

A large, stylized graphic of the American flag is positioned on the left side of the page. It features a dark blue field with a white star in the upper left, and horizontal stripes of red and white below. The graphic is partially cut off by the left edge of the page. The background of the page is split into a dark blue vertical band on the left and a dark red horizontal band at the top.

## **Experiments in Political Socialization: Kids Voting USA as a Model for Civic Education Reform**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes how an innovative curriculum promoted the civic development of high school students along with parents by stimulating news media attention and discussion in families. Evidence is based on a three-year evaluation of Kids Voting USA, an interactive, election-based curriculum. Political communication in the home increased the probability of voting for students when they reached voting age during the 2004 election. Thus, the interplay of influences from school and family magnified curriculum effects in the short term and sustained them in the long term. This bridging of the classroom with the living room suggests how Kids Voting offers a model for reforming civic education in the United States.

Data are derived from a series of natural field experiments, beginning with interviews of 491 student-parent pairs in 2002. We evaluate the curriculum as it was taught in the fall of that year in El Paso County, CO, with Colorado Springs as the largest city; Maricopa, County, AZ, which includes the Phoenix region; and Broward/Palm Beach counties, FL, the epicenter for the ballot-recount saga of 2000. Students who were juniors or seniors in 2002 were interviewed in the fall/winter of 2002, 2003, and 2004. They were all of voting age by the fall of 2004, allowing us to determine whether participation in the curriculum in 2002 affected turnout in the presidential election two years later. We also interviewed one parent from each family each year. We examined the voting records in the four counties to provide a definitive assessment of whether the curriculum increased the likelihood of voting. Finally, we supplemented the panel survey data with qualitative insights obtained from focus group interviews.

Findings address the following research questions.

### WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF IMPACT IN CIVIC DEVELOPMENT?

Even as a brief school intervention, taught only during the final weeks of the 2002 campaign, Kids Voting stimulated news attention, cognition, discussion with parents and friends, deliberative dispositions, and civic identity. These results held up despite a rigorous block of demographic controls. The strongest impacts involved discussion inside and outside the family. As neophyte citizens, KVUSA students were much more responsive to the civic environment, much more attuned to political messages flowing from media and schools, and more willing to share their knowledge and opinions with parents and friends. The sheer size of their discussion networks had grown significantly. We consequently judge the breadth of Kids Voting's immediate effects as impressive in light of prior studies showing modest influence from standard civic instruction.

### CAN KIDS VOTING ACT AS A CATALYST FOR CIVIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE LONG RUN?

Perhaps the most striking results in this study involve outcomes in 2003, after the passage of one year. Not only did Kid Voting effects persist, they increased for some measures of cognition and deliberative habits, along with partisanship and ideology. The nature of Kids Voting influence involves the induction of habits that are self-perpetuating. From this perspective, we can evaluate KVUSA as a successful catalyst for deliberative democracy. Students remained receptive to independent learning opportunities that came along later, such as new controversies or the eruption of political debate at home or with friends.

Many of these effects waned when measured in 2004, but Kids Voting influence retained statistical significance for attention to Internet news, frequency of discussion with friends, testing opinions in conversations, support for unconventional activism, volunteering, and campus activism. While the curriculum did not affect voting in 2004 directly, it did animate the family as a setting for political discussion and media use, habits that eventually lead to voting.

Parents got caught up in their children's enthusiasm for politics. Student-parent conversations stimulated by Kids Voting in 2002 predicted the following measures of parent civic involvement in 2004: news attention, cognition, discussion inside and outside the home, deliberative habits, support for

unconventional participation, volunteering, and activism.

### **DOES KIDS VOTING NARROW OR WIDEN GAPS IN CIVIC INVOLVEMENT?**

Kids Voting appears to provide an added boost for minority and low-income students. We found this to be the case with Hispanic students in Colorado in 2002 and low-SES students across the three sites in 2004. While the evidence of closing gaps is confined to just a few areas of civic development, the results replicate findings from our prior evaluation of Kids Voting as taught in San Jose, CA.

### **WHAT COMPONENTS OF KIDS VOTING ARE MOST CONSEQUENTIAL?**

Of the 10 activities measured, three stood out as predictors of long-term civic development: frequent classroom discussions about election issues, teacher encouragement of opinion expression, and student participation in get-out-the-vote drives. These activities allow adolescents to practice communication skills and to build social confidence, dispositions that are easily transferred to other domains of civic engagement.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The single most important lesson from Kids Voting is the benefit of integrating influences from schools, families, media, elections, and peer groups. Working independently from each other, these entities are often ineffective as agents of political socialization, as many prior studies conclude. However, once they are integrated in an election-based curriculum, they create a kind of political immersion for students. Adolescents draw knowledge and opinions from multiple sources, allowing them to compare opinions and to contemplate their options for civic identity.

The findings suggest the following recommendations.

#### ***1. Incorporate parents.***

Families represent proximal zone of learning in which students can practice the communication skills promoted in school. The inculcation of student-parent discussion about politics makes the home a powerful incubator for civic growth.

#### ***2. Deploy media in civic learning.***

Some Kids Voting activities directly involve media, as when students deconstruct political ads, but curriculum effects show how media use is promoted indirectly. When students realize they will be called upon to discuss or to debate a political issue in class, they turn to news media to arm themselves with knowledge. This utilitarian motivation to pay attention evolves into a genuine interest in the news, resulting in regular news consumption habits.

#### ***3. Teach to coincide with big political events.***

A great deal of research on civic education is based on the assumption of gradual, incremental learning. By contrast, the results here portray civic growth as occurring in spurts, in the context of the final weeks of election campaigns. Schools should take advantage of big political events such as elections, school board debates, and city council controversies.

#### ***4. Translate classroom instruction into community activism.***

Lesson plans should include activities such as student campaigns that mobilize adults to vote. Practicing political skills beyond walls of the classroom empowers adolescents and heightens political efficacy.

**5. Promote discussion on topics of greatest relevance to youth.**

Our focus group students were quite insistent that they should have the right to express political opinions among peers in the classroom. Furthermore, they argued that teachers should structure discussion around issues that are of greatest relevance to teenagers. And we know from our statistical analysis that the development of issue salience leads to opinion formation, resulting in motivation for voting. Relevant issues represent a connection to the political system, perhaps more so than ideology, partisanship, or parents' political preferences.

**6. Do not shy away from topical debates.**

When not properly structured, discussion of controversial issues in the classroom is risky given the potential wrath of parents. However, we must conclude from the survey and focus-group findings that schools should accept this risk. There are multiple benefits that accrue from peer discussion about topical issues, including increased news attention, political conversations with parents, opinion formation, and motivation for voting.

**7. Do not give up on low-income students.**

The literature on civic instruction is replete with pessimism about the capacity of civic education to promote equality of opportunities for political growth. Kids Voting defies these expectations, at least for some outcomes. These equalizing effects occur because Kids Voting helps to transform norms for communication in minority and low-income families.

**8. Promote citizenship beyond voting.**

We have kept in mind that Kids Voting officials and supporters will be curious about any curriculum connections with electoral participation. The results in aggregate, however, point to a broad vision of civic development. Students learned how to converse about politics so that even as they expressed their own opinions, they became more willing to listen to opponents. And even as they grew more supportive of conventional activities such as voting, they also identified more strongly with alternative expressions of citizenship such as participating in boycotts and protests. Schools should provide deliberative exercises so that adolescents can reflect upon the many dimensions of politics in which civic commitment is experienced.

*I told my dad, "Dad, you need to vote."*

*My dad likes to yell at the television all the time when he watches the news. We have that caught on tape. Usually I like to challenge my dad on his views.*

--Kids Voting students, Broward County, Florida

## BACKGROUND

The relationship between schools and families in civic education is often described as problematic, if not worrisome. Many teachers feel that they must tip toe around touchy topics to avoid rousting partisan parents (Hess, 2004). Research dating back to the 1970s suggests that children and adolescents are particularly attuned to what might upset parents and eagerly report back to them about classroom sessions that involve controversial books or contentious discussions (Jenning, 1975). Often, families are seen as obstacles to what schools strive to accomplish. In a national study of instruction influence, Niemi and Junn (1998, p. 116) concluded:

"Schools can offer more and better courses, as well as other school experiences, and they might in this way alter students' interest as well as lessen gender and racial-ethnic differences. But schools have no direct control over such home factors as television viewing, and they surely cannot alone solve the problem of racial and ethnic differences."

When not described as barriers to political learning, families are often portrayed as simply redundant vis a vis schools (e.g., Langton & Jennings, 1968). In the 1960s and 1970s, social studies courses were deemed inconsequential for older adolescents because they repeated messages already heard from parents, media, and friends. Many political scientists subsequently gave up entirely on trying to document influences of high school courses on civic development.

Leaving aside for a moment this pessimism, we can imagine what might happen if schools and

families interacted more productively as spheres for civic growth. Specifically, what would happen if students regularly initiated conversations with parents about ideas they were exposed to in class? How would parents respond? Fortunately, we do not have to speculate. Here we evaluate the long-term influence of Kids Voting USA, an interactive curriculum taught during the final months of election campaigns. We will show how KVUSA accounts for direct effects on high school students' news attention, political knowledge, discussion with parents and friends, and attitudinal support for civic activism. We then illustrate how Kids Voting's immediate influence is sustained by the inculcation of family political discussion, which provides motivation for voting and other forms of civic participation long after the curriculum ends. We trace back these influences to the specific components of Kids Voting to identify the most consequential activities. Finally, we explore curriculum effects on parents via student-initiated discussion.

Data are derived from a series of field experiments, allowing us to compare the civic involvement of Kids Voting students and parents with non-KV families. We will evaluate the curriculum as it was taught in the fall of 2002 in El Paso County, CO, with Colorado Springs as the largest city; Maricopa, County, AZ, which includes the Phoenix region; and Broward/Palm Beach counties, FL, the epicenter for the ballot-recount saga of 2000. Students who were juniors or seniors in 2002 were interviewed in the fall/winter of 2002, 2003, and 2004. They were all of voting age by the fall of 2004, allowing us to determine whether participation in the curriculum in 2002 affected turnout in the presidential election two years later. We also interviewed one parent from each family each year. We examined the voting records in the four counties to provide a definitive assessment of whether Kids Voting increased the likelihood of student and parent voting. Finally, we supplemented the panel survey data with qualitative insights obtained from focus group

interviews of students in 2003 and 2005.

### **INTERPLAY OF SCHOOL-FAMILY INFLUENCE**

For pragmatic purposes, researchers usually study schools and families separately as institutions of political socialization. Typically evaluations of civic curricular involve demographic measures, which are intended to show how schools might have some effect beyond what would be predicted by family influence. But controlling for family influences statistically does not allow for an investigation of how schools and families might interact with each other. Furthermore, a dearth of longitudinal panel studies—in which the same subjects are interviewed multiple times—has made it difficult to untangle the separate and interactive influences of home and school. Beyond these limitations of method, theory in political development is murky when it comes to imaging how schools and families might relate to each other as agents of political development. Standard demographics such as socioeconomic status (SES), while potent predictors of political involvement (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995), do not identify the actual characteristics of families that make a difference in civic development.

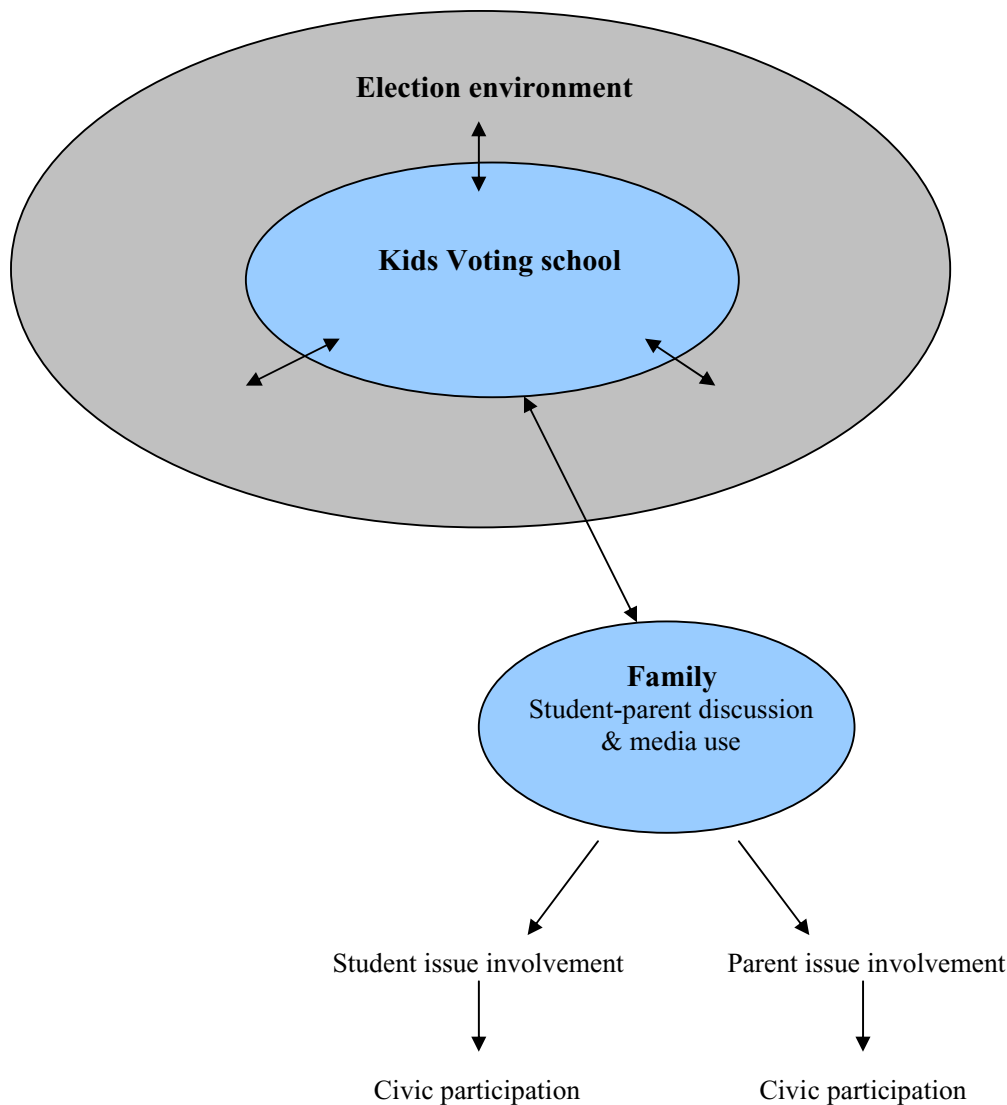
In combination with each other, the following design elements will allow us to track developmental pathways that remained hidden in prior studies of civic learning:

- dyadic interviews with students and parents from the same families.
- panel data to account for changes within the same individuals over time.
- civic development indicators that span many possible dimensions of curriculum influences.
- confirmation of voting turnout.
- triangulation of survey and focus group methods.

