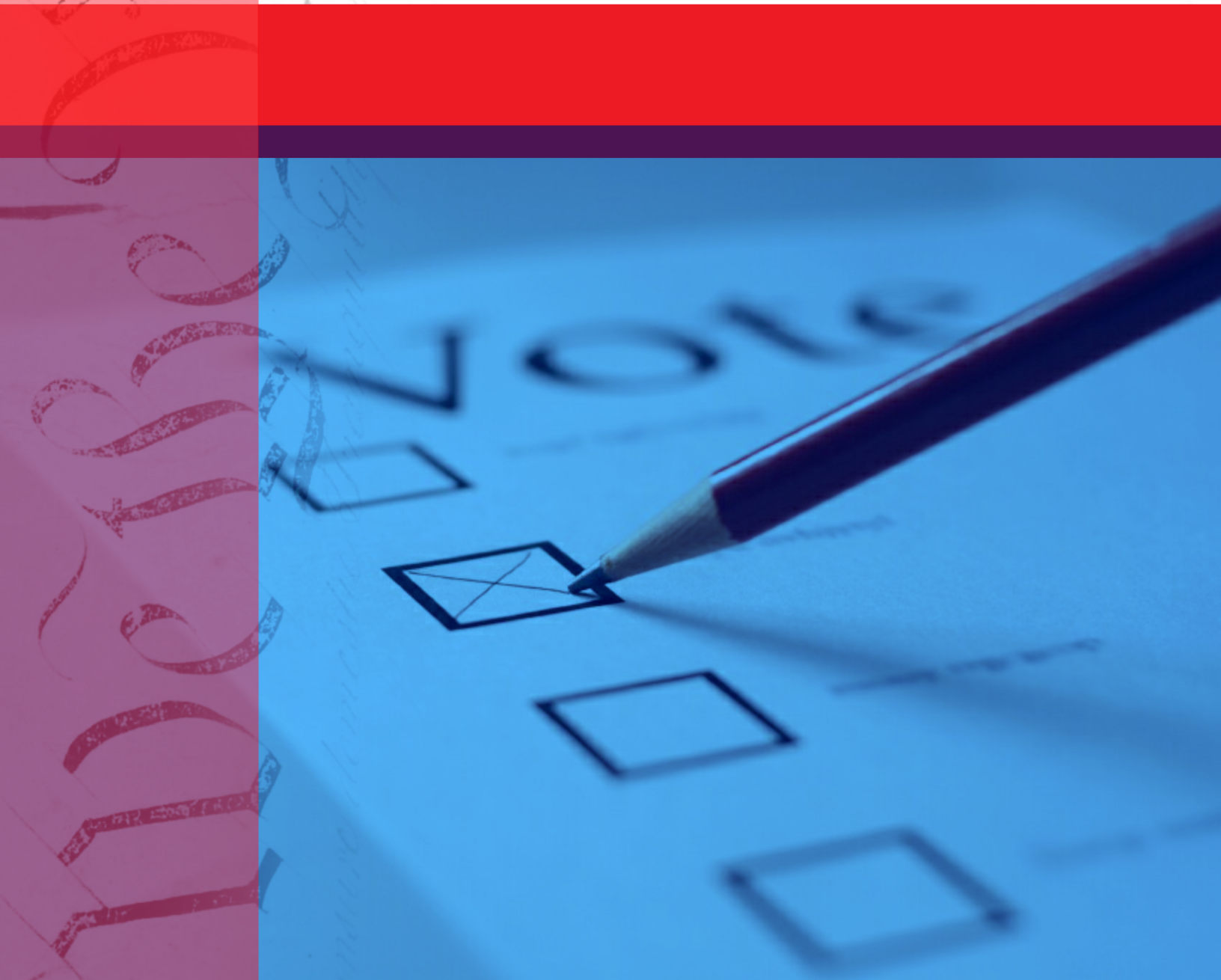# High School Students' Acquisition of Civic Dispositions: The Impact of We the People

