Team moved the survey online to Google Forms. The online survey includes a total of 37 multiple choice questions organized into six sections. Participants provide responses on a 5-point Likert-type scale.

Survey administration procedures




General information related to the use of Google Forms including how to create, edit, and format forms can be found at [this link](#).

We recommend that Kiwanis staff administer the surveys at approximately the same time every year in order to more accurately estimate the impact of the program. Program staff should consider what timing would be easiest to adhere to and aim to be as consistent as possible. For example, although administering the program on the first and last day of the program would allow for the maximum amount of time between assessments, it may result in including members in the analysis who have dropped out of the program in subsequent weeks, and fail to collect data from many members at the end of the program who do not attend the last day with no opportunity for follow-up. One suggestion is to administer the survey over three days in the first week of the program as well as over three days in the last week of the program to allow for some flexibility in collection procedures but still maintain a small timeframe for data collection at each time point.

When administering the survey, be aware that the survey includes a short preamble section thanking members for their participation, asking them to answer

honestly, and letting them know that they are allowed to skip any questions or ask staff members for help if they have questions. Before having members complete the survey, program staff should briefly reiterate these points to the members, making them aware that it is not a test, that there are no right or wrong answers, and also ask them if they have any questions before starting the survey. It may also be beneficial to ask members if they would prefer filling out the questionnaire during program time or on their own time at home in order for members to be most comfortable responding honestly. If multiple members are completing the survey at the same time, you should mention to them that they should only be looking at their own screens and responding individually.

Instructions outlining how the online survey can be administered to members as well as how to extract data from Google Forms are as follows:

- 1) Have students log on to their respective computers, enabled with internet access.
- 2) Members can access the survey using [this link](#). In order to send the link to members, you will need to log into the admin account (the account that owns the survey) and press the “SEND” button in the top right-hand corner of the screen (). You will then be provided with the option of sending the link directly via email () or by copying a link () which you can then paste and share accordingly.
- 3) In order to view responses, log into the admin account (the account that owns the survey) and click on the “Responses” tab.



- 4) To control whether the survey is recording responses, there is a switch labeled “Accepting Responses”. This must be activated (see image below) before members complete the survey or responses will not be saved.




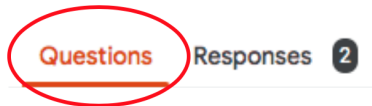
- 5) In order to manage data collection using this survey, click on the three dots in the top right-hand corner of the “Responses” tab. This will lead to a drop-down menu where you can choose to receive email notifications for each new response or delete all saved entries (not recommended).



- 6) In order to export the data after members have filled out the survey, press the green square on the top right-hand corner of the screen. This will open up a Google Sheets document with all of the information the participants filled out. You will need to copy and paste the data into the provided Excel document for analysis (See: [How to Analyze New Online Survey](#) section for instructions on data analysis)



- 7) Since these data contain identifying information (i.e., the names of participants are still associated with their responses), it is recommended that data are stored on a password-protected computer or USB that cannot be accessed without a password. One strategy for data management is to save all collected data for one year of the program in the provided formula sheet in the separate tabs for before and after the program (outlined in detail below). Alternatively, each time data is collected (before vs. end of the program) can be saved in separate files. Regardless of what method you choose, it is recommended that data files are saved using a file name which clearly outlines the year of the program and if stored separately by time point, whether the data was collected before or after the program (e.g., ABACUS_Data_2020-2021, ABACUS_Data_PRE_2020_2021, ABACUS_Data_POST_2020_2021). The survey includes a question asking whether members are filling out the survey at the start or at the end of the program which can assist in keeping data organized, along with a timestamp which will show the date the survey was filled out.
- 8) To edit or remove any components of the survey, click on the “Questions” tab. Here you will have the option of editing the type of question being asked using the drop-down menu on the right-hand side (e.g., short answer question, multiple-choice question, dropdown questions, etc...). Survey questions can be rearranged by dragging and dropping individual questions within each section. To add a question, click on the (⊕) symbol on the right-hand side of the screen. In order to duplicate a question (e.g., if you would like a new question but measured using the same response options as other questions in a section), you can duplicate questions by clicking on the (□) symbol and then change the question stem. Individual questions can be deleted by clicking on the (☒) symbol. To make a question mandatory you will need to indicate that responses are required (Required ).



- 9) It is recommended that the survey is duplicated for each year of the program in order to keep data collected from the same members together. In order to duplicate the survey, you will have to click on the three dots in the top right-hand corner of the screen. This will open a drop-down menu where you can click “Make a copy” to duplicate the survey. You will be prompted to choose a new name for the copied survey and it is recommended that you title the survey according to the year of the program (e.g., ABACUS Participant Survey - 2020-2021).



How to analyze the new online survey

Making sense of the survey data can require devoting many resources (i.e., staff time) to sorting, analyzing, and displaying the results. The kinds of analyses you can do range from simple, e.g. descriptive statistics like frequencies and averages, to more complex, e.g. t-tests and an analysis of variance. To build Kiwanis’ capacity to analyze their own survey data, the research team has created a template accompanied by detailed instructions that will automatically calculate response averages and frequencies from response data copied and pasted from Google Forms. This should enable any staff member with basic computer skills, regardless of their background in data analysis, to transform raw survey data into easily understandable results.