In our theoretical approach, Kids Voting schools draw upon the stimulation of a campaign environment to cultivate student interest in electoral politics. As students connect with certain issues and candidates and begin to form tentative impressions, they engage parents in conversations about the upcoming election and pay more attention to campaign news. Figure 1

helps us to illustrate what happens next. All of this political communication at home should feed back to the classroom as students become confident and politically aware, and more willing to express opinions among peers. The initial conversations lead to habitual political discussion as a regular feature of family life. Accompanied by increased attention to news media, family discussion allows students and parents to coax each other along toward sustained growth in terms of knowledge, issue involvement, and opinion sophistication. Over time, this animation of the family as a setting for political communication provides motivation for student and parent civic participation.

Figure 1: The Flow of Influence from Kids Voting



### KIDS VOTING USA

In the 1970s and 1980s, evaluations of civic curricula usually determined that effects were minimal beyond the direct transmission of textbook knowledge. In interpreting their data, Jennings and Niemi (1974) went so far as to suggest that students might begin to actively resist social studies instruction by the time they reach adolescence. However, recent studies show that participatory curricula—and classroom discussion of topical issues in particular—do contribute to civic development of older adolescents (Niemi & Junn, 1998).

Kids Voting USA is part of a national movement to promote the *Civic Mission of Schools* (Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2003). Innovations and reforms are motivated by stark declines in youth voting turnout dating back to the 1960s. We have seen an upsurge of electoral engagement among young adults following the drama of the last two elections for president, but research nonetheless shows generational declines in attention to news and interest in politics (Bennett, 2000). Findings from tests of teenagers' knowledge of public affairs would be laughable, except that the implications

for democracy are chilling. The good news is that the near crisis of youth civic disengagement has motivated promising initiatives in civic education such as the extension of service learning to political activism and uses of new technology to create simulations such as online diplomatic negotiations.

The nonpartisan, nonprofit Kids Voting USA began as a pilot program in 1988 in Arizona and went statewide in 1990. KVUSA currently encompasses 4.3 million students in 30 states, involving 200,000 teachers and 50,000 volunteers in 10,600 schools and 17,000 voter precincts. The curriculum is taught during election years during the final months before Election Day so that teachers can gear lesson plans toward candidate races and news coverage. Even in the current era of innovation, Kids Voting represents a distinctive approach by virtue of its holistic strategy of reaching out from the classroom into the community. This is illustrated in Figure 1 by the arrows that extend from the immediate school setting to the larger environments of electoral politics. KVUSA students participate in get-out-the-vote drives to promote electoral turnout, for example. They dissect political advertisements and carefully monitor news coverage of candidates in anticipation of classroom debates. They bring the curriculum home as well in activities such as interviewing parents about their personal voting histories.

Kids Voting works by integrating many of the important institutions for political socialization: the school, student peer groups, families, news media, and elections. It is this synergistic strategy that makes Kids Voting stand out among the many current initiatives in civic education and in youth activism. A kind of political immersion results during the final weeks before Election Day, allowing students to compare and to integrate knowledge, perspectives, and opinions from multiple sources, including teachers, media, peers, and parents.

Kids Voting deploys a multi-pronged approach through experiential learning that relies on group-problem solving, peer discussion, and cooperative activities. Lesson plans are designed for each grade level (K-12). The overall curriculum includes three areas. Civics Alive! refers to

classroom instruction that covers the history and the rights of voting. It also promotes the concept of deliberative democracy—i.e., responsible citizens study and discuss electoral issues before coming to judgment. Meanwhile, KVUSA reaches out to parents and to bilingual communities with Family Guide/Guía Familiar. Examples of activities are students creating a family election album and acting as political reporters to interview family members about their views on voting. KVUSA also provides service learning for high school students via Destination Democracy. The older students mentor younger children, register adult voters, and work for candidates. Finally, students cast ballots alongside parents thanks to the coordination of local election officials and a cadre of volunteers at voting stations. Local journalists are fond of reporting the results, documenting the extent that students agree (or disagree) with parents on ballot questions.

## PRIOR RESEARCH

Kids Voting represents an intervention in the normal occurrences of a child's life and in the regular structure of school instruction. When fully implemented in a community, the program offers a good deal of political stimulation for students in a short amount of time. The interventionist nature makes KVUSA an ideal program to study from a social science perspective as participating communities provide natural laboratories. Bruce Merrill and James Simon conducted the first studies of Kids Voting effects and reported positive assessments from students and teachers, coupled with increased voting turnout of parents (Merrill, Simon, & Adrian, 1994; Simon & Merrill, 1998). They concluded that Kids Voting elevates parent turnout by 3 to 5 percent.

The first author of this report has supervised a series of studies that have explored how Kids Voting interacts with family life. San Jose, CA, in 1994 provided the setting for our first evaluation of Kids Voting. We found that the program prompted news attention, knowledge, discussion with friends and parents, and opinions about candidates and issues (McDevitt & Chaffee, 1998). We also detected a pattern of effects that seemed odd at



the time. Parents were somehow affected by the curriculum even though they were never directly exposed to it. Like their children, KVUSA parents were more likely to pay attention to news, to talk about politics outside the home, and to acquire stronger opinions during the election campaign. A statistical path model identified student-initiated discussion as the causal mechanism (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2000).

This trickle-up influence of students on parents was particularly pronounced in low-SES families. While parents from this demographic background typically are not socialized to politics in their own youth, student-initiated conversations provided them with a second chance at citizenship. Students and parents from low-SES families gained the most from Kids Voting in comparison to families of higher income levels, illustrating the capacity of the program to promote equality of civic engagement. In a separate evaluation of the same program, Jack McLeod at the University of Wisconsin-Madison showed that the curriculum reduced the gender gap for election knowledge (McLeod, Eveland, & Horowitz, 1998). While boys benefited as well, girls increased substantially their frequency of political discussion with parents and peers.

A subsequent evaluation of Kids Voting was conducted during the 2000 election campaign in Lubbock, TX. In a process that we call developmental provocation, students poked and prodded parents in political conversations during the final weeks of the campaign and during the drama of the Florida ballot recounts (McDevitt, in press). These discussions were sometimes met with parent admonitions. But students benefited nonetheless from parent feedback as the knowledge of parents' views helped them to form their own opinions and to acquire an autonomous political identity.

## RESEARCH GOALS

This study represents the first longitudinal study of Kids Voting effects based on interviewing students and parents several times over a multi-year period. Our data allows us to answer four research questions about the nature and magnitude

of curriculum influence.

### ***1. What is the scope of impact in civic development?***

This curriculum evaluation is unusual in the breadth of measures used to document effects. We will redress a tendency in prior studies to ignore critical conceptions of how civic growth proceeds. "In many cases, important indicators are overlooked altogether, among them a tolerance for diversity (of people and ideas), the ability and willingness to engage in civil discourse, and the ability to analyze news and information critically" (The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2003). In this study, we incorporate some traditional measures for the purpose of replication and comparison with prior evaluations of Kids Voting effects. However, many of the indicators are used for the first time as measures of influence on students and parents. In the area of media use and cognition, our metrics for civic development include attention to news, knowledge, awareness (or salience) of political issues, and the ability to integrate new information from media and discussion. For interpersonal communication, student and parent measures include frequency of discussion inside and outside the family and size of discussion networks. We also developed measures that represent principles of deliberative democracy. These include listening to opposing views, willingness to disagree openly, and testing out opinions in conversations to see how people respond and to assess whether opinions are persuasive.

According to theoretical perspectives on deliberative citizenship, all of these communication behaviors should lead to civic identity and actual participation in the political system. Our identity measures include partisan and ideological identification, support for conventional politics, and support for unconventional activism (such as participating in boycotts or protests). The indicators for participation are volunteering, activism, and voting in 2004.

**2. Can Kids Voting act as a catalyst for civic involvement in the long run?**

This study fills gaps in prior research on KVUSA, which has been limited to immediate and short-term influence. We should keep in mind that Kids Voting is only taught during the final weeks of an election campaign. If the program is to have a lasting impact, it must inculcate habits that are self-sustaining. In this respect, the family provides a setting for political communication that might magnify and perpetuate the initial influence of KVUSA (Figure 1).

**3. Does Kids Voting narrow or widen gaps in civic involvement?**

Political participation in the United States is highly stratified by socioeconomic status (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995). This is the case for voting, news media use, discussion about politics, and many other dimensions of active citizenship. The same pattern occurs along ethnic lines, with white parents and children more involved in comparison with members of minority families. We will see whether Kids Voting can alleviate some of the disparities of civic involvement associated with family background.

**4. What components of Kids Voting are most consequential?**

Kids Voting represents a multifaceted approach. Our prior evaluations focused primarily on the influence of the entire curriculum. In this study, after examining prior research on curriculum effects and after looking at Kids Voting lesson plans, we identified four clusters of activities

that would seem to hold the most promise for generating civic growth:

- Peer discussion: When students are asked to talk about election issues and candidates, they learn from each other and create peer norms for civic competence. Activities such as classroom debates motivate students to pay more attention to news media and to ask parents about issues as they seek out information and opinions.
- Media literacy: Some KVUSA lesson plans include the analysis of media, as when students examine political cartoons and campaign ads. These exercises should increase sophistication about news coverage and candidate strategy, providing opportunities for students to get caught up in the ongoing drama of a campaign.
- Civic/community involvement: Service learning and voter-outreach enable students to participate in politics beyond classroom walls. Experiential learning creates opportunities for adolescents to build self-efficacy as they see for themselves that they are making a difference.
- Family activities: Homework assignments that involve parents and siblings should motivate family discussion about issues and candidates.

**METHODS**

As described in Figure 2, the overall study is conducted in three phases, representing the consecutive years of student and parent interviews. The first phase (T1) involved interviews of juniors and seniors, along with one parent from each family, following the 2002 election. The curriculum had been implemented during the initial months of the school year to coincide with the end of the

Figure 2: Panel Design: Three Waves

	<i>First Phase (T1)</i>		<i>Second Phase (T2)</i>	<i>Third Phase (T3)</i>
	September to Election Day 2002	November 2002 to February 2003	November 2003 to March 2004	November 2004 to January 2005
	Election campaign			Election campaign
Students:	Kids Voting for experimental group	S1 interview	S2 interview	S3 interview
Parents:		P1 interview	P2 interview	P3 interview

campaign. S1 and P1 in Figure 2 represent the first wave of student and parent interviews. S2 and P2 signify the interviews of the same respondents, which occurred one year after the curriculum experience. S3 and P3 indicate interviews conducted after Election Day of 2004, or two years after the curriculum exposure. (For the sake of terminology, we will refer to the young adults at T2 and T3 as Kids Voting students or control-group students, but many would have graduated from high school in 2003 and virtually all would have graduated by 2004).

### **Quasi-Experimental Design**

We are taking advantage of field settings that create conditions for a series of natural experiments. The study sites—El Paso County, CO; Maricopa County, AZ; and Broward/Palm Beach counties, FL—include both Kids Voting schools and a comparison group of schools. Similar demographics between the two groups allows us to eliminate extraneous factors as explanations for Kids Voting effects. The design does not fit entirely the requirements for a fully controlled experiment in that we could not randomly assign students to contrasting conditions. We consequently characterize this study as a quasi-experiment, in

which a student's selection to comparison groups is unbiased but not literally randomized (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). That is, a student's participation in KVUSA was determined by decisions made by school administrators and teachers. We confirmed in a statistical analysis that student ethnicity, gender, and grades earned in school were not correlated with exposure to the curriculum. We also examined the influence of parents' SES and their history of political interest, as indicated by their frequency of voting in prior elections. As Table 1 shows, the demographic predictors make no significant contribution to variance explained in multiple regression. The "R<sup>2</sup>" of .01 indicates that all of the measures taken together account for only 1 percent of the variance in student exposure to Kids Voting.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1: Effects of Demographics and Parent Prior Voting on Student Exposure to Kids Voting (Multiple Regression)

Predictors	r	beta
Ethnicity (white)	.03	.02
Student gender (male)	-.06	-.06
Grades earned in school	.04	.02
Family SES	.03	.01
Parent prior voting	.06	.06
R <sup>2</sup>		.01

Kids Voting programs vary from community to community depending on the amount of volunteer support and the discretion of district administrators and individual teachers. Instructors in most school districts have a great deal of autonomy in how they teach curriculum components, and in this case any given teacher might decide to use all, some, or none of the Kids Voting lesson plans. Consequently, we conceptualize Kids Voting exposure as a continuous variable rather than dichotomous. The sites thus do not create for us clearly contrasting experiment vs. control group conditions. All of the students and parents could have been exposed to various forms of political stimulation from school activities, electoral events, or news coverage. And we expect that many teachers who did not formally adopt the Kids Voting curriculum could have used similar lesson plans. However, the diffusion of Kids Voting activities within many but not all classrooms added to variation in the types and intensity of civics instruction.

### **Site Selection**

Data collection from several regions adds further to variation in activities such as the frequency of classroom debates about candidates. The three sites—one in the Southwest, one in the Rocky Mountain West, and one in the Southeast—increase our capacity to make generalized inferences about the processes and outcomes of curriculum influence. Furthermore, each community

has a unique political environment provided by local candidates, issue controversies, and news coverage. Multiple field settings provide an opportunity to investigate how a school intervention might exert influence within the particular context of a community. We used the following selection criteria for the sites: strong implementation of Kids Voting, the existence of both Kids Voting and comparison schools, and diversity with respect to ethnicity and SES.<sup>2</sup> Descriptions of the electoral contexts for the three regions are provided in the Appendix.

### **Data Collection & Sampling**

We obtained lists of students and parents in the three study sites from a major vendor for sample frames. In each of the three data-collection waves, we began interviews in November— after the election in the case of 2002 and 2004. We used a combination of interview modes—mail back, telephone, and Web-based survey—and provided small incentives (\$5 phone cards). Data collection ended in February 2003 for the first wave, March 2004 for the second wave, and January 2005 for the final wave. Details of data collection procedures and response rates are provided in the Appendix.

