

# Students in Action: Fostering a K-12 School and University Partnership to Promote Community Engagement and Professional Development through Bi-Annual Conferences

Jackson Stone, Nate Albin, Haley Zeri, & Dr. Jason Ware

## Background

- Students in Action (SIA) is an initiative implemented in K-12 schools to provide students with the skills to lead service-learning projects.<sup>1</sup>
- Service-learning can take many forms, but it follows 3 main principles. (1) People being served are able to control their services, (2) members being served can become equipped to serve others, (3) through serving they become learners and have control over what is learned.<sup>2</sup>
- To continue providing professional development opportunities to SIA students, we formed a conference committee.



## Conference Planning

- As the conference committee, we coordinated all conference logistics and facilitated communication between attendees.
- We developed engaging, personalized sessions and activities for the students that were sensitive to students' varying skill level.
- The conference facilitated inter-school conversations, allowing students to connect with other students in their community.
- As Purdue students, our connection with the community enhanced our ability to plan a tailored conference experience.



## Implications

- Students and teachers viewed the conference positively, with multiple common themes emerging from narrative and observational data.
- The conference helped foster connections across schools through discussions and activities made possible through a collaborative environment.
- Additionally, our activities and lessons were engaging and beneficial for students of varying experience levels.
- The conference left students feeling inspired and prepared to execute their service-learning projects with new knowledge and skills.

## Future Directions

- We hope our work can serve as the foundation for other universities or organizations nationwide to support youth service-learning initiatives based on our framework.
- We will continue to utilize student and advisor feedback to improve conferences.

We would like to thank the SIA students and advisors at Jefferson, McCutcheon, Oakland, and Tecumseh, along with our advisor, Dr. Jason Ware, for their collaboration on this project.

## References