*What this analysis **can** tell you:* This analysis will enable Kiwanis to describe trends or patterns in their data, and to compare participants attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours between the beginning and end of the ABACUS program. Additionally, the provided template will allow program staff to assess individual changes in members from before and after the program to check the progress of individual members.

*What this analysis **can’t** tell you:* This analysis cannot tell you that any observed changes between the start and end of the ABACUS program are caused directly by the program—only that they’re correlated. In order to say with confidence that any observed changes were caused by the program, we would have to conduct a statistical test (e.g., a paired t-test), which requires that certain statistical assumptions are met. Calculating a statistical test and checking for statistical assumptions is beyond the scope of this report.

Procedures: In submission of this report, the research team provided Kiwanis with an Excel file titled **ABACUS – Survey Data Analysis Formula Sheet.xlsx**. The document consists of eight separate sheets: three are used to input data, and the other

five are used to automatically calculate and display results. Results are displayed as calculated frequencies and averages for the group based on the responses at the start vs. at the end of the program. Instructions on how to use the document are as follows:

Analyzing group-level differences

- Once data is extracted from Google Forms (see [section above](#)), you will first need to separate data that was collected at the start of the program from data collected at the end of the program. You can see the time that the surveys were filled out by looking at the survey question asking: “*When are you filling out this survey*”. Copy all data collected “*At the start of this year’s ABACUS program*” and paste it into the sheet titled: **DATA - Start of program**. Then, copy and paste all data collected “*At the end of this year’s ABACUS program*” into the sheet titled: **DATA - End of program**. Make sure that you copy and paste the entire row of data including the “*Timestamp*” variable.
- Group level averages for the outcomes “attitudes towards learning,” “interest in/commitment to post-secondary education,” and “connection to the community” will be calculated and presented in the sheets titled: **RESULTS-Learning**, **RESULTS-Post-secondary comm.**, and **RESULTS-Community Engagement**, respectively.
- To view the results, click on the relevant sheet and you will see the group’s average response for each question at the start vs. the end of the program in columns B and C. In addition, the charts in columns E-G and I-K display the number and proportion of individuals that selected each response. . (Note: If you see the statement “#DIV/0!”, this indicates you haven’t copied and pasted any data into the corresponding data sheet. For instance, if you’ve only entered data into the “DATA - Start of program” sheet but don’t have any “end of program” data, the proportions in the End of program charts will return “#DIV/0!”)
- The sheet titled: **RESULTS-Program Characteristics** contains responses that do not directly relate to any of the three outcomes but were included to provide the staff with important feedback from the members on how they feel about the ABACUS program.

Analyzing individual differences

- The sheet titled **DATA - Individual** will allow you to assess individual changes in one member at the start vs. the end of the program. To do so, copy and paste data from the member’s survey from the start of the program (found in sheet: DATA - Start of Program) into Row 2, and data from the members’ survey from the end of the program (found in sheet: **DATA - End of Program**) into Row 3. As before, you must copy and paste the entire row. In order to easily find the

member of interest, you can use the “Control + F” command in excel (or click: Edit → Find → Find.) and search each sheet by the member’s name.

- Results are presented in the sheet titled: **RESULTS-Individual Changes** where you will see all questions from the survey listed in column B, and the member’s responses to each question at the start and end of the program in columns C and D to look at any changes from before to after the program.

Section III: Focus Groups

Overview

At the request of the Kiwanis staff, the research team created tools and instructions to enable the staff to conduct focus groups with their members and analyze resulting data. The data obtained from the focus groups will complement the survey data by providing more in-depth data to evaluate the program’s target outcomes as well as gather feedback about the program. In this section, we first go through steps for preparing and facilitating a focus group. Next, we provide a focus group guide, including questions and a complete script for facilitation. Lastly, we provide a step-by-step process to analyze focus group data using a provided template.

Preparing for a focus group

The following are step-by-step instructions for preparing for a focus group:

1. Identify facilitator(s): As the facilitator, you will ask the questions and guide the discussion using prompts and offering clarity when necessary. In addition, you will have to keep the members on track if they start to change the topic.
2. Identify a note taker: As the note taker, you will try to capture the feedback and ideas expressed by members. You do not need to capture the discussion word for word, but you should attempt to keep track of the speaking order and summarize what’s being said. Some focus group questions will require the group members to raise their hands (i.e. Raise your hand if you plan to go to University or College?). In this case, you will count the number of hands that are up and record this number in the notebook or on your laptop. You should consider creating a way to identify who is speaking (e.g. names, assigning numbers or animals). This is important in the case that any members are reporting a negative experience with regards to the ABACUS program or negative feelings towards learning and furthering their education as the ABACUS staff would want to follow-up with these members. We recommend that you use a laptop because it’s faster than taking handwritten notes.

3. Arrange for an audio recording device and transcription method: Most smartphones and laptops come pre-installed with an audio recording app or program. It is important to consider how you will transcribe the recording:
 - One way is through a speech to text app. You can install the app on a cellphone or computer, but keep in mind that you will need to set up the recording device in the middle of the focus group circle. Free speech to text apps, such as Otter, are available on any app store on your smartphone. These apps, however, can be unreliable (e.g., background noise can affect the accuracy, low accuracy for individuals with strong accents or speech impediments), so make sure you read over the transcript while listening along to the audio. This way you can make edits to the transcript as needed.
 - Another option is a service called Rev ([www. rev.com](http://www.rev.com)). Rev has a cost associated with it (\$1.25 USD / per minute of audio), but it is a timely, reliable and accurate transcription method as the audio is transcribed by a person, rather than a computer program.
 - A member of the ABACUS staff could perform the transcription by listening to the audio and typing out what is being said word-for-word. This would save the costs associated with a transcription service but will require a larger time commitment.