Table 2 lists the number of respondents interviewed at each wave. A confluence of design factors created a daunting challenge for us in trying to achieve a high response rate at each interview wave. Adolescent children represent a difficult-to-reach population even for a one-shot,

Table 2: Numbers for Students & Parents Interviewed at Each Wave

	First Wave	Second Wave	Third Wave
Students	563	313	204
Parents	680	308	223
Total individuals	1243	621	427
Completed dyads	491	288	187

cross-sectional survey. But with our three-year time frame for consecutive interviews, we also had to stay in touch with the many respondents who are mobile as they leave home for work and college. Thus, we needed to keep up with them as they changed addresses and we needed to gain cooperation from both a parent and a student to complete a dyad. Meanwhile, the interview topics involved controversial issues (politics) and sensitive questions (about family interaction and parenting style). As we expected, there is substantial attrition from year to year, as shown in Table 2.

Our statistical analyses incorporate demographic and behavioral measures of both a student and a parent in a given family, and consequently we will use the Ns for completed dyads at each interview wave (491 at T1, 288 at T2, and 187 at T3).

The basic demographics for the student sample at T1 are as follows: 53% juniors and 47% seniors; 57% female and 43% male; 64% Anglo, 12% Hispanic, 7% African-American, 3% Asian, 1% Native American, and 13% "other." In terms of SES, 50% of the parents indicated that they graduated from college, and 75% said they earn at least \$41,000 annually. Appendix tables 1 and 2 provide demographic data for the student and parent samples. Attrition of respondents in data collection at T2 and T3 narrowed the demographic variance somewhat. The gender breakdown remained unchanged, and there was very little change in demographics from T2 to T3. However, there was some drop off of Hispanic families from T1 to T3 (12% to 8%). As expected, lower-income respondents were more likely to drop out of the study. Parents who said they earned at least \$41,000 annually climbed from 75% to 81% from T1 to T3.

### **Measures**

**Kids Voting participation.** A continuous scale represents the reality of Kids Voting implementation better than a dichotomous indicator in that a teacher might opt to use a component but not all of the curriculum. The T1 questionnaire included items to prompt recall of 10 Kids Voting experiences. Each item was

standardized and summed to form an index. No single item is definitive evidence of participation, but responses to the items collectively provide a probabilistic approach. Reliability ( $\alpha = .62$ ) is similar to that of the exposure scale used by McDevitt and Chaffee (2000) in their initial study of KVUSA in San Jose ( $\alpha = .67$ ). For the first two questions, students used a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "never" and 5 meaning "very often." Respondents were asked, "In school this fall, how often has the election been discussed in your classes?" and "How often have your teachers encouraged you to say what you think about politics, even if the topic is controversial?" Students then answered "yes" or "no" to questions about their school experiences from that year. These items asked whether they took sides in a debate, analyzed political cartoons, analyzed political ads, participated in a "service learning" program, worked at a polling site on Election Day, encouraged people to register to vote, did any homework assignments on the election that involved family participation, or voted with a parent on Election Day.

**Demographics.** The following demographics were assessed at T1 for students and parents: gender, ethnicity, religious group membership, state of origin, and family SES. We also measured student grade level and grades earned in school. We asked parents to report voting or non-voting in previous elections, which represents a variable not measured in prior evaluations of Kids Voting. This variable will help us to control for the effects of parent influence on student civic development prior to the school intervention. Item wording, coding and reliability scores are provided in the Appendix.

**Civic involvement.** We used identical or nearly identical wording for students and parents for the questionnaire items that made up the civic involvement indicators. We kept wording identical whenever practical for the items from year to year to allow for direct comparisons across time. The metrics for curriculum effects cover the following dimensions of political engagement: media use, cognition, discussion, deliberative habits, civic identity, and participation. Item wording, coding, and reliability scores are provided in the Appendix.

### **Validity**

Most of our indicators of civic development are based on self-reported behavior. These measures are subject to exaggeration or selective recall as respondents seek to make themselves appear more civic minded than they really are. However, our concerns about internal validity are alleviated due to several design elements:

- The questionnaires included a knowledge test for students and parents, creating an effect measure not subject to demand characteristics of the interview. If knowledge is then strongly correlated with curriculum exposure and other criterion indicators, there is evidence that the overall pattern of curriculum influence is real.
- A general bias in reports about civic involvement might not affect correlations across an entire sample in that adding a constant to everyone's score would not alter correlation coefficients. And while social desirability in survey responses is potentially related to particular attributes of respondents, we controlled for demographic influence in statistical tests of Kids Voting effects.
- The students—not their parents—were asked about participation in Kids Voting. Consequently, the questionnaire design reduces the chance that statistical associations between curriculum participation and parent behaviors would result as merely an artifact of measurement.

### **Voting Confirmation**

Because respondents are prone to exaggerate their civic involvement, we did not want to rely on self-reported accounts of voting in 2004. Instead we matched students' and parents' names and addresses with voter files from the four counties. We completed interviews with 427 students and parents in the third wave of interviews (Table 2). Using updated addresses obtained in the final interview, we checked the voting records for students and parents who claimed that they voted in 2004. Of the 427 respondents, we were able to confirm with voting records that 312 students and parents did vote in the four counties. Fifty-six respondents

acknowledged in the T3 interviews that they did not vote. That leaves us with 59 respondents whom we could not confirm as voters or non-voters. Of these, 47 respondents claimed in the interview that they voted in other counties but our budget did not allow for obtaining records beyond the counties in the three study sites. And 12 refused to name the county they voted in or to give their name when completing the survey.

### **Focus Groups**

We supplemented the survey data with focus group interviews in Florida in 2003 and in 2005. This triangulation of methods allows us to take advantage of both the external validity offered by a large, standardized data set and the insights produced by the more intimate settings of small-group conversation. We chose to conduct the focus groups in Broward County because of the demographic diversity of south Florida and its large immigrant population. The opportunity to talk with diverse groups of teenagers added value to the overall project given that the samples obtained for the standardized questionnaires were not as diverse as the populations themselves for the three regions. The high percentage of immigrant families in Broward allowed us to test a hypothesis derived from the trickle-up scenario. We will explore whether student-to-parent influence takes the form of first-generation Americans socializing parents to the host civic culture.

We conducted four focus groups of nine to ten students per group on May 8 and 9, 2003. Each session lasted approximately one hour. The students were all juniors or seniors. The Kids Voting director for Florida, along with school-district administrators, helped us to arrange the group discussions at Miramar and Stoneman Douglas high schools. Miramar serves a relatively low-SES population, with a high percentage African-American and Hispanic students, and Stoneman serves a higher-SES population. Each focus group was moderated by the co-principal investigator and videotaped.

On January 29, 2005, we conducted two additional focus group sessions in Broward County, this time assisted by Perceptive Market Research

of Gainesville, Florida. In selecting two high school sites, we again sought to compare a lower-income group of minority students to a higher-income group of primarily Caucasian students. The first group consisted of ten students from Pompano Beach High School and a second group of ten students came from Stoneman Douglas. Perceptive Market Research provided a moderator who is fluent in English and Spanish. The sessions were videotaped.

### **Effects on Students**

We begin with an overview of effects across the three interview waves. Table 3 reports results from partial correlation analysis in which we control first for student demographics and the parent's prior political involvement. Our intent is to create stringent test for evaluating Kids Voting. We are interested in whether KVUSA can stimulate civic development beyond what would be predicted by a student's demographic background. Factors such as grades received in school, gender, family income level, ethnicity, religious group membership, and parent political interest have all been shown in prior studies to be associated with civic development.<sup>3</sup> The partial correlations control for all of these variables, along with the year in school when the student was exposed to Kids Voting in 2002.<sup>4</sup> A parent's prior interest in politics is measured by the frequency with which he or she voted in recent elections.

Our media use measures for civic development include attention to political news and attention to Internet news. These represent important indicators of civic development as they reflect genuine interest in politics along with information resources for refining political knowledge. The third outcome variable is student encouragement of parents to pay attention to news. We developed this measure after documenting in prior studies the extent to which adolescents try to coax parents into political conversations. Here we will see if this trickle-up influence extends to family media use.

In terms of immediate effects in 2002, political news attention accounts for one of the strongest partial correlations in Table 3 ( $r = .32$ ,  $p$

$< .001$ ). Attention to Internet news was measured in 2003 and 2004 but not at T1. Kids Voting produced exactly the same partial correlation with students' encouraging parent news attention at T1. This latter finding suggests that the curriculum elevated news attention as a more central part of family life. Many family conversations likely accompanied efforts of adolescents to direct parents' attention to news articles and TV news shows.

Table 3: Longitudinal Effects of Kids Voting on Students (Partial Correlations)

	2002 (T1)	2003 (T2)	2004 (T3)
<u>Measures of civic involvement</u>			
<i>Media use</i>			
Attention to political news	.32***	.25***	.14
Attention to Internet news	n/a	.12	.23**
Encourage parent attention	.32***	.20**	.11
<i>Cognition</i>			
Political knowledge	.15**	.18**	.04
Issue salience	.16**	.23***	.02
Information integration	.26***	.26***	.15
<i>Discussion</i>			
With parents	.34***	.28***	.12
With friends	.38***	.28***	.17*
Size of discussion network	.33***	.31***	.13
<i>Deliberative habits</i>			
Listen to opponents	.12*	.24***	.14
Willingness to disagree	.24***	.33***	.09
Testing opinions for response	n/a	.25***	.10
Testing opinions to persuade	n/a	.21**	.16*
<i>Civic identity</i>			
Partisanship	.08	.10	.00
Ideology	.05	.15*	.01
Conventional participation	.24***	.14*	.09
Unconventional activism	.21***	.09	.21**
<i>Participation</i>			
Volunteering	n/a	.17*	.27***
Campus activism	n/a	.17*	.28***
Voted in 2004	n/a	n/a	.01

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

The partial correlations control for the following variables: ethnicity, year in school when exposed to Kids Voting in 2002, grades earned in 2002, gender, religious group membership, parent SES, and voting history of parent.

$N = 491$  dyads at T1 and 288 at T2. At T3,  $N = 187$  dyads for all analyses except “voted in 2004.” The  $N$  for voting is 158 dyads. This reduction is due to the loss of some respondents in the voting confirmation process.



Student participation in Kids Voting predicted all three dimensions of cognition at T1: knowledge, issue salience, and information integration. Knowledge, of course, is fundamental to any conception of active citizenship, but we also view this effect as a validity check for the media-use outcomes. Students were tested for knowledge of partisan politics during the interviews. They were asked, for example, to identify the party affiliations of General Wesley Clark and Richard Cheney. Through news attention or interpersonal communication, Kids Voting students were clearly paying more attention than non-KV students to the electoral environment ( $r = .15, p < .01$ ).

The concept of issue salience refers to the degree of importance that a respondent attributes to a public problem or controversy. The election ballots in Arizona, Colorado, and Florida in 2002 each featured a proposed amendment that received widespread news coverage. We asked respondents: How important is the issue of expanding gambling/restricting bilingual education/limiting class size in Arizona/Colorado/Florida? The Kids Voting effect on issue salience was similar in magnitude to the knowledge outcome ( $r = .16, p < .01$ ). The influence of KVUSA was even stronger with respect to information integration ( $r = .26, p < .001$ ). Information integration refers to the effort an individual gives to figure out the meaning or significance of new information in light of existing knowledge. Such integration is the foundation from which political sophistication arises and opinions crystallize.

As we saw in previous evaluations of Kids Voting, the strongest effects involve interpersonal communication. The impact of the program on student-parent discussion ( $r = .34, p < .001$ ) is particularly important as this represents the lynchpin behavior that connects the school with the family (Figure 1). We will have more to say about school-family interaction later, but for now we simply note that there is a definitive behavioral bridge that connects classroom and living room discussion. The effect sizes are similar for frequency of discussion with friends ( $r = .38, p < .001$ ) and the sheer size of discussion network ( $r = .33, p < .001$ ). These represent impressive

results in that they seem to signify an intrinsic, spontaneous desire of adolescents to exchange ideas and to share knowledge. Given that peer-centered interaction is so powerful as a learning process, these Kids Voting effects are noteworthy. By exposing themselves to a widening circle of discussants, students are presumably expanding their access to diverse perspectives on politics.

By deliberative habits, we refer to the interpersonal dispositions that reflect ideals as articulated by the philosophy of deliberative democracy. We see great value in applying this perspective to civic education in general, and to Kids Voting as a specific case. Schools embody “communities in which young people learn to interact, argue, and work together with others, an important foundation for future citizenship” (Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2003, p. 5). From this perspective, Kids Voting could be judged as successful if it instilled habits such as the willingness to listen to partisan opponents, the courage to disagree openly in conversations, and motivation to refine opinion by testing them out in discussion. In fact, the curriculum was significantly correlated with our two deliberative outcomes: listening to opponents ( $r = .12, p < .05$ ) and willingness to disagree ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ).

All of this political communication should provide a cognitive basis as well as social motivation for adopting a civic identity. Our measures of civic identity include traditional indicators of partisanship and ideology (regardless of direction). But in light of research showing that many young Americans do not identify with either of the two major parties, we also developed indicators of attitudinal support for conventional participation (e.g., voting, donating money to candidates) and support for unconventional activism (e.g., confronting police in a protest or joining a boycott). The results show that Kids Voting did not have an appreciable impact on partisanship or ideological identity but it did simulated support for conventional participation ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ) and for unconventional activism ( $r = .21, p < .001$ ).

Now we turn to the question as to whether

influence persisted, looking first at the outcomes as measured in 2003. We would describe the results in aggregate as quite remarkable. We have 14 dimensions of civic development in which there are measures at T1 and T2 and in six cases the KVUSA effects are actually stronger a year later. In one case the partial correlation is identical. Increases in Kid Voting influence after the passage of a year are evident in the areas of cognition, deliberative habits, partisanship, and ideology. We attribute these increases to the school intervention functioning as a catalyst for activities that became mutually reinforcing long after the curriculum ended. Kids Voting provided a temporary nudge, in other words, but the initially stimulated behaviors evolved into habits. And while there is also a pattern of slippage for many of the curriculum influences, the effects a year later are still statistically significant in 16 out of 20 cases.