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SUMMARY

Civic dispositions are traits essential for democratic character formation and the maintenance of constitutional democracy. This study investigates the proposition that civic education contributes to students' development of the capacities that support democratic citizenship. Specifically, it explores the impact of *We the People* teacher professional development and the *We the People* curriculum on high school students' acquisition of six categories of civic dispositions: 1) respect for the rule of law; 2) political attentiveness; 3) civic duty; 4) community involvement; 5) commitment to government service; and 6) the norms of political efficacy and political tolerance. The findings indicate that civics instruction is positively related to students' development of civic dispositions. Students whose teachers have *We the People* professional development, especially those who took a *We the People* class, scored significantly higher than students in the comparison group on all six types of dispositions.

Key Study Findings:

*Students whose teachers had *We the People* professional development, especially those who took a *We the People* class, became much more inclined to participate in politics than before taking civics.

*From the outset, students strongly respected the rule of law. Still, the level of respect for the rule of law increased after taking a civics class, particularly among students of *We the People* teachers.

*Students' level of attentiveness to government and politics increased significantly as a result of taking a civics class. Students who took a *We the People* class were the most likely to follow politics, enjoy talking about government and politics, and critically consume political news.

* Students taking classes from *We the People* teachers were significantly more inclined to anticipate that they would vote in presidential elections, vote in local elections, and serve on a jury than students in the comparison group.

*Civic education had no influence on students' perception of their duty to serve in the military.

*Students who took a *We the People* class were more likely to believe that it is their responsibility to be involved in their community than students who took traditional civics classes.

*Students' desire for a career in government service or to run for office was low at the outset of the study, and improved only slightly as a result of taking a civics class. *We the People* students were the most inclined toward government service.

**We the People* students had higher levels of political efficacy than students in traditional classes. Students generally were more likely to feel that they could work with others to help make things better in their communities than to believe that they can make a difference individually.

*Students of teachers with *We the People* professional development became more tolerant of opposing political ideas as a result of their civics class than students in the comparison group.

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Introduction

Civic dispositions are orientations related to democratic character formation. They are the public and private traits essential to the maintenance and improvement of constitutional democracy (Branson, 1998). Dispositions cover a range of interpersonal and intrapersonal values, virtues, and behaviors that provide a foundation for individuals' active embrace of the norms of good citizenship. They encompass peoples' motivations to be civically engaged (Torney-Purta, 2004). The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools (2011) defines civic dispositions as a concern for others' rights and welfare, fairness, reasonable levels of trust, and a sense of public duty. People who evince a strong democratic temperament are willing to compromise personal interests for the greater good (Stambler, 2011). They embrace their democratic rights, responsibilities, and duties in a responsible, tolerant, and civil manner. They have the confidence to engage in civic affairs and to participate actively in political life. Civic dispositions were described as "habits of the heart" by Alexis de Tocqueville in 1835 (2003), and are elements of civic culture (Dahlgren, 2003) and civic virtue (Peterson, 2011).

The acquisition of civic dispositions is necessary for the stable functioning of a constitutional democracy. Civic dispositions include respect for the rule of law, a commitment to justice, equality, and fairness, trust in government, civic duty, attentiveness to political matters, political efficacy, political tolerance, respect for human rights, concern for the welfare of others, civility, social responsibility, and community connectedness (Morgan and Streb, 2001; Torney-Purta, 2004; Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 2011). These dispositions enable people to become independent members of society who accept the moral and legal obligations of a democracy and take personal responsibility for their actions (Kahne, et al., 2006). They encourage thoughtful and effective participation in civic affairs. They require citizens to keep informed about politics and government, monitor political leaders and public agencies to ensure their actions are principled, and work through peaceful, legal means to change unjust policies (Branson, 1998).

This study examines the impact of *We the People* professional development (WTP PD) and the *We the People* curriculum on students' acquisition of civic dispositions. The civic dispositions examined in this study fall into six categories: 1) respect for the rule of law; 2) political attentiveness; 3) civic duty; 4) community involvement; 5) commitment to government service; and 6) political norms, specifically political efficacy and political tolerance. We find that students of teachers with WTP PD, and especially those who have taken a WTP, class are more likely to have acquired political dispositions as a result of civics instruction than students of teachers without WTP PD.