4. Plan to split up members into groups. You will want about 6 – 10 members per group (no less than three, no more than 10). There are different ways to split up the members into groups:
 - Grouping members based on their friendship with each other.
 - i. PROS: The members will be more comfortable talking to each other.
 - ii. CONS: There might be a higher likelihood that members will joke around and diverge from the topic.
 - Grouping members that might not have as much of a relationship with each other.
 - iii. PROS: The members might be more focused on answering the questions being asked and less likely to become distracted.
 - iv. CONS: The members might be less comfortable to talk with people they do not know well.

5. Confirm that you have all the supplies you need: This includes a copy of the focus group guide, a note taking device, snacks/refreshments for participants, a recording device, chart paper and markers (if setting up stations - see below) and a quiet room. You will want to try to remove all potential distractions from this room.

6. Prepare the space where the focus group will be performed:

- For a group discussion format, you will need to set up chairs in a circle. This method will require a facilitator, a notetaker, and an audio recording device.
 - If you want to break the participants up into smaller groups, you will need to set up a station for each set of focus group questions (e.g., one station for general feedback about the program, one station for attitude towards learning). Each station should have markers and a large piece of chart paper with the questions written at the top. This method will require multiple facilitators to ask the questions, facilitate the discussion and record the main points on the chart paper. The group discussion will still need to be recorded. If possible, a note taker should be assigned to each station; otherwise, each group should be recorded at each station. This method may be less feasible depending on the number of available staff that can assist with the process.
7. Create ground rules for the focus group. A guide for creating ground rules can be found in Appendix C.

Conducting a focus group

This section provides instructions for conducting a focus group using the guide we prepared. The focus group guide¹ may be found in Appendix D. Like the survey, we designed questions in the focus group guide to gather feedback on the program's impact on the three target outcomes. Additional questions seek to gather general feedback about the program, including suggestions for improvement.

The following are instructions for conducting a focus group with members:

1. Read over the focus group preamble and the ground rules for the focus group (see Appendix D for the Focus Group Guide).
2. Perform an icebreaker activity. This is a good strategy to help the members open up. Some suggestions include asking simple questions (example have been included in the Focus Group Guide) or performing fun games (examples of icebreaker games can be found [here](#)).
3. Start the recording device (and/or a speech to text app if using one).

¹ The focus group guide provides a script that should be followed when conducting the focus group. The focus group guide is made up of two main components. The first component is the introduction which the facilitator will read to the members before beginning the focus group. The introduction will outline the purpose of the focus group and the ground rules of the discussion, as well as explain to the members that this is an optional discussion and they are not required to participate. The second component is the list of the focus group questions which the facilitator will ask to the members.

4. Read the questions as per the focus group guide (see below - Section II B. Focus Group Guide).
 - You will want to make sure that all group members have had a chance to share their thoughts before you move to the next question.
 - If, after asking a question, you're met with silence, try rephrasing or clarifying the question. You can prompt the members with secondary questions. We've provided some examples of prompts you can use in the focus group guide.
 - After the members have responded to a question, you might consider summarizing the main points from the discussion as a way of confirming and clarifying the answers that were given. This can also be a prompt for members to bring up a unique point that was not made in the original discussion.
 - Remember that your objective as a facilitator is to ask questions in a way that facilitates discussion and then to listen. Try not to inject your own ideas or conclusions into the discussion or lead members towards a particular answer (e.g., avoid saying something like, "didn't you folks learn something about anger management in ABACUS?"). The point of the focus group is to access what's at the top of members' minds - not yours.

Addressing challenges during the focus group (for the facilitator)

1. **The discussion gets off-topic:** If the members start to get off topic, you should redirect the tangent back to the original question. Whenever possible, you should avoid interrupting a member mid-sentence, but should instead wait for a natural pause in the discussion. When redirecting a tangent, consider using a prompt if more detail is needed on the topic, or, if enough feedback has been collected for the question, you can move onto the next question.
2. **Distracted group members:** Distracted group members could be a signal that they're confused about the questions being asked or disinterested in the discussion. You will want to try to foster an engaging discussion by encouraging personal anecdotes from members and reinforcing the ideas embedded in their stories. If the group still has difficulties focusing, it might be a good time to take a snack break. You should initiate the break once a topic has finished being discussed.

Additional focus group resources

If any staff members are interested in learning more about preparing for and conducting focus groups, the following are a list of accessible resources for self-directed learning:

- Tips for preparing for the focus group: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/conduct-focus-groups/main>

- Tips for facilitating the focus group:
https://www.uml.edu/docs/FG%20Tips%20sheet_RK_tcm18-167588.pdf
- Tips for preparing, facilitating and note taking for the focus group:
<https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/how-to-conduct-focus-groups>
- Tips for preparing, facilitating and note taking the focus group:
<https://www.eiu.edu/ihec/Krueger-FocusGroupInterviews.pdf>

Analyzing focus groups transcripts

After the audio recordings have been transcribed (the options for transcription are presented in Section II A. - Focus Group Facilitation Guidelines), you will need to analyze the data. Making sense of lengthy transcripts can be a resource-intensive task for individuals not trained in qualitative data analysis/evaluation. Software programs can help with the analysis of qualitative data, but these programs have their own learning curves, and many cost money to download and use.