An overall erosion of Kids Voting influence is equally obvious when we compare 2003 to 2004, or one-year versus two-year effects. However, we must keep in mind that 2004 was a presidential election year, which could have provided ample political stimulation for both KVUSA students and the control group. Thus, the specific impact of Kids Voting was apparently diluted by the many other sources of civic involvement. There are some notable exceptions to the pattern of waning influence. From 2003 to 2004, Kids Voting influence actually increased for attention to Internet news ( $r = .23, p < .001$ ), unconventional activism ( $r = .21, p < .001$ ), volunteering ( $r = .27, p < .001$ ), and campus activism ( $r = .28, p < .001$ ). The effects for the last two outcomes suggest that the stimulation of media use and discussion, accompanied by knowledge gains and opinion formation, eventually translated into actual participation in politics. However, the analysis did not reveal a statistically significant result for voting in 2004. The correlation of KVUSA with voting is .07 and the partial correlation is .01. We will examine later the possibility of KVUSA promoting voting as an indirect effect by way of stimulated family discussion.

To summarize, for the 14 cases in which

we have measures at all three interview waves, the mean partial correlation is .22 in 2002, .22 in 2003, and .10 in 2004. The illustrations below depict the developmental boost that Kids Voting provides for some but not all behaviors. Figure 3 shows the longitudinal effect of the program on news attention and Figure 4 outlines the effect on frequency of political discussion with friends. In both cases we see that Kids Voting establishes an initial advantage for its students and while that difference erodes somewhat over the next two years, the superior levels remain in 2004.

Figure 3: Longitudinal Effect of Kids Voting on Attention to News

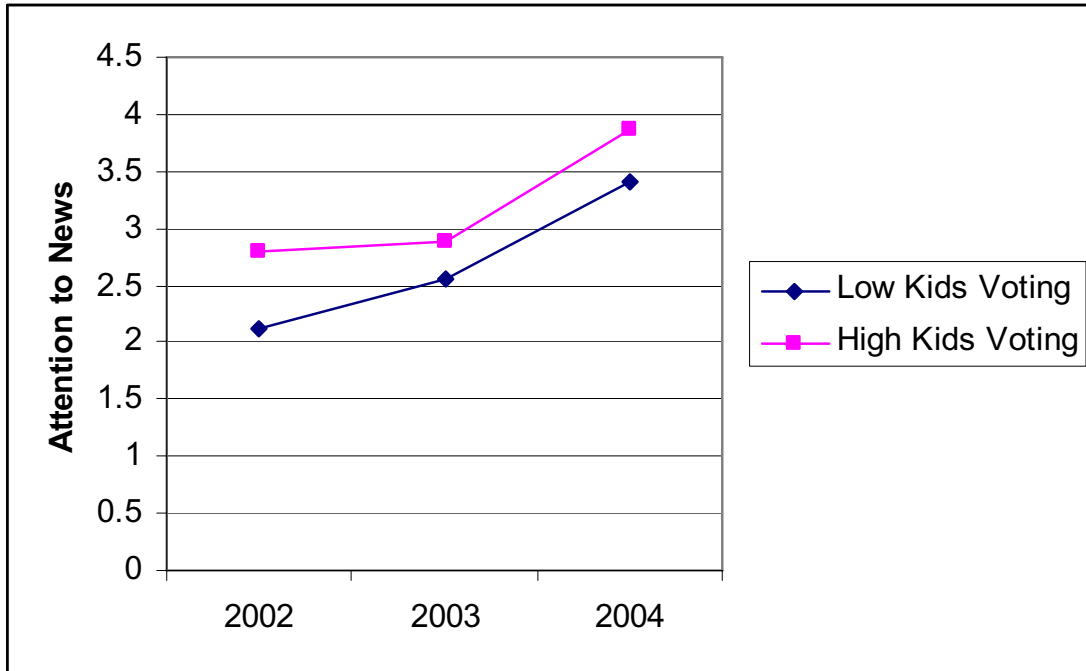
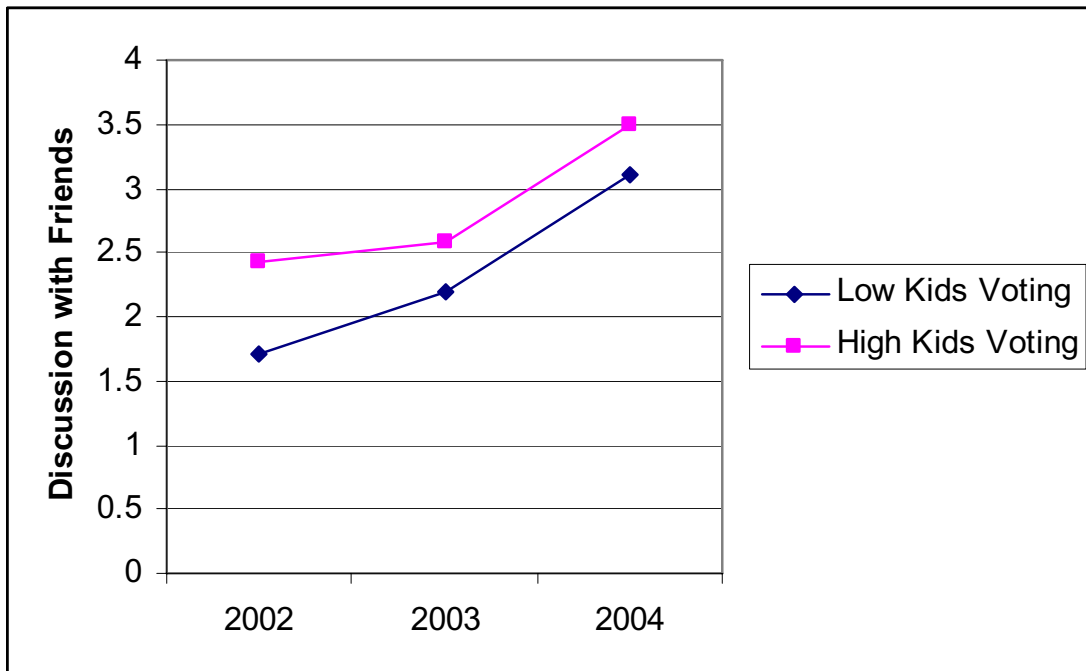


Figure 4: Longitudinal Effect of Kids Voting on Discussion with Friends



As shown in Figure 1, our theoretical expectation is that Kids Voting influence is mediated by the family. We are assuming that civic development is spurred to a great extent by political communication—i.e., media use and conversation. Prior research has confirmed that in both cases the home is the most likely place where these activities occur on a regular basis (Wyatt, Kim, & Katz, 2000). Thus, if a student gets caught up in the drama of an election campaign at school, her home provides the most convenient location to practice skills of political communication, whether they be deciphering newspaper bias or discovering how to goad parents into debates. We know from Table 3 that one of Kids Voting's strongest immediate effects is student-parent discussion. Now we consider whether family discussion translates into long-term gains in civic development.

Table 4 shows the result of a regression model that predicts various dimensions of political involvement as measured in 2004. The block of demographic measures are entered in the first equation to control for their influence. Kids Voting exposure is entered in the next equation, followed by student-parent discussion in 2002. This analytical model reflects our expectation for indirect, long-term influences of the curriculum via family discussion. Cell entries in Table 4 signify the percent of variance of an outcome measure that is attributed to demographics, KVUSA, or family discussion.

Table 4: Effects of Kids Voting &amp; Family Discussion in 2002 on Civic Involvement of Students in 2004 (Hierarchical Regression)

	Demographics R <sup>2</sup>	Kids Voting $\Delta R^2$	Student-parent discussion $\Delta R^2$
<b>Civic involvement in 2004</b>			
<i>Media use</i>			
Attention to political news	.03	.02	.09***
Attention to Internet news	.08	.05**	.06***
Encourage parent attention	.03	.01	.06***
<i>Cognition</i>			
Political knowledge	.08	.00	.05**
Issue salience	.03	.00	.00
Information integration	.07	.02	.03*
<i>Discussion</i>			
With parents	.04	.00	.12***
With friends	.07	.03*	.01
Size of discussion network	.09	.04**	.00
<i>Deliberative habits</i>			
Listen to opponents	.05	.02	.00
Willingness to disagree	.04	.01	.03*
Testing views for response	.06	.01	.00
Testing views to persuade	.03	.02*	.00
<i>Civic identity</i>			
Partisanship	.09*	.00	.02
Ideology	.07	.00	.00
Conventional participation	.07	.01	.09**
Unconventional activism	.09*	.04**	.00
<i>Participation</i>			
Volunteering	.05	.07***	.01
Campus activism	.06	.07***	.00
Voted in 2004	.09	.00	.07**

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

The hierarchical regressions control for the following variables: ethnicity, year in school when exposed to Kids Voting in 2002, grades earned in 2002, gender, religious group membership, parent SES, and voting history of parent.

$N = 187$  dyads for all analyses except “voted in 2004,” which used 158 dyads.

In six of the 20 cases, Kids Voting's influence is exclusively direct and thus not supplemented by effects of family discussion. This direct-only influence makes intuitive sense with respect to discussion with friends and size of discussion network. These concepts refer to interpersonal communication outside the family and thus a school curriculum might provide a stronger stimulus than family discussion. The direct-only influence is also apparent in the substantial effects for support of unconventional activism, volunteering, and campus activism. This is also to be expected if we assume that social/political skills developed in Kids Voting activities are easily transferable to volunteering and activism, whereas private family discussion might not so easily translate in this fashion.

Beyond these direct effects, however, indirect influences via family discussion are quite apparent. Student-parent conversation accounts for significant increments in variance for all three of the media use variables at T3. It also predicts knowledge, information integration, family discussion two years later, willingness to disagree, support for conventional participation, and voting in 2004.

### ***Pathways to Voting***

With the results documented so far, we can assemble the pieces of discrete effects into a holistic picture of civic development. We want to know whether the set of findings fit our theoretical model as outlined in Figure 1. That is, can a brief school intervention establish conditions for a tipping point in the family so that student-parent discussion fundamentally alters the structure of family interaction? If so, we expect that habitual family discussion will be accompanied by heightened news attention, which in turn will engender involvement in political issues, opinion formation, and finally voting.

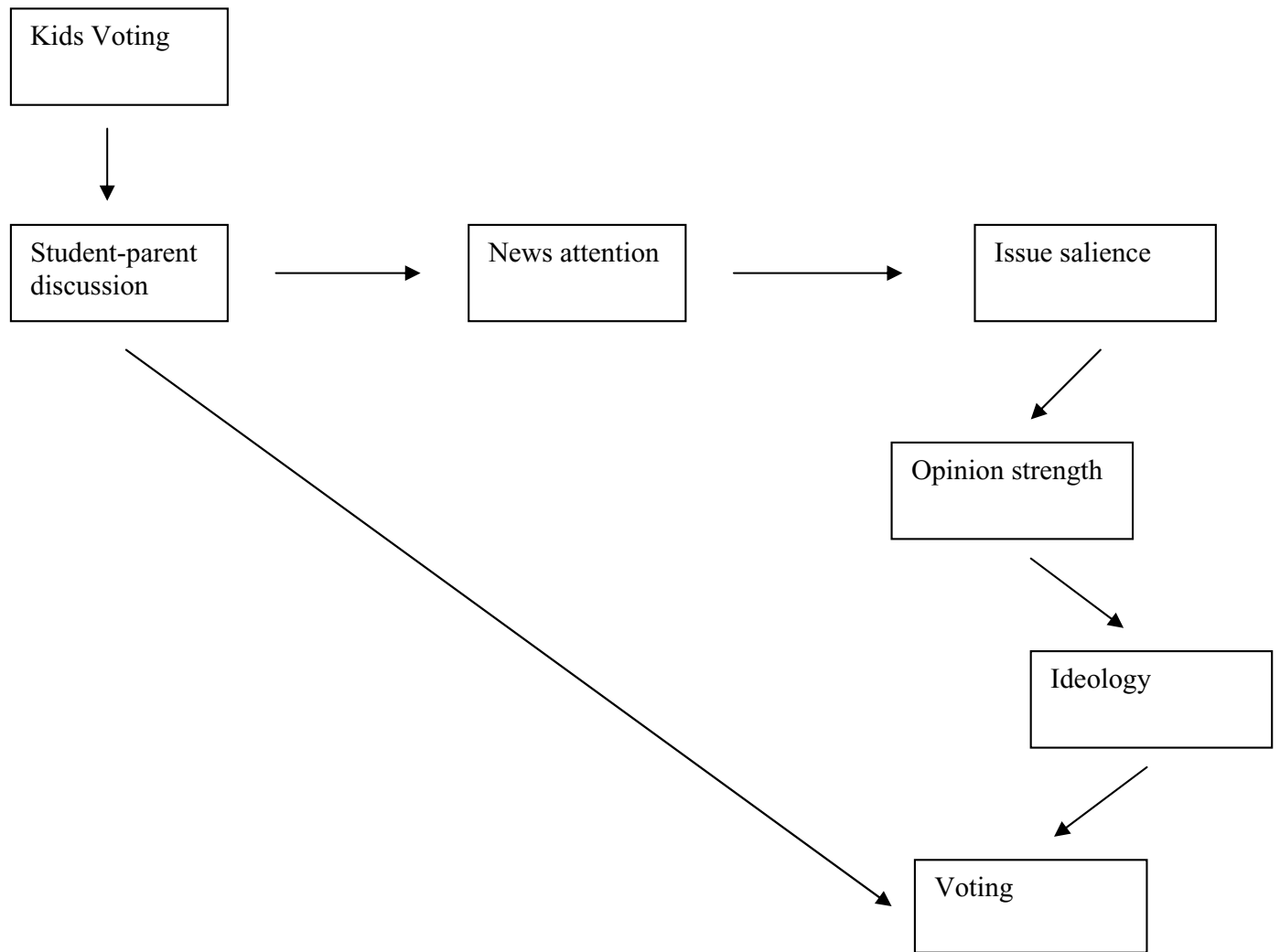
Perhaps the best analytical approach to answering this research question is structural equation modeling (SEM). Unlike other multivariate approaches, SEM offers the advantages of being able to examine hypothesized relationships in a theoretical model while simultaneously controlling

for all other relationships, as well as testing for direct and indirect effects (Byrne, 2001). While controlling for demographics, we tested our theoretical model using KVUSA exposure and student-parent discussion in 2002 to predict news attention, issue salience, opinion formation, and voting in 2004.

