

WELCOME

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for leading Student Vote in your school and being a champion of democratic engagement for your students and community. Teachers play a vital role in building future citizens and we believe that preparing students for the voting process should start at an early age.

Student Vote turns the general election into an authentic learning opportunity and helps foster the development of 21st century competencies. Rather than learn about civics and citizenship from a textbook, students experience it firsthand with relevant events and issues in real time. The model is an exercise in deeper learning, exploration and connectedness, which allows students to practice the habits of active and informed citizenship.

Student Vote teaches students that the role of a citizen is a critical one if our democracy is to thrive and succeed. The publication of the Student Vote results allows students to feel that their voice matters and helps them understand that they are part of something larger than their school.

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

The Student Vote program aims to achieve the following student outcomes:

- Improved understanding and awareness of government and the electoral process;
- Enhanced sense of civic duty and social responsibility;
- Increased political conversation with friends and family;
- Heightened awareness and interest in politics and public policy;
- Enhanced digital and information literacy habits; and
- Improved critical thinking and decision-making skills.

An independent evaluation commissioned by Elections Canada in 2015 found that participating in Student Vote had a positive impact on student knowledge and understanding of Canadian politics and elections, on their interest and confidence in discussing politics and on their future voting intentions. Furthermore, the program provides families with more opportunities to learn about elections and politics. Among parents and guardians of participating students, 28 per cent said that their child's participation in Student Vote positively influenced their own decision to vote.

PROGRAMS OF STUDY OUTCOMES

This resource supports the vision and goals of the Alberta Education Social Studies Programs of Study, with specific linkages to the Grade 6 curriculum. Though it is the content of the Social Studies curriculum that most closely align with the Student Vote program in its discussions of politics, democracy and government, our resource fulfills many skills requirements of Alberta's education system in a variety of streams and acts as a complement to many subject areas, particularly English Language Arts.

The Program Rationale and Philosophy for Social Studies K-12 in Alberta states that it "provides opportunities for students to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge that will enable them to become engaged, active, informed and responsible citizens." The Student Vote program aligns perfectly as one of these opportunities. By running the Student Vote program for your students, you will fulfill several of the targeted skills covered in the Social Studies curriculum.

DIGITAL LITERACY AND NEWS CONSUMPTION HABITS

One of the most significant threats facing democracies today is the proliferation of mis- and disinformation online. Citizens must navigate an information ecosystem where it is increasingly challenging to separate fact from fiction and to recognize credible information.

Developing effective information literacy skills has the potential to make a real and lasting impact on the next generation's ability to contextualize and assess news and information from any source.

With this in mind, we have incorporated three lessons into the resource to help tackle these issues and support teachers in introducing key skills to students (Lessons 4-6). For more information, visit www.newswise.ca.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OR QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact us at 1-866-488-8775 or by email at hello@civix.ca. Please be sure to visit the Student Vote Alberta project website for additional resources: www.studentvote.ca/ab2019