In this section, we provide a step-by-step process for distilling insights about the program from a focus group transcript using the **ABACUS – Focus Group Data Formula Sheet** provided alongside the submission of this report:

1. In the “Member ID” column, you will enter the initials of the participants. In the “Group #” column, you will add the member’s corresponding group number (if using a focus group format where participants are split into groups; if you did not split participants into groups, ignore this column).
2. In the “Statement from transcript” column, copy and paste members’ responses to the questions in the corresponding rows based on which members provided the answers. For the questions where members were required to raise their hands, you will need to refer to the notes taken to identify the number of members who raised their hands.
3. As you are entering answers to the questions, highlight any interesting quotes using the cell “Fill Colour” tool. You might want to include interesting quotes in your final report. These quotes should be representative of a common response to a question or a common idea that has frequently come up throughout the focus group discussion.
4. Some answers might be long, so you will want to try to summarize each answer into words or a phrase. You will enter the summary words into the corresponding “Summary of response” columns. We’ve provided examples in the Excel file to help you see how you might summarize responses into condensed meaning units (i.e., concise words and phrases).
5. You might notice that many of the answer summaries for a question are the same or similar. In the corresponding “Theme(s)” column, you will enter a word or phrase that can encompass all of the same/similar answers.

- a. Themes are the major concepts that will summarize an entire group of questions (i.e. themes for members' interests in learning, themes for members' commitment to secondary school, themes for members' commitment to post-secondary school, and themes for community involvement).
 - b. There is no set number of themes that you need to come up with (i.e. for one group of questions you might have 3 themes and for another group of questions you might have 5).
 - c. The themes represent the main findings from the focus group data. You will discuss these themes in the results section of your report.
6. Due to the subjective nature of qualitative data analysis, when you're finished, have a colleague review your analysis². Based on their feedback, you may decide to make modifications to the themes you developed or re-interpret the meaning of members' statements. You can ask your colleague these questions to guide their review:
- a. Did I correctly summarize what members were saying?
 - b. Did the themes I developed correctly capture the beliefs and perspectives of members? Should any themes be added, removed, or renamed?
 - c. Did I correctly apply the themes to members' statements?

Additional qualitative data analysis resources

If any Boys and Girls staff members are interested in learning more about qualitative data analysis, the following are a list of accessible resources for self-directed learning:

- Tips for transcribing and analyzing focus groups (pages 10 - 15): <https://www.eiu.edu/ihec/Krueger-FocusGroupInterviews.pdf>
- Tips for analyzing focus groups: <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/how-to-do-a-thematic-analysis-of-user-interviews>
- Tips for using a visual method for identifying codes and themes before entering the data into your Excel Spreadsheet: <https://youtu.be/KUZ6iGvJIGI>
- Tips and examples for identifying codes and themes <https://youtu.be/eT-EDgwRvRU>

² When you are performing the data analysis of the last question of the focus group guide ("Does anyone have anything they would like to add"), keep in mind that this is a general question. The answers that the members provide to this question may relate to any of the four main topics already discussed, or they may be unrelated. You will have to use your judgement to identify where these answers will fit, or if these answers are even relevant to your purpose of the report. We recommend that if the answers given (and their associated themes) seem to be unrelated, you should still consider trying to include these results in your report. For example, you could consider including these results in the "General Feedback" section, since this section involves general feedback about the ABACUS program.

- Example for identifying codes and themes:
<https://baselinesupport.campuslabs.com/hc/en-us/articles/204305675-How-to-analyze-qualitative-data>

Section IV: Reporting on your findings

Overview

Using the tools and procedures in this report will allow Kiwanis to collect ongoing monitoring data for the ABACUS program. Program managers may choose to informally review results periodically, such as at the end of a program year, to look for areas of success and opportunities for improvement. At other times, Kiwanis may choose (or be required) to create a formal evaluation report for its stakeholders.

In preparing an evaluation report, you'll have two sets of results at your disposal: quantitative results from the surveys and the qualitative results from the focus groups. The quantitative results will allow you to establish trends about the program, i.e. what you're observing. The qualitative results will help to explain why you're observing what you're observing. In this way, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative findings can help round out the "story" of ABACUS. This section provides guidelines on how to synthesize quantitative and qualitative data to help Kiwanis communicate its impact to stakeholders.

Clarifying the purpose of the report

Before getting started, it will be important to consider the purpose of your report. For example, will you be reporting on specific metrics required by funding agencies? Or will you be communicating feedback to parents? This will, in turn, influence the tone and depth of your reporting. If you are reporting specific metrics to the granting agency, you will want to make sure to include all relevant data related to the outcomes listed in your grant proposal. You should give in-depth details from the results of both the survey data and the focus groups. You likely will also write with a more formal tone. If you are providing feedback to the parents, you may choose to highlight a few key findings from the survey data and the focus group. You should consider what findings would be most important to the parents. You will want to use simple language and visuals (i.e. graphs such as pie charts). Instead of creating a formal report, you may choose to create an infographic, a one-page summary or a verbal presentation to highlight key points.