The results are shown in Figure 5. Arrows signify statistically significant relationships among the variables.<sup>5</sup> As expected, Kids Voting's influence on the eventual outcome, voting, is mediated by political communication in the home: conversation and news attention. Student-parent discussion as measured in 2002 directly influenced voting. We can think of this as a relational route to voting. The reciprocal influence inherent in interpersonal communication may have provided a mechanism by which children and parents motivated each other to vote. But student-parent discussion also set dominos tumbling in a more complicated sequence. This represents a cognitive route to voting, featuring increased issue salience. Caring about discrete political issues and acquiring strong opinions about them provide young adults with a foothold into the political system (Kiousis, McDevitt, Wu, in press).<sup>6</sup> This quite naturally leads to a more coherent system of beliefs and opinions, represented in Figure 5 by the ideology measure. In other words, the students are learning about politics inductively as they move from a specific issue to a global belief structure. Now with a claim to an ideological identity, there is plenty of motivation for voting.

Figure 5: Pathways from a School Intervention to Voting

2002 .....2004



### ***Closing Gaps***

We found in our first evaluation of Kids Voting—as taught in San Jose in 1994—that the program narrowed gaps in civic involvement between students of low and high income. We found in this study that Kids Voting closed gaps tied to ethnicity in 2002. This pattern occurred primarily in El Paso County, CO, where Hispanic students benefited the most from the curriculum. Students apparently became concerned about a proposed state amendment to enforce English-only instruction. Kids Voting interacted with ethnicity to narrow or completely close gaps in attention to news, attention to the amendment debate, political knowledge, integration of new information, willingness to listen to opposing views, willingness to disagree, and support for conventional politics. These results are described in more detail in “CIRCLE Working Paper 07: The Civic Bonding of School and Family”.

Now we are interested in whether Kids Voting can promote equality of civic development in the long term. We did not find a pronounced pattern of this occurring for ethnicity or socioeconomic status, but the curriculum did interact with SES for two indicators in 2004: attention to Internet news and campus activism.<sup>7</sup> As illustrated in Figure 6, there is a gap in Internet news attention tied to SES in 2004 but only for students not exposed to Kids Voting in 2002. This gap closed completely for KVUSA students. For campus activism (Figure 7), we can see that low-SES students actually scored higher than high-SES students in 2004, but this is the case only for adolescents who had participated in Kids Voting.



Figure 6: Interaction Effect of Kids Voting & SES on Attention to Internet News in 2004

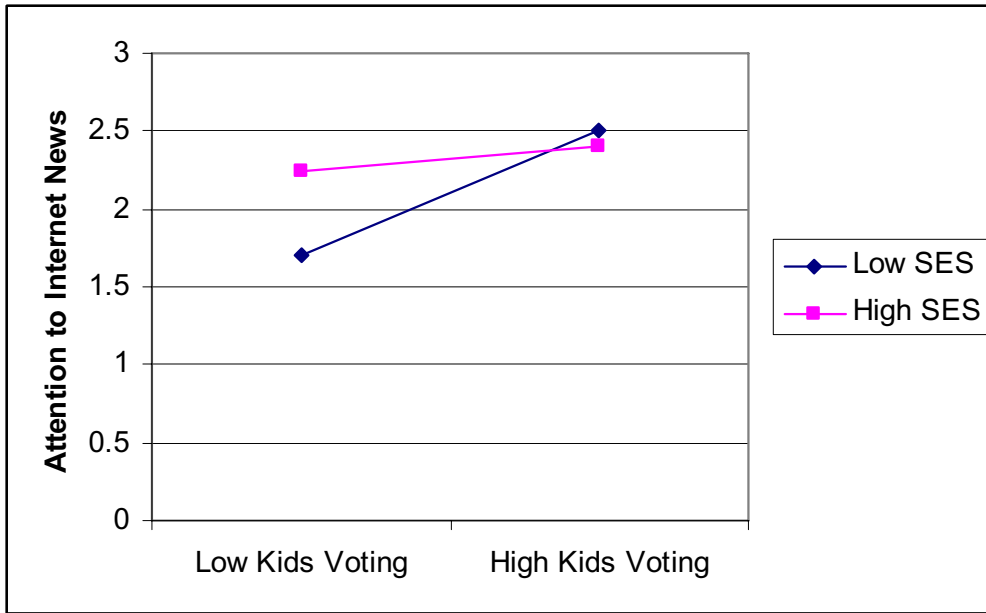
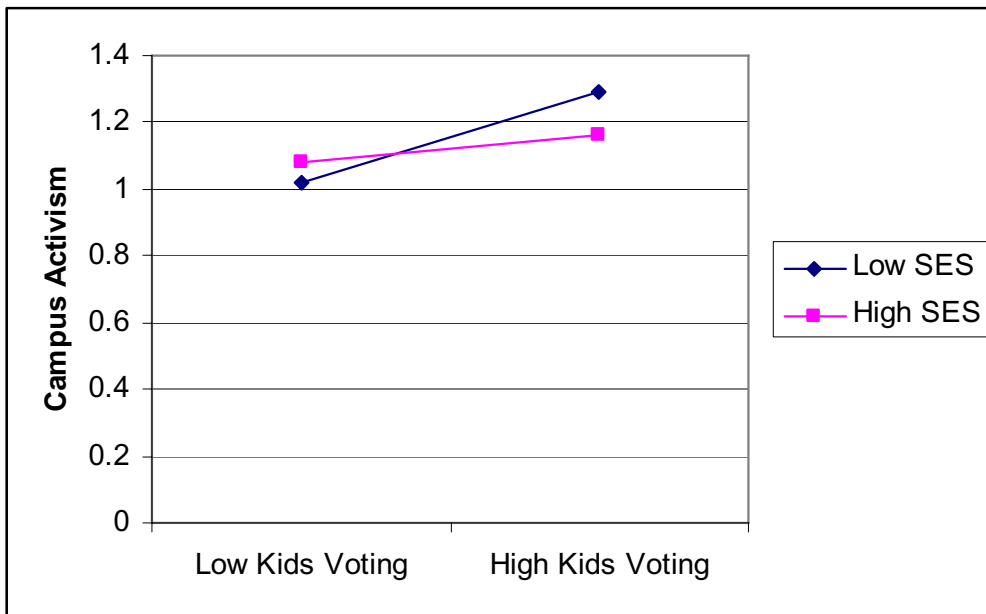


Figure 7: Interaction Effect of Kids Voting & SES on Campus Activism in 2004



### **Effects of Curriculum Components**

In "CIRCLE Working Paper 07: The Civic Bonding of School and Family," we identified the Kids Voting activities that stood out as most effective in the immediate stimulation of civic development. Now we have data to explore which of the ten curriculum components have lasting impacts. We first examined the frequency with which teachers taught various lesson plans across the three sites. The most frequently used activity was classroom debates, as 61 percent of our student respondents reported that they participated. This was followed closely by analyzing political cartoons. Conversely, relatively few teachers asked students to work at a polling site or to accompany parents to the polls on Election Day to cast mock ballots. While mock voting is effective for younger students, many teachers have found that the older students would rather express citizenship independent of parents when

Table 5: Correlations of Kids Voting Components in 2002 with Student Civic Measures in 2004

it comes to voting (Chaffee, Moon, McDevitt, Pan, McLeod, Eveland, & Horowitz, 1995). Appendix Table 3 reports the frequency of student exposure to KVUSA activities.

We examined each of the 10 components to identify patterns of significant correlations with the 20 measures of civic development in 2004. As shown in Table 5, three curriculum activities proved to be the strongest predictors as judged by the number of significant correlations. These activities are frequent discussion of the election in class, teachers promoting opinion expression, and participation in get-out-the-vote drives.

	Number of significant correlations <sup>1</sup>
<u>Kids Voting activities</u>	
<i>Peer discussion</i>	
Frequent discussion of election	8
Teacher promotes opinion expression	7
Classroom debates	2
<i>Media literacy</i>	
Analysis of political cartoon	5
Analysis of political ads	2
<i>Civic/community involvement</i>	
Service learning	3
Work at polling site	0
Encourage others to vote	10
<i>Family activities</i>	
Homework involving family	2
Vote with parent	0

<sup>1</sup> Significance level at least  $p < .05$ .

Table 6 shows the specific areas in which these three curriculum activities are most consequential. Student encouragement of adults to vote emerges as the most effective component. It is significantly correlated with measures in all six areas of civic development: media use, cognition, discussion, deliberative habits, civic identity, and participation. Notably, it out performs the two curriculum discussion measures in its association with the three indicators of student discussion in 2004. Our interpretation of these results is that student participation in a voting-turnout campaign provides a meaningful, real-world experience that builds political efficacy, or a person's belief that she can make a difference in politics. This self-empowerment is easily transferable to other aspects of civic involvement. Notice, for example, that students who encourage adults to vote are also more likely to encourage their parents to pay attention to political news ( $r = .16, p < .05$ ). Outside the family context, encouraging others to vote is also correlated with volunteering ( $r = .17, p < .05$ ) and campus activism ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ).

Frequency of classroom discussion and teacher encouragement of opinion expression tend to be correlated with the same type of outcomes, as we would anticipate. But frequent classroom discussion in particular is strongly correlated with media use in 2004. This finding probably reflects the ability of teachers to indirectly promote news attention habits by establishing expectations for classroom participation in discussion. Once students realize that they will be called upon to discuss politics, they turn to news media for knowledge and opinions. This initial interest in news apparently evolved into a long-term habit. Both measures of classroom discussion are significantly correlated with student discussion with parents in 2004. This implies that teachers can engender, through classroom discussion, civic dispositions that migrate over to the family. Thus, two years after the school intervention ended, Kids Voting students were more likely to be talking regularly with parents about political topics. Frequent classroom discussion and teacher encouragement of opinion expression are also significantly correlated with support for

conventional participation and volunteering. This suggests that peer discussion about politics helps to instill motivation for civic engagement in a community.

Table 6: Correlations of Classroom Discussion and Voter Encouragement in 2002 with Student Civic Measures in 2004

	Frequent discussion of election	Free expression of opinion	Student encourages adults to vote
<u>Civic involvement in 2004</u>			
<i>Media use</i>			
Attention to political news	.21***	.12	.14
Attention to Internet news	.22***	.13	.07
Encourage parent attention	.21***	.05	.16*
<i>Cognition</i>			
Political knowledge	-.03	.04	.03
Issue salience	.07	-.07	-.04
Information integration	.18***	.15*	.20**
<i>Discussion</i>			
With parents	.15*	.14*	.16*
With friends	.12	.18*	.24***
Size of discussion network	.13	.20*	.20**
<i>Deliberative habits</i>			
Listen to opponents	.01	.12	.07
Willingness to disagree	.01	.10	.14
Testing views for response	.07	.13	.18*
Testing views to persuade	.06	.05	.13
<i>Civic identity</i>			
Partisanship	.14*	.08	.15*
Ideology	.00	.10	-.02
Conventional participation	.16*	.26***	.20**
Unconventional activism	.06	.13	.14
<i>Participation</i>			
Volunteering	.20**	.16*	.17*
Campus activism	.14	.17*	.24***
Voted in 2004	-.04	.00	.14

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

$N = 187$  for all analyses except “voted in 2004,” which used 158 respondents.

***Effects on Parents***

The initial activation of student-parent discussion in 2002 creates a mechanism by which Kids Voting might affect parents in 2004. The curriculum might influence parents independent of family discussion if, for example, a parent became more interested in politics by simply becoming aware of Kids Voting's presence in local schools. But it seems safe to assume that most curriculum influence on parents is mediated by family discussion. We consequently used the same regression model deployed for students; demographics are entered first as controls, followed by student participation in Kids Voting and then student-parent discussion in 2002. All of the parent indicators of civic involvement are measured in 2004.

As expected, Kids Voting was not a strong predictor of direct influence on parents after the passage of two years (Table 7). There are two exceptions: the curriculum accounted for significant amounts of variance in parent support for conventional participation and support for unconventional activism. We can only speculate as to how these effects occurred. As described earlier, Kids Voting represents a community effort of teachers, volunteers, and election officials, and this civic ethos may have inspired parents to some extent regardless of any family discussion.

Table 7: Effects of Kids Voting &amp; Family Discussion in 2002 on Civic Involvement of Parents in 2004 (Hierarchical Regression)

	Demographics R <sup>2</sup>	Kids Voting ΔR <sup>2</sup>	Student-parent discussion ΔR <sup>2</sup>
<u>Civic involvement in 2004</u>			
<i>Media use</i>			
Attention to political news	.04	.00	.08***
Attention to Internet news	.04	.00	.02*
Encourage student attention	.04	.01	.05**
<i>Cognition</i>			
Political knowledge	.12**	.00	.08***
Issue salience	.08*	.01	.00
Information integration	.07	.01	.02*
<i>Discussion</i>			
With student	.04	.00	.12***
With friends	.05	.02	.06***
Size of discussion network	.10**	.00	.00
<i>Deliberative habits</i>			
Listen to opponents	.08	.00	.06***
Willingness to disagree	.04	.00	.04*
Testing views for response	.06	.00	.08***
Testing views to persuade	.04	.00	.05*
<i>Civic identity</i>			
Partisanship	.05	.01	.00
Ideology	.09*	.00	.00
Conventional participation	.05	.02*	.07***
Unconventional activism	.04	.05**	.03
<i>Participation</i>			
Volunteering	.04	.01	.07***
Activism	.03	.01	.04*
Voted in 2004	.20***	.01	.00

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

The hierarchical regressions control for the following variables: ethnicity, gender, religious group membership, SES, and voting history.

$N = 187$  dyads for all analyses except “voted in 2004,” which used 158 dyads.

However, Kids Voting's indirect influence via student-parent discussion is clearly the stronger factor. The stimulation of family conversation in the fall of 2002 had long-term consequence for parents' civic involvement. Among the 20 outcome variables, family discussion accounted for incremental variance in 14 cases. These results are surprising in light of prior research that describes adult political involvement as essentially stable with only gradual changes through the life cycle. Here we see that parents were quite responsive to an episode of frequent family conversation during the 2002 election campaign. This periodic increase in family political communication engendered among parents the same kind of habitual behavior we saw with students. Evident again is the tight connection between discussion and media use. Family conversations motivated parents to pay more attention to news, to encourage student news attention, to acquire political knowledge, and to actively integrate new information.

Discussion with students in 2002 accounts for 12 percent of the variance in this same indicator as measured in 2004, suggesting that the periodic stimulation of this behavior did indeed become a habit. And family discussion in 2002 also led parents to talk more frequently with friends about politics in the long term. Meanwhile, habitual family discussion helped to cultivate in parents stronger deliberative dispositions as reflected in the effects for listening to opponents, willingness to disagree, and the two measures of testing out opinions.

