

## **Students in Ferguson Schools Respond Positively to After-school Chess Clubs**

In fall 2015, Ascension financed an after-school chess program in the Ferguson-Florissant School District in a partnership with the Saint Louis Chess Club and Scholastic Center. Eighteen clubs at 16 different schools were created in the first semester of the program. These schools serve a highly disadvantaged population of students, with an average 79 percent free/reduced lunch rate an average percent minority of 88 percent.

The St. Louis Chess Club administered surveys to the students participating in the after-school chess clubs in Ferguson to gauge the effectiveness of the program.

Feedback surveys given to students in the fall sessions find that:

- **Nearly half of the students reported that they had never played chess before, while an additional third had only played a few times.**
- **85% of students say they look forward to school more on days when they have the Chess Club (20% somewhat agree, 65% strongly agree);**
- **94% of students report that the Chess Club has taught them that they can complete difficult tasks if they work hard (30% somewhat agree, 64% strongly agree);**
- **92% of students report that the Chess Club has made them more confident that they can learn difficult material (35% somewhat agree, 57% strongly agree);**
- **95% of students report that their experience in Chess Club make them want to challenge themselves more in the future (32% somewhat agree, 63% strongly agree) .**

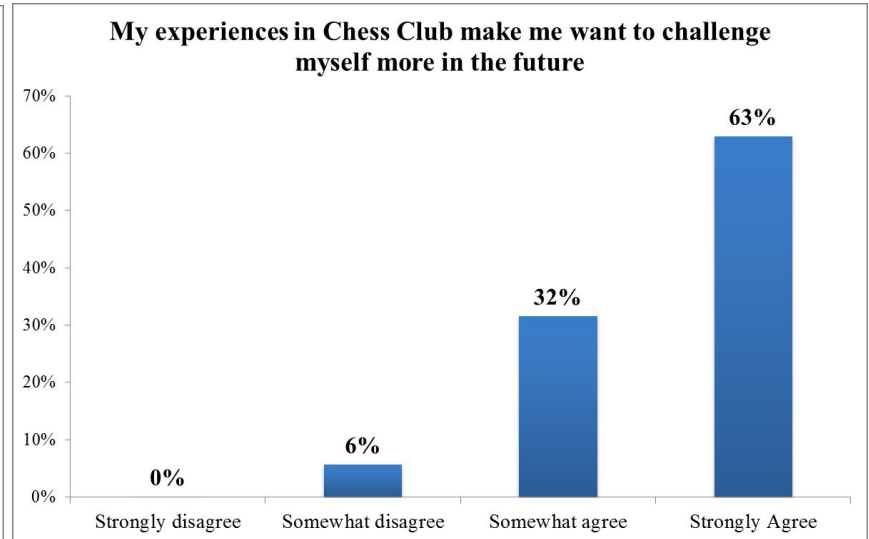
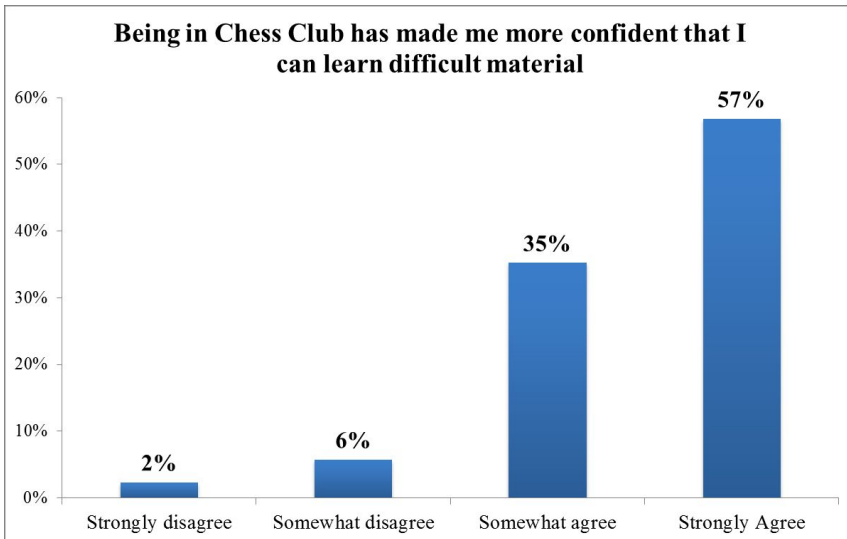
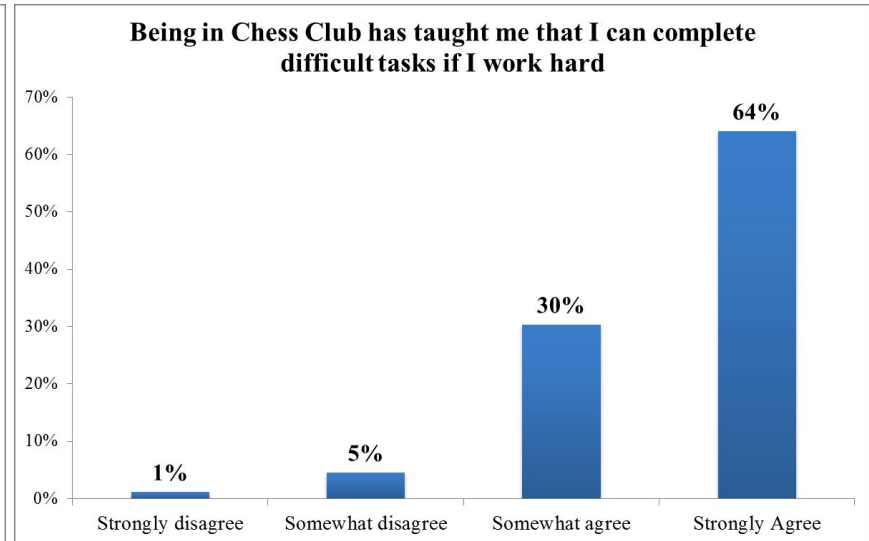
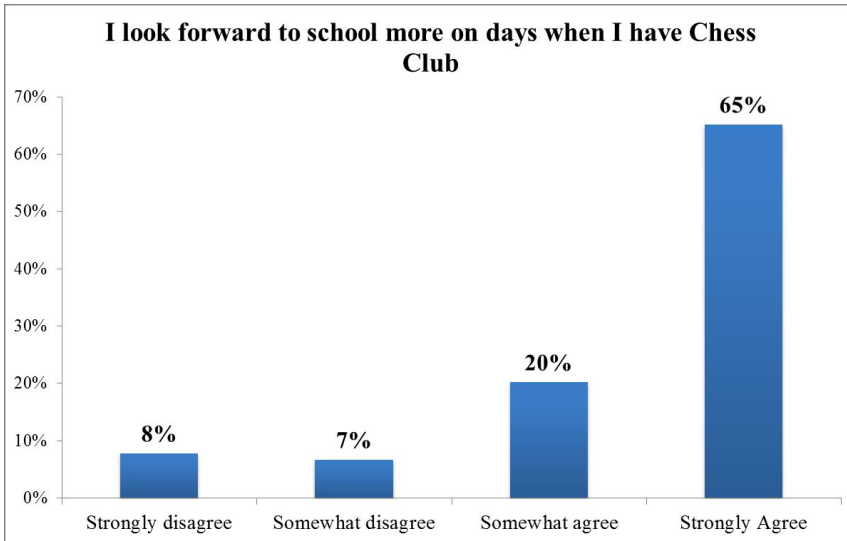
Additionally, a pre and post survey given to the students finds that participating in the after-school chess program:

- **Significantly increased the amount of time they spent playing chess with their family and friends;**
- **Significantly increased their confidence in their chess-playing abilities; and decreased their belief that chess is confusing.** In pre-surveys 32% strongly agreed that chess was something they were good at, in post surveys that number rose to 65%. At the same time, in pre-surveys 29% strongly disagreed that “chess is confusing.” In post-surveys, that number grew to 69%.

For questions about the survey data, contact [briankisida@gmail.com](mailto:briankisida@gmail.com)

- **Significantly increased their plans to continue playing chess when they are adults.** In pre-surveys 21% said they strongly agreed that they will play chess as an adult, in post-surveys that number grew to 43%.

In summary, the Saint Louis Chess Club and Scholastic Center's afterschool programs are producing numerous positive impacts for the students they serve in Ferguson-Florissant schools. Future research will continue to shed light on the benefits of this important program.



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