Information to include

When we refer Metrics from the survey data you could include:

- The average response for a question at the start vs. end of the program, displaying any increases or decreases in the value. Be sure to report the sample size (i.e. the number of members that answered each question) in your report.
- Tables are a great way to summarize a large amount of data. For examples on how to do so, review Section I.
- Frequency distributions, i.e. graphs (e.g., histograms or pie charts) that visually display the proportion of responses for each of the 5 response categories.

For the qualitative data from the focus groups, you will want to discuss the themes you identified during the qualitative data analysis. To discuss the themes, you will explain what they represent (i.e. explain what the theme means) and how they relate to the topic. To add interest, quotes from members can be included as well. The quotes you select need to illustrate the theme you are discussing. Once you have gathered all the data you need, you will want to write up the results in your report. Each of the main topics you have selected to discuss in the report will now become a section of the results write up.

You can also include enrollment data that you have collected from past years. Kiwanis staff mentioned that they had access to data tracking members' transitions from ABACUS into Raise the Grade. These numbers may also be beneficial to include in the report. This could be reported as a percent ($\frac{\# \text{ of members who transitioned to the Raise the Grade program}}{\# \text{ of members who graduated from the ABACUS program}}$ and then multiply this by 100%).

Organizing information

Presenting results from your surveys and focus group(s) in a clear, organized way is essential to helping your audience understand ABACUS's impact. Thinking through how you might structure the "findings" section of your report will help you develop an approach for synthesizing your qualitative and quantitative data.

One way to structure your findings is to synthesize the survey and focus group results for each of the target program outcomes. In addition, you may include an additional section that synthesizes feedback about the program from the survey and focus group results. Using this way to structure your findings, the findings section of your Table of Contents might look something like this:

Findings

1. General program feedback
2. Impact on attitudes towards learning
3. Impact on interest in and commitment to secondary and post-secondary education

4. Impact on connections to the community

Another way to structure your findings is to separate results from the surveys and focus group(s). Using this way to structure your findings, the findings section of your Table of Contents might look something like this:

Survey findings

1. General program feedback
2. Impact on attitudes towards learning
3. Impact on interest in and commitment to secondary and post-secondary education
4. Impact on connections to the community

Focus group findings

1. General program feedback
2. Impact on attitudes towards learning
3. Impact on interest in and commitment to secondary and post-secondary education
4. Impact on connections to the community

We recommend using the first structure because it's easier to compare and contrast results from the survey and focus group(s) within one section than two. Assuming you've decided to use the first approach to structure your findings, the next step will be to pull together relevant quantitative and qualitative results into each section. Here is where you can pull data for each section of your results:

Results Section	Quantitative Findings (See ABACUS – Survey Data Analysis Formula Sheet)	Qualitative Findings (See ABACUS – Focus Group Data Analysis Formula Sheet)
General feedback about the program	Metrics from the “RESULTS - Program Characteristics” data analysis formula sheet	Themes and quotes from the “Discussions about ABACUS” and the “Suggestions for improvements” sections of the Focus Group data analysis template
Attitudes towards learning	Metrics from the “RESULTS - Learning” data analysis formula sheet	Themes and quotes from the “Attitudes towards learning” section of the Focus Group data analysis template

Interests in and commitment to secondary and post-secondary education	Metrics from the “RESULTS - Post-secondary Comm.” data analysis formula sheet	Themes and quotes from the “Interest in secondary” and the “Interest in post-secondary” sections of the Focus Group data analysis template
	Past data of members who graduated from the ABACUS program and went on to participate in the Raise the Grade program. ³	
Connections to the community by having positive mentorship and community involvement	Metrics from the “RESULTS - Community Engagement” data analysis formula sheet	Themes and quotes from the “Community involvement” section of the Focus Group data analysis template

When writing up each results section, you could consider discussing the quantitative results in the first paragraph and then discuss the qualitative data in the second paragraph. In the third paragraph, you can explain the key take home messages by combining the quantitative and qualitative results together. Here is an outline of how to structure the results of the report:

- **Section Heading:** The main topic you are discussing (i.e. Attitudes toward Learning)
- **Paragraph 1:** Discuss the quantitative results in the first paragraph.
- **Paragraph 2:** Discuss the qualitative results in the second paragraph.
- **Paragraph 3:** Discuss the key points in the third paragraph. You will want to consider what the most important results that best address your purpose (i.e. feedback for the funding agency). You should include quantitative and qualitative findings that highlight where the ABACUS program is successful, and where the ABACUS program needs improvement.

**Repeat this structure for each main topic*

For further resources on writing up your results, you may want to review the article by Bronstein and Kovacs ([Title: Writing a mixed methods report in social work research, Journal: Research on Social Work Practice; 2013](#)), which was sent with the analysis

³ This data is not captured in the provided tools within this document. However, this is data we recommend Kiwanis staff collect.

Excel sheets. This academic article provides additional examples and suggestions on writing up qualitative and quantitative data together.