As with student exposure to Kids Voting, family discussion predicted parents' support for conventional participation, although family discussion accounted for more than three times as much variance. Finally, and perhaps most surprisingly, family discussion in 2002 predicted parent volunteering and political activism in 2004. Many of the previously mentioned behaviors occur inside the home, such as media use. However, the results for volunteering and activism point to the powerful impact of family interaction on civic behavior that occurs outside the home.

### **Focus Group Findings**

We report here the highlights of the focus

group interviews. We reported results from the 2003 focus groups in "CIRCLE Working Paper 07: The Civic Bonding of School and Family" so we will only briefly summarize those findings and then move on to the focus groups that were conducted in January 2005.

#### 2003 Focus Groups

*What works in civic education.* While many of these students were already interested in politics, they suggested that their peers would only become more involved when issues that were highly relevant to them were stressed at school. Some of these topics include higher education funding, drinking age, and school policies. This insight is consistent with results from the survey data regarding the closing of ethnicity-based gaps in Colorado. Kids Voting was particularly beneficial for Hispanic students as it focused their attention on state political issues. They became intrigued—or perhaps threatened—by an English-only ballot proposition.

*Trickle-up influence.* One of our goals with the focus groups was to gain insight as to how and why children encourage parents' interest in politics. Students relished the chance to talk about this reversal of influence in the family. The influence takes many forms. Students prod parents to talk about issues, to explain why they hold certain views, to explain why they pay attention to particular news shows and pundits, and why they failed to vote in previous elections. Said one student, "I told my dad, 'Dad, you need to vote.' I got him interested in what is going on and told him to vote." She explained that "My mother works for a computer company. She comes home expressing what is going on like in the stock market and how this is going to affect her and she asks me. She hopes that I will bring about some other aspects to help her understand what is going on." Students from immigrant families talked about how they act as translators and interpreters of political information. Some students said that their parents' voting decisions were based on their children's research.

*Civic identity.* The assertion of civic identity appears to be the answer to the question as to why students initiated conversations with parents. From

a teenager's perspective, a first step in choosing a civic identity is to find out where parents line up on partisan issues. One student explained:

My dad likes to yell at the television all the time when he watches the news. We have that caught on tape. Usually I like to challenge my dad on his views ... I just want to make him explain to me the way he feels about everything. He actually got me to watch the Washington news and I would like to know why he's always yelling at it.

Political communication at home provides teenagers with an opportunity to demonstrate expertise as emerging adults. This requires equal footing with parents when it comes to discussion. This assertion of civic identity can cause tension in many families, however, given that political opinions might represent a threat to parents with limited formal education. This was evident from one student:

The parents always think since they are older they are wiser than us. When we try to give them information, they said, 'No, you are wrong' or 'You are too young; you don't know nothing.' I told them when you grew up your time's education was not as good as my time period. We are going through more than what you were going through. But they don't like that.

### 2005 FOCUS GROUPS

With the first two waves of standardized questionnaires completed, we explored qualitatively some of the developmental trends documented in the panel data. The timing of the focus groups—in January 2005—allowed us to ask students to reflect on their motivations for voting and for other expressions of citizenship.

*What works in civic education.* Before bringing up specific curricular approaches, we asked students to identify the single most important activity that increased their interest in politics. A clear consensus emerged—classroom discussion with peers along with exposure to political issues that resonate most strongly with youth. Most students said the war in Iraq was

important in generating concern about political issues. The President's stand on stem-cell research, abortion, and gay marriage were topics that also stimulated interest. One student said she felt offended that a man could tell her that she could not have an abortion or could stop stem cell research. Other salient issues mentioned were the possible drafting of youth into the military, censorship, legalization of drugs, and issues with a moral basis. Conversely, students said that issues involving big business, taxes, and Medicare do not evoke interest because they do not perceive personal relevance.

Many students seemed passionate about the opportunity to freely discuss political issues with peers in a classroom setting. They emphasized that having the opportunity to debate the issues and candidates significantly peaked their interest in political issues. One student said that hearing many viewpoints and seeing different sides through debate made him more interested in the political process. Another suggested that peer discussion puts pressure on students to acquire political knowledge. "Everyone has an opinion. Maybe they are usually too shy to voice their opinion, but when everyone is discussing the issues, you are more likely to share your opinion." Classroom discussion is also valued because it prompts internal reflection and opinion refinement. In one student's words: "By taking sides, it makes you look at more than just your opinion." Finally, discussion promotes interest in voting. "If someone opposes your viewpoint, it generates interest and gets you motivated," one student explained. "When I see all these people disagreeing with me, I feel like I have to do something about it."

To be sure, not every student agreed that civic classes should amount to a political free-for-all. One student commented that politics is personal and people can be offended. Another added, "The school frowns upon it." A third student said, "I totally disagree with teachers voicing their opinions, especially in schools."

The moderator then asked for comments on specific activities associated with Kids Voting. Many students expressed an affinity for formal classroom debates. One student said that participation in



debates forced students to do their own research and to clarify their views. Nearly all of the students agreed that working at polling sites is another successful way to generate interest in politics. One student said that passing out flyers and other information at the polls gives students first-hand experience about elections. Another student said that encouraging others to vote allowed her to be involved in the process, and other students noted that it allowed them to explain their views to other people.

Civic lesson plans that incorporate media use appear to be quite effective in cultivating political curiosity. For example, one student explained how his teacher assigned students to keep a diary about issues and candidates covered on C-SPAN. The student said that he learned a great deal in this exercise because he was exposed to programs he typically would not watch. Another student said that analyzing political advertisements is a good way to understand the political parties' positions on specific issues. These comments seem to reveal a subtle shift from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. In other words, the students are required to pay attention to news media, but once they delve into the issues they acquire a taste for politics and begin to enjoy the drama and intrigue of politics.

*Trickle-up influence & family discussion.*

Students said that information obtained in civic courses sparked discussion and debate at home. A couple students admitted that they enjoy provoking parents to see their reaction. Students who said they discuss politics with their parents did so because they had reached an age where public policies have begun to have a profound effect on their lives. Therefore, they said it was important for them to begin voicing their opinions. One student said he talked to his parents about politics to ensure they were informed and another said he simply enjoyed debating the issues.

When we asked students how much parents had influence on their views of presidential candidates George Bush and John Kerry, the majority downplayed parent influence. One student said:

My parents and my whole family are

Democrats, but when I had to learn about the candidates, I looked at both sides. The fact that they were all Democrats was not the only thing that really mattered. My opinion is based on how the candidates present themselves: the debates and stuff.

While students tended to dismiss direct influence of parents, conversations at home appear to help young adults to figure out the relevance of core family values for politics. While students want to make up their own minds, they realize that their views are structured by basic values learned from parents. One student said, "I think subconsciously your moral values are still there when you make decisions and they don't change. Those values will play a part in whatever view you form. It is not an option."

As described above, the assertion of an autonomous civic identity in relationship with parents requires some demonstration of knowledge and expertise. One student said that his influence on parents pertains to issues, not candidates. "On an issue level, I think kids have a very big impact on what their parents think, especially on the issues that affect kids, like minimum wage." Another student agreed with this idea and said he influenced his parents because of their fear that he could be drafted.

Discussion with parents during election campaigns might also represent a source of political efficacy. Several students said they are not likely to change the views of parents but the discussions may motivate parents to vote. Just as students gained a sense of civic empowerment from registering adults to vote, they might also acquire civic efficacy by way of pushing parents to the polls.

Finally, we detected in students' comments the theme of actively trying to integrate views from multiple sources: teachers, peers, parents, and media. Students explained that they sought out opinions from parents but not in random fashion. They wanted to hear parents' views on topics in which parents had some advantage in terms of knowledge or life history. One student said, "Many kids may go to their parents to find out more about

the issues, like taxes.”

*Obstacles to discussion.* We also asked students to comment on factors that inhibit political discussion. Some said they would feel uncomfortable about expressing opinions at home if these views conflicted with basic family values. One student said, “It matters how involved they (parents) are with their beliefs. If they have fought their entire life about it, you know there can be conflict.” Other students said that the assertion of family values, to the extent that they relate to politics, is usually avoided at school. One said, “You can speak, just not freely.” Another student said that such discussions would depend on the teachers and felt his grade could be influenced by disagreeing with certain teachers.

Students emphasized the importance of the situational context in which opinions are expressed. Several students said the safest place to test out opinions is at home with parents, while other students said the safest place is among friends. One student said, “With friends, you know when the discussion is over, you are still OK, but that is not the case with someone you don’t know.”

*Civic identity.* We explored again with students how they come to adopt a civic identity. We want to gain insight into the issues, institutions, or personal relationships that provide young adults with a connection to the political system. Perhaps the most obvious source of identity would be allegiance to a political party, but most students shunned party identification. They explained that claiming a party identification was not important in how they cast their vote. A candidate and her political views were the deciding factors. A majority of focus-group discussants were more concerned about making the right decision than voting the party ticket. Furthermore, a majority did not believe that party identification is helpful when talking about politics with friends. One student put it this way: “You don’t say the Democratic or Republican candidates. You say Bush or Kerry.”

One student said he believed in the two-party system but he disagreed with people always voting along party lines. “When most people find a political party, they vote a straight ticket and that is not the way to go.” Ironically, party identification

is important not as voting cue but for decoding media content. Several students explained that being informed about party platforms helps them to determine if news media are biased.

Judging from students’ comments, civic identity is very much a work in progress for them, involving comparison and integration of perspectives from many sources. One student explained that with media, “You watch a little bit of everything and, hopefully, that gives you a little bit of balance.” A second student said that hearing different opinions at school helped him have greater balance in his opinions. Similarly, many students commented that comparing political perspectives from teachers and parents was valuable.

*Family background.* Pompano Beach and Stoneman Douglas high schools serve student populations that are quite different demographically, allowing us to observe possible influences of family background on political learning. Students from the higher-income Caucasian group (Stoneman Douglas) reported they talked freely with parents and disagreed with them, whereas Pompano Beach students said they were apt to agree with parents and thus not much discussion took place. Pompano Beach students also seemed less curious about parents’ opinions. “It doesn’t really matter to me now that I am older (what they think),” said one student. “I know that on some things we will have different opinions. I just think how I feel.” Such comments seem to reveal a tendency of lower-income adolescents to avoid testing out opinions in conversations. One student explained that parental feedback would not affect him because he does not change his mind once he has made a decision. While students from both high schools said they benefited from integrating information from multiple sources, the higher-income students were more likely to compare the opinions of teachers and parents to themselves.

Students from Stoneman Douglas were much more enthusiastic about opportunities to express their political views and to hear a wide range of opinions expressed at school. Some of these students went so far as to argue that

teachers should be allowed to voice their political opinions in class. One student remarked, "Most youth form their opinions from their parents, even if their parents are wrong, or from the media. What better way for people to be more involved than from one class to another class where teachers can have many different opinions."

When we asked Pompano Beach students to name school activities that stimulate their interest in politics, they named only one: classroom discussion about issues. The higher-income Caucasian group mentioned several activities. We take from this that peer discussion, while relatively infrequent, is of crucial importance for low-SES adolescents.

We also noticed that the lower-income students were much more reticent about discussing the specific views of parents and friends. When asked to compare the political perspectives of parents and friends, at first five members of the Pompano Beach group did not wish to do so. One adolescent said it is not important to compare views of peers and parents because people their age are not informed enough about the important issues.

Not surprisingly, the lower-income students expressed less personal involvement in political issues. They indicated that people their age are generally not interested in politics because the issues don't affect them yet as they are still in school. One student explained, "Most kids live with their parents so they don't have to worry about bills, so they don't care." Others said that their opinions do not matter and that they distrust politicians. A Pompano Beach student observed: "People in general would get more involved if they felt their opinions mattered." Another agreed and referred to President Bush and the presidential election in 2000. She said, "Why vote if he is going to cheat again?" However, the vast majority of students from both high school groups said they believe that voting is important.

## CONCLUSION

We return to our four research questions to summarize what we have learned.

### ***What is the scope of impact in civic development?***

We would judge the breadth of Kids Voting's immediate effects as impressive in light of prior studies showing modest influence from standard civic instruction. Even as a brief school intervention, taught only during the final weeks of the 2002 campaign, Kids Voting stimulated news attention, cognition, discussion with parents and friends, deliberative dispositions, and civic identity. These results held up despite a rigorous block of demographic controls. The strongest impacts involved discussion inside and outside the family. As neophyte citizens, KVUSA students were now much more responsive to the civic environment, much more attuned to political messages flowing from media and schools, and more willing to share their knowledge and opinions with parents and friends. The sheer size of their discussion networks had grown significantly.

### ***Can Kids Voting act as a catalyst for civic involvement in the long run?***

Perhaps the most remarkable results in this study involve effects in 2003, after the passage of one year. Not only did Kids Voting influence persist, it actually increased for some measures of cognition and deliberative habits, along with partisanship and ideology. To explain these results, we must contemplate the nature of Kids Voting effects along with their magnitude. Unlike in many evaluations of medical or behavioral interventions, we are not assessing the persistence of effects in a traditional sense. Certainly the curriculum had a beginning and ending point, but we are not measuring effects analogous to a half-life or to a gradual decay. Instead, the nature of Kids Voting effects involve the induction of habits that are self-perpetuating. From this perspective, we can evaluate KVUSA as a successful catalyst for deliberative democracy. Students remained receptive to independent learning opportunities that came along later, such as new controversies or the eruption of political debate at home or with friends.

Many of these effects eroded when

measured in 2004, but Kids Voting influence retained statistical significance for attention to Internet news, frequency of discussion with friends, testing opinions in conversations, support for unconventional activism, volunteering, and campus activism. While the curriculum did not affect voting in 2004 directly, it did animate the family as a setting for political discussion and media use, and these habits lead to voting.

Parents also got caught up in their children's enthusiasm for politics. Student-parent conversations stimulated by Kids Voting in 2002 predicted the following measures of parent civic involvement in 2004: news attention, cognition, discussion inside and outside the home, deliberative habits, support for unconventional participation, volunteering, and activism.

### ***Does Kids Voting narrow or widen gaps in civic involvement?***

Kids Voting appears to provide an added boost for minority and low-income students. We found this to be the case with Hispanic students in Colorado in 2002 and low-SES students across the three sites in 2004. While the evidence of closing gaps is confined to just a few areas of civic development, the results replicate findings from our evaluation of Kids Voting as taught in San Jose (McDevitt & Chaffee, 1998, 2000).

### ***What components of Kids Voting are most consequential?***

Of the 10 activities measured, three stood out as predictors of long-term civic development: frequent classroom discussions about election issues, teacher encouragement of opinion expression, and student participation in get-out-the-vote drives. These activities in particular allow adolescents to practice communication skills and to build social confidence, dispositions that are easily transferred to other domains of civic engagement. The civic growth associated with voter-turnout involvement is reminiscent of trickle-up influence, whereby adolescents prompt parents to pay more attention to electoral politics. In both cases, students achieve civic efficacy by translating knowledge and enthusiasm into the influencing

of others. They are making a transition from recipients of political information to users of that information.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

As is common in survey research, our sample of respondents is upwardly skewed with respect to socioeconomic status. Also, attrition during the three waves of interviewing resulted in a disproportionate loss of minority groups from the sample. Fortunately, the original exposure of students to Kids Voting was not tied to demographics, and we were able to control for the influence of demographics in our statistical tests of curriculum influence. However, we suspect that we would have been able to document a more systematic pattern of gap closing if we possessed better variance in the sample for SES and ethnicity. Another limitation is restricted sample size at T3, which reduced our statistical power in terms of detecting curriculum influence on voting and other behaviors. While we were able to demonstrate indirect effects of the curriculum on student voting, we could not show direct effects with our relatively small sample at T3.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The results highlight the value of thinking about Kids Voting as a model for civic curriculum reform. The single most important lesson from Kids Voting is the benefit of integrating influences from schools, families, media, elections, and peer groups. Working independently from each other, these entities are often ineffective as agents of political socialization, as many prior studies conclude. However, once they are integrated in an election-based curriculum, they create a kind of political immersion for students. Adolescents draw knowledge and opinions from multiple sources, allowing them to compare opinions and to contemplate their options for civic identity.

Our findings suggest the following recommendations.

#### **1. Incorporate parents.**

One way to look at generational declines in

civic engagement is to dismiss schools and families as inconsequential sources for political motivation. However, this study shows what happens when schools and families interact via student-initiated discussion. Families represent proximal zone of learning in which students can practice the communication skills promoted in school. The inculcation of student-parent discussion about politics as a regular feature of family life makes the home a powerful incubator for civic growth. As participants in our focus groups revealed, students often relish the chance to engage parents in political discussions and debates, but many adolescents are not likely to initiate these conversations at home unless prompted by peer discussion at school.

### **2. Deploy media in civic learning.**

News about politics is easily available throughout the United States and adolescents benefit tremendously when they do pay attention (Atkin, 1981). The problem is that most teenagers most of the time ignore news about public affairs. Some Kids Voting activities directly involve media, as when students deconstruct political ads, but curriculum effects show how media use is promoted indirectly. When students realize they will be called upon to discuss or to debate a political issue in class, they turn to news media to arm themselves with knowledge. This utilitarian motivation to pay attention, however, evolves into a genuine interest in the news, resulting in regular news consumption habits.

### **3. Teach to coincide with big political events.**

A great deal of research on civic education is based on the assumption of gradual, incremental learning (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002). By contrast, the studies on Kids Voting portray civic growth as occurring in spurts, in the context of the final weeks of election campaigns. Schools should take advantage of big political events such as elections, school board debates, or city council controversies.

### **4. Translate classroom instruction into community activism.**

Teachers should implement activities such as

student campaigns that mobilize adults to vote. We noticed that service learning in 2002 was not yet implemented as part of the Kids Voting curriculum for most of the schools in the study sites. There was also minimal use of the exercise in which students work at polling sites. Along with classroom discussion, these are the types of activities that empower students and heighten their sense of political efficacy.

### **5. Promote discussion on topics of greatest relevance to youth.**

Our focus group students were quite insistent that they should have the right to express political opinions among peers in the classroom. Furthermore, they argued that teachers should structure discussion around issues that are of greatest relevance to teenagers. And we know from our statistical analysis that the development of issue salience leads to opinion formation, resulting in motivation for voting. Relevant issues represent a connection to the political system, perhaps more so than ideology, partisanship, or parents' political preferences. While news media tend to focus on the strategy of electoral politics, and parties push candidates and ideology, these foci might fail to resonate with youth. By contrast, schools can and should provide opportunities for peer discussion on issues.

### **6. Do not shy away from topical debates.**

While there is broad consensus in the United States that schools should prepare young people for civic participation, there is little agreement about the kinds of citizenship that should be taught and promoted (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Politicization of the civic curriculum has become still more acute in the post-9/11 era. These debates often revolve around whether schools should promote patriotism and a unifying set of values, or whether they should engender critical thinking, dissent, and collective activism. When not properly structured, discussion of controversial issues in the classroom is indeed risky given the potential wrath of parents. However, we must conclude from our survey and focus-group findings that schools should accept this risk. There are multiple benefits

that accrue from peer discussion about topical issues, including increased news attention and discussion with parents, opinion formation, and motivation for voting.

### **7. Do not give up on low-income students.**

The literature on civic education is replete with pessimism about the capacity of civic education to promote equality of opportunities for political growth (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2000). Jane Junn, a prominent scholar of political behavior, argues that civic interventions might “reinforce and even exacerbate present inequalities by providing jump-starts to civic engagement for the already powerful” (Junn, 2004, p. 255). As evident in the gap-closing findings, Kids Voting defies these expectations, at least for some outcomes. Meanwhile, we found no significant evidence that the curriculum widened disparities tied to demographics. These equalizing effects occur because Kids Voting helps to transform norms for communication in low-SES homes (McDevitt & Chaffee, 1998).

However, findings from the focus groups reveal lower-income students to be more reticent to talk about politics, less likely to express controversial opinions, and less interested in comparing views from peers, parents, and teachers. Our conclusion is that they need more support at school to express their own ideas about issues that matter to them. Once empowered at school, they are more likely to initiate conversations with parents.

### **8. Promote citizenship beyond voting.**

A great deal of effort in this study was devoted to documenting the indirect influences of the curriculum on voting. We have kept in mind that Kids Voting officials and supporters of the program will be curious about any curriculum connections with electoral participation. The results in aggregate, however, point to a broad vision of civic development. Students learned how to converse about politics so that even as they expressed their own opinions, they became more willing to listen to opponents. And even as they grew more supportive of conventional activities such as voting,

they also identified more strongly with alternative expressions of citizenship such as participating in boycotts and protests. Schools should provide deliberative exercises so that adolescents can reflect upon the many dimensions of politics in which civic commitment is experienced.

## NOTES

1. This result supports our assumption of random assignment and our characterization of the overall evaluation as a series of naturally occurring experiments. The lack of association between demographics and Kids Voting helps us to rule out alternative explanations. For example, it could be argued that a finding such as increased political knowledge is not attributable to Kids Voting but simply due to the tendency of students with greater intelligence, curiosity or other attributes to recall civics lessons. However, such cognitive or psychological dispositions would likely be related to key demographic factors we included in the study, particularly grades earned in school. Because grades earned in school is not correlated with Kids Voting exposure, we have some assurance that the results we find are real and not due to a hidden factor that both (a) accounts for strong political involvement and (b) predisposes students to recall or exaggerate their involvement in Kids Voting.
2. After talking with several state directors—and noting programs that earned special recognition from the national office of Kids Voting USA—we believe that the locations chosen represent three of the strongest Kids Voting sites. While the program has expanded to 30 states, participating school districts vary considerable in the success of implementation. For example, some programs were inactive for the 2002 election due to lack of funding or community support. Kids Voting is indeed an ambitious endeavor as it represents the coordination of school district administrators, teachers, and community volunteers. Consequently, we chose the study sites carefully.
3. County of residence in this study was not correlated with measures of civic involvement.
4. Kids Voting USA is no longer a new program, and its popularity has resulted in some school districts using the program for several electoral cycles. We know from evaluations of the curriculum as taught in San Jose in the 1990s that the intervention appears to be most effective in the middle grades and that the older students seem less responsive. Thus, it might be the case that Kids Voting already exerted much of its potential influence in the students' earlier grades. Our first report to the Knight Foundation included an analysis of the effects of KVUSA as taught in the three study sites prior to 2002. While we did find some specific instances of lasting impacts from earlier involvement in the curriculum, 2002 participation was a much stronger predictor of civic development.
5. Goodness-of-fit statistics are as follows:  $\chi^2 = 37.85$ ,  $df = 26$ , ns; RMSEA = .05.
6. "Strength of opinion" is introduced into this analysis as a cognitive bridge from issue salience to ideological identity. The wording and coding for this measure are included in the Appendix.
7. We conducted the interaction analysis by splitting the 2004 sample at the mean for Kids Voting exposure and the mean for SES.

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## APPENDIX

### *Electoral Contexts*

The election year of 2002 provided a good deal of stimulation for political socialization, and it was the job of Kids Voting teachers to make sure that students were paying attention to campaign events, controversies, and news. Along with races for governor and other high-profile seats, the contests in Arizona, Colorado, and Florida each featured at least one contentious amendment/proposition. We provide here a brief overview of the electoral contexts for the three study sites.

Arizona. One of the fastest growing states in the nation, Arizona is a mix of Western frontier and high-tech innovation. Arizona boasts one of the nation's fastest growing populations and the expansion of a sophisticated, de-centralized economy that belies its early days of state-hood. Politically, the state is also a paradox of the old and the new. Largely due to the influence of Barry Goldwater, Arizona is predominantly conservative: it is the only state to vote Republican every presidential campaign from 1952 to 1992.

Our study site, Maricopa County, contains more than 50 percent of the state's voters. The vast majority of this population is concentrated in the greater Phoenix area. SES indicators show Maricopa County to be more affluent and slightly less diverse than the rest of the state. The ethnic backgrounds of the county are as follows: 77 percent white, 4 percent African American, 2 percent Native American, 2 percent Asian, and 25 percent Hispanic. (The summed percentages exceed 100 due to multiple responses for the U.S. Census data).

Arizona's gubernatorial election in 2002 saw Democrat Janet Napolitano defeat Republican Congressman Matt Salmon (46 percent to 45 percent). Salmon won Maricopa County, however (47 percent to 45 percent). Napolitano succeeds Goldwater conservative Jane Hull to become Arizona's second consecutive woman to sit in the governor's chair. The election featured three competing gambling propositions: 200, 201, and 202. Only the last of these passed. Proposition 202

requires the governor to approve new tribal gaming compacts. It gives tribes one to four gaming facilities, 475 to 1,400 slot machines, and 75 to 100 card tables. Tribes may offer blackjack, poker, wagering on horse and dog races, lottery games, bingo and keno.

Colorado. Prior to the 1970s, Colorado was politically a bit more Republican and conventionally conservative than the United States as a whole. Since then, two generations of politicians and partisan agendas have shaped the political culture of the state: liberal Democrats in the 1970s and the ascendancy of a second wave of Republicans in the late 1990s that continues to hold political power into 2003.

The liberal movement of the 1970s was driven by concerns about limiting growth and preserving the splendor of the Rocky Mountain state. The current trend toward conservative priorities has its roots in the high-tech explosion along the Front Range in the mid 1990s. Since 1990, 300,000 people moved to the state—many of them coming from Southern California and bringing a preferred moral and political climate.

El Paso County is home to conservative initiatives such as Focus on the Family. Activists from Colorado Springs authored the "Tax-Payers Bill of Rights" in 1994, which restricts the growth of state government. El Paso County voters are solidly Republican—they cast ballots in near opposition to the state in the 1996 presidential election. The county is comparable to the rest of Colorado in SES indicators. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the county median household income was \$46,844. The ethnic breakdown is 83 percent Anglo, 11 percent Hispanic, 7 percent black, 2 percent Asian, and 1 percent Native American.

The 2002 election featured the breezy re-election of Governor Bill Owens by a 63-to-34-percent margin over Democrat Rollie Heath. Voters turned down Amendment 31 in a highly publicized and financed campaign. The amendment would have required that all public school students be taught in English unless they were explicitly exempted. It would have required students who do not speak English to be taught English through sheltered language immersion programs. It would

have authorized a parent to sue for enforcement and provided detailed penalties for teachers and school board members. Partisan rhetoric featured conservatives advocating "English only" amidst the patriotism of post 9-11 America. Opponents cited racially motivated invective. The amendment narrowly failed statewide. With its substantial Hispanic base, El Paso County also voted no (55 percent to 45 percent).

Florida. Half a century ago, Florida was the least populous state in the South, with 1.4 million people. Today it is the fourth most populous state in the United States with 14 million people. Florida is on the leading edge of a nation-wide shift to service-oriented economies and tourism. With the influx of sun-seeking residents, the Florida of today is a hybrid of emerging, blended cultures. It is also a state whose various subcultures are seen by many as Balkanized. Quite separated from one another are the Latino-Cuban populations of Miami-Dade County, the newer affluent communities south of Tampa, the high-tech Space Coast communities and family suburbs around Cape Canaveral, the heavily Jewish retirement communities of the Gold Coast, and the more traditionally "Southern" western Panhandle bordering Georgia. Politically, Florida has become the most Republican of the nation's ten largest states.

Palm Beach County borders Broward County along the Gold Coast. Both counties are markedly more Democratic than the prevailing Republican ethos of Florida. Electoral districts in Broward County alone accounted for 43 percent of the state's 7 Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2002. The median household incomes (Census 2000) for the counties are in the \$42,000 to \$45,000 range, compared with the state median of \$38,819. The ethnic breakdown for Broward is 71 percent white, 20 percent African American, 17 percent Hispanic, 2 percent Native American, and 2 percent Asian. Palm Beach has similar a similar ethnic makeup, although not quite as diverse.

In 2002, incumbent Jeb Bush easily handled Democrat Bill McBride (56 percent to 43 percent). Meanwhile, Amendment 9 proposed that the Legislature provide funding for sufficient

classrooms to reduce class size. The amendment passed 52 percent to 48 percent statewide, and 70-30 in Broward County.

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

Our original intent for data collection was to work with a Kids Voting and a comparison school district in each region to obtain permission for distributing questionnaires to students in classrooms. However, with funding not secured until the late summer of 2002, this option became problematic given the amount of time necessary to work with multiple school-site administrators. While working with the schools would have represented a cost-effective method for obtaining student respondents, we were still left with the task of reaching parents. We were also concerned about the lack of external validity due to the selection of just two schools for each of the states. We consequently shifted to population-based screening, in which we purchased sampling frames for the three sites, thereby bypassing the schools in terms of questionnaire administration. Due to increased costs associated with this method, our sample size was reduced substantially but we obtained more diverse groups of respondents as the families came from school districts throughout a given region. The total sample includes students representing more than 150 schools.