Appendix A: Frequency distributions of ABACUS 2017-2019 survey data

	JUNE 2019 (n=12)		2018 (n=14)				JANUARY 2017 (n=18)		
	Count	Proportion	MARCH		JUNE		Count	Proportion	
1. ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING	Q4A) I enjoy being at school								
	RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all true)	1	8.33%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	5	29.41%
	RESPONSE = 2 (Not really true)	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	11.76%
	RESPONSE = 3 (Sort of true)	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	1	7.14%	2	11.76%
	RESPONSE = 4 (True)	6	50.00%	3	21.43%	5	35.71%	3	17.65%
	RESPONSE = 5 (Very true)	4	33.33%	9	64.29%	8	57.14%	5	29.41%
	Q4B) I do well in school								
	RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	5.56%
	RESPONSE = 2 (Not really true)	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	11.11%
	RESPONSE = 3 (Sort of true)	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	1	7.14%	4	22.22%
	RESPONSE = 4 (True)	4	33.33%	7	50.00%	4	28.57%	7	38.89%
	RESPONSE = 5 (Very true)	7	58.33%	6	42.86%	9	64.29%	4	22.22%
	Q4C) I have goals to do better in school								
	RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	11.11%
	RESPONSE = 2 (Not really true)	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	11.11%
	RESPONSE = 3 (Sort of true)	2	16.67%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	3	16.67%
	RESPONSE = 4 (True)	4	33.33%	8	57.14%	3	21.43%	2	11.11%
	RESPONSE = 5 (Very true)	5	41.67%	5	35.71%	11	78.57%	9	50.00%
	Q4D) Doing well in school is important to me								
	RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	3	18.75%
	RESPONSE = 2 (Not really true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	RESPONSE = 3 (Sort of true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	25.00%
	RESPONSE = 4 (True)	2	16.67%	3	23.08%	3	23.08%	4	25.00%
	RESPONSE = 5 (Very true)	10	83.33%	10	76.92%	11	84.62%	5	31.25%
	Q4E) I think the things I learn at school are important								
RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	6.25%	
RESPONSE = 2 (Not really true)	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	6.25%	
RESPONSE = 3 (Sort of true)	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	1	7.14%	3	18.75%	
RESPONSE = 4 (True)	4	33.33%	3	21.43%	6	42.86%	5	31.25%	
RESPONSE = 5 (Very true)	7	58.33%	10	71.43%	7	50.00%	6	37.50%	

	JUNE 2019 (n=12)		2018 (n=14)				JANUARY 2017 (n=18)		
			MARCH		JUNE				
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	
2. INTEREST IN POST- SECONDARY	Q4H) I think that I will go to college or university								
	RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	11.11%
	RESPONSE = 2 (Not really true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	5.56%
	RESPONSE = 3 (Sort of true)	0	0.00%	2	14.29%	1	7.14%	4	22.22%
	RESPONSE = 4 (True)	2	16.67%	2	14.29%	3	21.43%	3	16.67%
	RESPONSE = 5 (Very true)	10	83.33%	10	71.43%	10	71.43%	7	38.89%

	JUNE 2019 (n=12)		2018 (n=14)				JANUARY 2017 (n=18)		
			MARCH		JUNE				
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	
3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LEVELS	Q3D) I feel like I belong when I'm in my neighbourhood or community								
	RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all true)	1	9.09%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	23.53%
	RESPONSE = 2 (Not really true)	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	2	11.76%
	RESPONSE = 3 (Sort of true)	1	9.09%	3	21.43%	0	0.00%	5	29.41%
	RESPONSE = 4 (True)	3	27.27%	3	21.43%	4	28.57%	3	17.65%
	RESPONSE = 5 (Very true)	6	54.55%	7	50.00%	10	71.43%	3	17.65%
	Q4G) My school is an important part of my community								
	RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	11.76%
	RESPONSE = 2 (Not really true)	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	RESPONSE = 3 (Sort of true)	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	1	7.14%	7	41.18%
	RESPONSE = 4 (True)	5	41.67%	5	35.71%	3	21.43%	3	17.65%
	RESPONSE = 5 (Very true)	7	58.33%	7	50.00%	10	71.43%	5	29.41%
	Q5B) I have friends who encourage and support me								
	RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all true)	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	1	5.88%
	RESPONSE = 2 (Not really true)	0	0.00%	2	14.29%	0	0.00%	2	11.76%
	RESPONSE = 3 (Sort of true)	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	1	7.14%	5	29.41%
	RESPONSE = 4 (True)	5	41.67%	2	14.29%	7	50.00%	6	35.29%
	RESPONSE = 5 (Very true)	7	58.33%	8	57.14%	6	42.86%	3	17.65%
	Q5C) I get along well with other kids my age								
	RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	11.76%
RESPONSE = 2 (Not really true)	0	0.00%	2	14.29%	0	0.00%	2	11.76%	

RESPONSE = 3 (Sort of true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	11.76%
RESPONSE = 4 (True)	6	50.00%	6	42.86%	6	42.86%	7	41.18%
RESPONSE = 5 (Very true)	6	50.00%	6	42.86%	8	57.14%	4	23.53%
Q5D) I can ask my teachers for help when I need it								
RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	11.76%
RESPONSE = 2 (Not really true)	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	3	17.65%
RESPONSE = 3 (Sort of true)	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	3	17.65%
RESPONSE = 4 (True)	6	50.00%	6	42.86%	3	21.43%	3	17.65%
RESPONSE = 5 (Very true)	5	41.67%	7	50.00%	10	71.43%	6	35.29%
Q5E) I know where to go to get help with problems I might face								
RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all true)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	5.88%
RESPONSE = 2 (Not really true)	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	2	11.76%
RESPONSE = 3 (Sort of true)	2	16.67%	2	14.29%	1	7.14%	3	17.65%
RESPONSE = 4 (True)	2	16.67%	3	21.43%	2	14.29%	6	35.29%
RESPONSE = 5 (Very true)	8	66.67%	8	57.14%	11	78.57%	5	29.41%
Q6C) How comfortable do you feel telling the instructors what you wanted to do, or when you don't like certain things?								
RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all)	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	0	0.00%	2	11.76%
RESPONSE = 2 (A little)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	23.53%
RESPONSE = 3 (Somewhat)	1	9.09%	3	21.43%	2	14.29%	4	23.53%
RESPONSE = 4 (Very much)	4	36.36%	4	28.57%	4	28.57%	1	5.88%
RESPONSE = 5 (Totally)	6	54.55%	6	42.86%	8	57.14%	6	35.29%
Q6F) Do you feel like the staff or instructors are caring and supportive of the kids in your group?								
RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	13.33%
RESPONSE = 2 (A little)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
RESPONSE = 3 (Somewhat)	0	0.00%	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	2	13.33%
RESPONSE = 4 (Very much)	4	36.36%	3	25.00%	1	7.14%	7	46.67%
RESPONSE = 5 (Totally)	7	63.64%	8	66.67%	13	92.86%	4	26.67%
Q6G) I would recommend this group to friends or others								
RESPONSE = 1 (Not at all)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	2	13.33%
RESPONSE = 2 (A little)	0	0.00%	1	8.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
RESPONSE = 3 (Somewhat)	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	7.14%	4	26.67%
RESPONSE = 4 (Very much)	1	9.09%	4	33.33%	3	21.43%	1	6.67%
RESPONSE = 5 (Totally)	10	90.91%	7	58.33%	10	71.43%	8	53.33%

Appendix B: Updated survey questions

****Bolded questions** have either been modified from the previous survey or are new questions.*

1. I feel like I am good at many things
2. I have a lot to be proud of
3. I feel good about who I am
4. I feel I am able to do things as well as most people
5. It is important for me to get information to support my opinions
6. I develop ideas by gathering information
7. I think of possible results before taking action
8. I think about the world and WHY things are the way they are
9. There is a group of people my age I feel I am a part of
10. I have friends I am close to and trust completely
11. I feel like I belong when I'm with kids my own age
12. I feel like I belong when I'm in my neighborhood or community
13. I enjoy being at school
14. I do well in school
15. I have goals to do better in school
16. Doing well in school is important to me
17. I think the things I learn at school are important
18. I work hard at school
19. My school is an important part of my community
20. I think that I will go to college or university
- 21. I plan to continue the ABACUS program until I graduate from elementary school**
- 22. I plan to join the Raise The Grade program when I am in high school**
23. When faced with most problems, I am able to think carefully and solve the problem well
24. I have friends who encourage and support me
25. I get along well with kids my age
26. I can ask my teachers for help when I need it
27. I know where to get help for problems I might face
28. Programs, like this one, are important for kids my age
29. I enjoy the ABACUS program
- 30. I feel like the ABACUS program promotes a positive environment.**
- 31. I feel like the ABACUS program is a place where I feel comfortable sharing my ideas.**
- 32. I feel like the ABACUS program is a place where people trust one another.**
- 33. I feel comfortable telling the staff or instructors when I don't want to do certain things.**

34. I feel like I have a lot of input into activities and discussions in ABACUS.
35. I feel like ABACUS covers a good variety of topics.
36. I feel like there are a lot of different things to do in ABACUS.
37. I feel like the staff are caring and supportive.
38. I feel the staff help me get more involved in the community.
39. I feel like the staff help me reach my goals.
40. I feel like the staff are mentors to me.
41. I would recommend the ABACUS program to friends or others.
42. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix C: Focus group – Ground rules

Ground rules are important for the focus group interview in order to make sure that everyone is being treated with respect. These ground rules should be discussed with the members before the focus group interview begins. These ground rules may be based off of current ground rules of the ABACUS program or the Boys and Girls Club. Below are some suggestions that can be included in the ground rules that you create. You can also consider creating the ground rules with the members before the focus group interviews to identify what is important to them.

In the Focus Group Guide introduction, there is a section where the ground rules are discussed. This section should be edited based on what specific ground rules the facilitator, note taker, focus group members and the ABACUS staff find suitable.

Examples of Ground Rules:

- If you want to talk, raise your hand.
- It is important to remember to let everyone have the chance to speak and not to interrupt anyone when they are talking.
- It is important to know that there is no right or and wrong answers and that everyone's opinion is valuable.
- We all need to respect each other's opinions, thoughts and experiences.
- It is important to remember that what is said in this room stays in this room. Nothing that we talk about today should be shared with anyone outside this room.
- There are some members in this group that might not want to participate in this discussion. We will not pressure these members to participate, and we will respect their decisions.
- It is important to stay on topic. Please try not to cause any distraction.
- If you need clarification on a question, do not be shy to ask.

Appendix D: Focus group – Full guide and script

Hi everyone. Today, [names of facilitator(s) / note taker] are going to be asking you questions about the ABACUS program. We are trying to understand what you're taking away from the program and if there are any ways, we can make it better.