To maximize the response rate for a self-administered mail back at T1, Dillman's (2000) Total/Tailored Design Method was used, which includes follow-up contacts to non-respondents. We included small incentives (\$5 phone cards) in the initial mailing. We also provided a Web-based survey, anticipating that this option would be especially attractive for adolescents. Finally, we conducted telephone interviews to reach students and parents who failed to respond initially.

For the first wave of interviews (T1), the initial questionnaire mailing took place on November 19, 2002 (after schools had implemented the curriculum and the election finished). Reminder post cards were mailed to non-respondents on December 9. Telephone follow-

up began December 17. During this phase, at least 10 attempts were made before coding a number as unreachable. Web surveys were completed throughout the field period. Data collection ended on February 25, 2003. In total, 680 parents and 563 students were interviewed, representing 491 completed dyads.

The cooperation rate for student-parent dyads represents the ratio of completed questionnaires/interviews to eligible respondents contacted. The rates are 58% for Arizona, 62% for Colorado, and 55% for Florida. These rates are consistent with a recent effort to reach young adults on matters of civic engagement without the benefit of school-site administration (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2002).

We refined interview procedures for the second wave by dropping the online questionnaire option but increasing substantially our efforts in the telephone and mail-back modes. We provided the same response incentive. Interviews were initially attempted by telephone with all dyads in the sample, beginning on November 6, 2003. Telephone calls were first made to the homes of the parents. If students no longer lived at home, parents were asked for the new phone numbers. The range of attempts per telephone number was 1 to 35. Often students were now in college and reaching them was difficult. Questionnaires were mailed at two times to parents and students not reached by phone. Data collection ended on March 1, 2004. In total 308 parents and 313 students completed the questionnaire at T2, either by phone or by mail, comprising a total of 288 completed dyads. The completion rate for dyads is 80 percent.

For the final wave of data collection, we again relied mostly on telephone calls to re-interview as many students and parents as possible from the original sample of 491 dyads. The interviews began on November 10, 2004. Reaching students became even more difficult during this last round of interviews as more of the young adults had left home. The range of attempts per telephone number for students and parents was 1 to 34. A self-administered version of the questionnaire was mailed to respondents not reached by phone. Data collection ended on January 8, 2004. In total, 223 parents and 204 students participated in interviews at T3, representing 187 completed dyads. Among these dyads, 158 participated in all three interviews and 29 completed interviews at T1 and T3. The completion rate for the dyads is 75 percent.

### ***Item Wording & Coding for All Measures***

#### Student Demographics

These measures were assessed during the first year of data collection (T1).

##### Grade Level

What grade are you in at school? Coded: 11th=1, 12th=2.

##### Grades Earned

Would you say your grades are mostly A's, B's, C's or D's? mostly A's=4, mostly B's=3, mostly C's=2, mostly D's=1.

##### Gender

What is your gender? female=1, male=2.

### Ethnicity

Of what ethnic group do you consider yourself? Hispanic (including Chicano and Spanish), Native American, African American, Asian, and other=dummy 1; white=dummy 2.

### Religious Group Membership

Are you a member of a religious group or club?" no=0, yes=1.

### Parent Demographics

Gender, ethnicity, and religious group membership were identical to the student measures. Data for these measures were also assessed at T1.

### SES

A two-item scale measured family socioeconomic status based on the parent's report of income and education. We standardized the coded values for each item and summed the scores. For statistical purposes, we need to estimate household income before tax. Indicate the category that fits you. less than \$15,000=1, \$16,000 to \$25,000=2, \$26,000 to \$40,000=3, \$41,000 to \$60,000=4. Indicate your level of formal education completed. some high school=1, graduated from high school=2, some college=3, graduated from college=4, attended graduate school=5.

The correlation is .36 ( $p < .001$ ).

### Prior Voting

A summed, three-item scale assessed frequency of prior voting.

Did you vote in this year's election (2002)? Coded no=0, yes=1.

Did you vote in the 2000 presidential election between Al Gore and George W. Bush? no, don't recall=0, yes=1.

Did you vote in the 1996 presidential election between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole?

The alpha is .79.

### Student Exposure to Kids Voting at T1

The questionnaire items are provided in the Methods section. For the first two questions, students used a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "never" and 5 meaning "very often." Students then answered "yes" or "no" to the remaining questions. These items were coded as yes=1 and no=0.

### Student & Parent Indicators of Civic Development

The following variables were identical or nearly identical for students and parents across the three interview waves.

#### Attention to Political News

Respondents answered with a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "none" and 5 "a great deal."

How much attention do you pay to election news about politics? (for the non-election year of 2003, "election news" was replaced with "news.")

#### Attention to Internet News

Respondents used the same response scale.

How much attention did you pay to election news on the Internet? ("Election news" was replaced with "news" at T2.)

#### Encouragement of Media Use

The response options and coding were as follows: not at all like me/not sure=1; somewhat like me=2; a lot like me=3.

I frequently encourage a parent/child to pay attention to news events.

#### Political Knowledge at T1

For students, four questions were used to create a summed scale. Answers were coded 0 for incorrect, 1 for don't know (DK), and 2 for correct.

Which party controls the U.S. House of Representatives?

Which party controls the U.S. Senate?

What is the party affiliation of Matt Salmon/Bill Owens/Jeb Bush?

What is the party affiliation of Janet Napolitano/Rollie Heath/Bill McBride?

The alpha is .60.

For parents, the four questions above were used along with the following:

Which party would you say is more in favor of school vouchers?

Which party has been more supportive of privatizing Social Security investments?

The alpha is .61.

#### Political Knowledge at T2

For students, seven questions were used to create a summed scale.

Which party do you consider more liberal?

Which party is more in favor of tax cuts to help stimulate the economy?

Which party controls the U.S. House of Representatives?

Which party controls the U.S. Senate?

What is the party affiliation of General Wesley Clark?

What is the party affiliation of Richard Cheney?

What is the party affiliation of Howard Dean?

The alpha is .60.

For parents, the questions above were used along with the following:

Which party would you say is more in favor of school vouchers?

Which party is more in favor of reducing government regulations to help stimulate the economy?

What is the party affiliation of Tom Daschle?

The alpha is .72.

#### Political Knowledge at T3

For students and parents, 10 questions were used to create a summed scale.

Which party do you consider more liberal?

Which party would you say is in more favor of raising the minimum wage?

Which party is in favor of stem cell research?

Which party is more in favor of defining marriage as solely between a man and a woman?

Which party controls the U.S. House of Representatives?

Which part controls the U.S. Senate?

What is the party affiliation of John Edwards?

What is the party affiliation of Richard Cheney?

Was Iraq actively involved in the planning of the 9/11 attack?

Has the US found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq since the 9/11 attack?

The alpha is .72 for students and .60 for parents.

#### Issue Salience at T1

Respondents answered with a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "not important" and 5 meaning "very important."

How important is the issue of expanding gambling/restricting bilingual education/limiting class size in Arizona/Colorado/Florida?

#### Issue Salience at T2

Respondents used the same response scale.

How important is the issue of the economy?

#### Issue Salience at T3

How important is the issue of the US involvement in Iraq?

#### Information Integration at T1

Two questions were used to create a summed scale. Response options and coding were as follows: not at all like me=1, somewhat like me=2, a lot like me=3.

When I came across election stories, I found myself tying the stories to ideas I had before.

When I join in political conversations, I find myself tying the arguments to ideas I had before.

The correlation is .46 ( $p < .001$ ) for students and .49 ( $p < .001$ ) for parents.

#### Information Integration at T2

For students, four questions were used to create a summed scale.

When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased.

When I hear news about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.

News about people running for office makes me wonder how they might change things.

When I join in political conversations, I find myself tying the arguments to ideas I had before.

The alpha is .67.

For parents, two questions were used to create a summed scale.

When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased.

When I hear news about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.

The correlation is .42 ( $p < .001$ )

#### Information Integration at T3

Two questions were used to create a summed scale.

When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased.

When I hear news about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.

The correlation is .38 ( $p < .001$ ) for students and .40 ( $p < .001$ ) for parents.

#### Discussion with Parents/Child

Respondents answered with a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "never" and 5 meaning "frequently."

How often did you talk about the election campaign with your parents/child? (We replaced "election campaign" with "politics" at T2).

### Discussion with Friends

Respondents used the same response scale.

How often did you talk about election campaign with your friends? (We replaced "election campaign" with "politics" at T2).

### Size of Discussion Network

We used the original number provided by respondents for this measure.

How many friends do you have who like to talk about politics?

### Listening to Opposing Views

Respondents answered with a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "never" and 5 meaning "frequently."

How often do you listen to people talk about politics when you know that you already disagree with them?

### Willingness to Disagree

Respondents used the same response scale.

In conversations, how often do you openly disagree with people about politics?

### Testing Opinions for Response

How often do you test out opinions in conversations to see how people might respond?

### Testing Opinions to Persuade

How often do you test out opinions in conversations to see if your views are persuasive?

### Partisanship

Which of the following best represents your political beliefs? Response options and coding: Republican, Democrat=2; Independent, other=1.

### Ideological Identity

Would you say you're liberal, conservative, moderate, neither, or are you not sure? Coded: liberal, conservative=2; moderate, neither, not sure=1.

### Support for Conventional Politics at T1

Two items were summed to create a summed scale. Respondents used a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "do not support" and 5 meaning "strongly support."

Voting on a regular basis.

Contributing money to a political party.

The correlation is .30 ( $p < .001$ ) for students and .27 ( $p < .001$ ) for parents.

### Support for Conventional Politics at T2

Three questions were used to create a summed scale.

Voting on a regular basis.

Contributing money to a political party.

Wearing a Republican or Democrat campaign button.

The alpha is .69 for students and .60 for parents.

### Support for Conventional Politics at T3

Two questions were used to create a summed scale.



Contributing money to a political party.

Wearing a Republican or Democrat campaign button.

The correlation is .45 ( $p < .001$ ) for students and .53 ( $p < .001$ ) for parents.

Support for Unconventional Activism at T1

Three items were summed to create a composite measure. Respondents used the same 1-to-5 scale.

Confronting police in a protest.

Participating in a boycott against a company.

Refusing to wear clothes with corporate logos.

The alpha is .59 for students and .42 for parents.

Support for Unconventional Activism at T2 & T3

Six items were summed to create a summed scale.

Confronting police in a protest.

Participating in a boycott against a company.

Refusing to wear clothes with corporate logos.

Creating a Web site to embarrass a corporation.

Trespassing on private land to protest the cutting down of ancient forests.

Refusing to pay taxes in order to protest a government policy.

For students, the alpha is .71 at T2 and .72 at T3. For parents: .68 at T2 and .71 at T3.

Student Volunteering at T2

Have you volunteered this year for any political organizations or causes? Coded: yes=1, no=0.

Student & Parent Volunteering at T3

Did you volunteer during the election campaign for any organizations or causes?

Campus Activism of Students at T2 & T3

We used a branching question to identify respondents who were still a student in high school or a student in college.

At your campus this year, have you participated in any political activities such as protests or demonstrations? Coded: yes=1, no=0.

Parent Activism at T3

During the election campaign, did you participate in any protests or demonstrations?

Student Strength of Opinion at T3

Students used a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "strongly oppose" and 5 meaning "strongly support." To create an extremity measure, we recoded the variable so that 3=1, 2 & 4=2, and 1 & 5=3.

What best describes your feelings about the U.S. government's handling of the situation in Iraq?

Appendix Table 1: Demographic Profile for Students in 2002 (Percentages)

		Arizona	Colorado	Florida	Total Sample
Grade in School	Junior	54	49	58	53
	Senior	46	51	42	47
Grades Earned in School	Mostly As	47	46	45	46
	Mostly Bs	41	41	44	42
	Mostly Cs	9	12	9	10
	Mostly Ds	2	2	2	2
Gender	Female	58	55	58	57
	Male	43	45	42	43
Ethnicity	Hispanic	15	6	17	12
	Anglo	66	67	54	64
	Native American	1	1	1	1
	African American	5	6	12	7
	Asian	3	4	1	3
	Other	11	16	15	13

Appendix Table 2: Demographic Profile for Parents in 2002 (Percentages)

		Arizona	Colorado	Florida	Total Sample
Gender	Female	71	69	68	70
	Male	29	31	32	30
Political Ideology	Liberal	13	19	28	18
	Conservative	40	42	29	38
	Moderate	28	24	23	25
	Neither	12	11	17	13
	Not Sure	7	5	5	6
Party Identification	Democrat	24	20	45	27
	Republican	49	51	30	46
	Independent	21	22	16	20
	Other	6	7	9	7
Voted in 2000	Yes	85	87	84	86
	No	14	12	15	13
	Don't Recall	1	1	1	1
Voted in 1996	Yes	86	85	79	84
	No	13	14	18	14
	Don't Recall	1	1	3	1
Ethnicity	Hispanic	8	7	13	8
	Anglo	79	76	67	75
	Native American	2	3	2	2
	African American	3	5	10	5
	Asian	4	2	2	3
	Other	4	7	7	6
Education Completed	Some high school	2	1	2	2
	High school/GED	13	15	17	14
	Some college	35	34	28	33
	Graduated from college	31	31	33	31
	Graduate school	20	18	21	19
Income	Less than \$15,000	2	4	6	4
	\$16,000-\$25,000	4	8	4	6
	\$26,000-\$40,000	14	17	13	15
	\$41,000-\$60,000	20	22	21	21
	Over \$60,000	59	49	56	54

Appendix Table 3: Frequency of Instruction for Kids Voting Components in 2002 (Percentages)

	Arizona	Colorado	Florida	Total Sample
<i>Peer discussion</i>				
Discussions of election <sup>1</sup>	46	28	49	40
Opinion expression encouraged <sup>1</sup>	49	45	45	47
Debates	64	60	57	61
<i>Media literacy</i>				
Analysis of political cartoons	64	58	52	59
Analysis of political ads	50	39	43	44
<i>Civic/community involvement</i>				
Service learning	27	16	22	21
Work at a polling site	4	3	8	5
Students encourage others to vote	37	29	30	33
<i>Family activities</i>				
Homework involving family	24	16	18	20
Vote with parents	3	4	10	5

<sup>1</sup> These two items were originally coded with a 1-to-5 scale. To create dichotomous measures in keeping with the other indicators, scores of 4 and 5 were re-coded as 1 and all other scores were re-coded as 0.

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