We are going to ask [33 - insert final number of questions] questions about the ABACUS program. We are going to split you into smaller groups of 6-10 members so that when we can ask you questions, everyone can get a chance to share their answers and opinions. What we talk about today will help the ABACUS team figure out how to improve the ABACUS program for you and future members. Does anyone have questions about what we're about to do?

[Members break into groups - this should be decided by ABACUS staff beforehand]

Before we begin our talk, we want to go over some basic ground rules (*Below are recommendations to be included in the ground rules. They can be edited based on specific needs/values/rules of the ABACUS program. See "Focus Group Ground Rules" document for tips on developing ground rules. One developed, include all the ground rules below*):

- Everyone's views are welcomed and important.
 - It is important to remember to let everyone have the chance to speak and not to interrupt anyone when they are talking. It is also important to know that there are no right or and wrong answers and that everyone's opinion is valuable.
 - We may step in to make sure everyone has a chance to speak, and we may also step in if we feel the talk is going off topic.
- Everything that's said in this group should stay in the group.
 - This means that you should not tell anyone about another member's answers.
 - What we say in this group stays in this group.
- Your participation in this group is voluntary.
 - You do not have to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable answering.
 - If you don't want to participate, feel free to sit silently and listen.
- This group discussion will not be longer than 1 hour.

Use of Tape Recorder – if you are ok with it, this focus group will be audio-recorded to make it easier to understand your answers.

- The recordings and written scripts will be securely stored in a Google Drive folder that only the ABACUS staff has access to.
- We will also be taking notes during the discussion.
- If you don't want to be audio-recorded, feel free to sit silently and not participate.

We might ask you to clarify things that we do not fully understand. If at any point you like you need a break, please let us know and we can take a short break. We will also ask if you need a break half-way through the discussion.

Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

We are going to start the discussion now. If you do not want to participate, it's okay. We just ask that you sit here but you do not have to answer any of the questions.

FULL QUESTIONS:

Ice breaker questions

Consider asking easy questions to get the children more comfortable with talking. Some examples include:

1. How was your day today?
2. Can you tell me about something cool that you did this week?

General Feedback

1. What were your favourite parts about ABACUS?
2. What did you learn from ABACUS?

Member's attitude towards learning

1. Who here likes school? (Count the number of hands)
2. (For those that raise their hands) What do you like about school?
3. Who here does not like school? (Count the number of hands)
4. (For those that raise their hands) What do you not like about school?
5. Since you started coming to ABACUS, have your feelings about school changed in any way? Can you explain how they have changed?
6. Did you learn anything in the ABACUS program that has helped you in school?
 - i. Prompt: Can you give examples of ABACUS activities that have helped you?
 - ii. Prompt: How did these activities help you in school?

Member's interest in/commitment to secondary education

1. Raise your hand if you are looking forward to going to high school? (Count the number of hands).
2. What parts of high school are you excited for?
3. What parts of high school are you not excited for or nervous about?
4. Have your feelings about going to high school changed since you have been in the ABACUS program? How so?
5. Can you give examples of the skills you think you might need when you start going to high school?
 - i. Prompt: What I mean by skill is something that you can do to help you do well at something. For example, one skill that helps me run a community program is being able to talk in front of groups of people like this.
 - ii. Further prompt if needed: What skills do you think you will need to do your homework, get good grades on assignments or tests? / What skills do you think you need when you meet new people and when you try to make new friends?
6. Did you do or learn anything in ABACUS that helped give you the skills you need for high school? If so, what?
7. Is there anything you wished you could have learned with ABACUS to help prepare you for high school?

Member's interest in/commitment to post-secondary education

1. Raise your hand if you have gone on a field trip to any Universities or Colleges? (Count the number of hands)
2. What did you like about those field trips?
3. Is there anything you didn't like about those field trips?
4. What was the most important thing you learned from those field trips?
5. Does anyone here want to go to University or College? (Count the number of hands)
6. For those that said yes, can you tell me why you want to go to University or College?

7. For those that didn't raise their hand, can you tell me why you don't want to go to University or College?
 - i. Prompt: When did you make this decision?
8. For those that do not want to go to University or College, what would you like to do after high school instead?
9. Did being in the ABACUS program help you decide whether or not you want to go to University or College? How so?

Community involvement and positive mentorship

1. How did you get along with the Abacus staff?
 - i. Prompt: What do you like about the program staff?
 - ii. Prompt: Is there anything you didn't like about the program staff?
2. Did the program staff teach you anything particularly special? If so, what?
 - i. Prompt: Did you feel like you got any good advice or ideas for your own life?
3. Is anyone currently involved in any other community groups, volunteer positions or sports teams? (Count the number of hands)
4. Do you think it is important to be involved in your community? If so, why?
5. Since participating in the ABACUS program, have you been encouraged to become involved in your community? If yes, who has encouraged you to become involved in your community?
6. How does it feel to be involved in the ABACUS program?
 - i. Prompt: Are there times that this program makes you feel good?
 - ii. Prompt: Are there times that this program does not make you feel good?

Suggestions for improvements to the ABACUS program

1. If you could change anything about the ABACUS program, what would it be?
 - i. Prompt: Could the ABACUS program activities be changed in any way to make them more helpful to you?

Those are all the questions we have for you. Before we finish our discussion, does anyone have anything they would like to add (Prompt: what you liked, what you didn't like, what you learned)?

Thank you for participating in this discussion!