We the People **Program and Professional Development**

Civic education varies greatly across, and even within, schools. Civics offerings range from dedicated social studies/American government classes to brief sections of a history class. While civics classes often are conducted using a standard lecture/textbook approach, some schools offer programs that employ active pedagogies designed to impart civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions that encourage students to take part in the polity. Our study explores the civic dispositions of students instructed by a teacher with *We the People* professional development and who have gone through the WTP program compared to students who took civics classes with teachers without WTP PD who employed a more traditional curricular approach.

The *We the People* program instructs students in the foundations and institutions of American government. It is distinctive for its emphasis on constitutional principles, the Bill of Rights, and Supreme Court cases. A WTP textbook reflecting the curriculum is available in both a print and an e-book version that facilitates interactive learning. WTP students take part in simulated congressional hearings that encourage them to engage in a range of learning activities. This exercise requires students to research and develop succinct, yet complete, answers to probing questions. Some classes take part in district, state, and national WTP hearings in Washington, D.C. The finals of the national competition are held in congressional hearing rooms on Capitol Hill. This active approach to civics instruction is associated with positive learning outcomes (Vontz and Leming, 2005-06). Several studies have shown that *We the People* students gained superior knowledge about key elements of government and politics, and that the program promotes greater political tolerance and engagement (Leming, 1996; Brody, 1994; Neimi, 2001; Hartry and Porter, 2004; Soule and Nairne, 2009; Owen and Soule, 2010; Eschrich, 2010; Owen, 2013; Owen and Riddle, 2015).

The WTP curriculum and WTP teacher PD focus on six essential questions that are reflected in the six chapters of the *We the People* textbook:

1. What are the philosophical and historical foundations of the American political system?
2. How did the framers create the Constitution?
3. How has the Constitution been changed to further the ideals contained in the Declaration of Independence?
4. How have the values and principles embodied in the Constitution shaped American institutions and practices?
5. What rights does the Bill of Rights protect?
6. What challenges might face American constitutional democracy in the twenty-first century?

Secondary school students' learning is dependent on the knowledge base and pedagogical skills of their teachers. Effective professional development includes three essential components: 1) content knowledge, 2) pedagogy, and 3) student assessment. WTP teacher PD is administered through training institutes, workshops, and seminars. Teacher participants interact with law, history, and political science scholars who are responsible for conveying high level content related to one or more of the essential questions and demonstrating effective pedagogy. In addition, the teacher participants interact with mentor master teachers familiar with both the content and the pedagogy of the *We the People* textbook. The mentor teachers are responsible for helping teacher participants understand the content and how best to implement the program content in their classroom. WTP PD also provides pedagogy sessions delivered by mentor teachers and university and college social studies methods professors that demonstrate "best practices," including written argument development, Socratic questioning, interactive teaching strategies, primary document analysis, and critical reading of non-fiction sources. The final component of the WTP professional development program focuses on assessment. In small groups of 4-6 teachers and guided by mentor teachers, participants prepare written statements answering congressional hearing questions designed to complement the six units in the *We the People* textbook. The participants are assessed based on: 1) their understanding of the basic issues involved in the question; 2) their knowledge of constitutional history and principles; 3) their use of sound reasoning to support their positions; 4) their use of historical or contemporary evidence and examples to support their positions; 5) the extent to which they answered the question asked; and 6) the extent to which most members contributed to the group's presentation.

Civic Education and Civic Dispositions

Civic education can increase students' civic dispositions and capacities that support the development of social capital for political engagement. A goal of civics instruction is to convey to students an understanding of their own rights and an appreciation of the rights of others (Langton and Jennings, 1968). Quality curricular opportunities have been shown to galvanize political interest, civic commitment, and community involvement (Torney-Purta, 2002). High school civics instruction can spark awareness and discussion of political issues, and increase students' propensity for political participation. Students can learn to identify problems in their communities and seek solutions by working collectively (Kahne, et al., 2006). They can come to understand the connection between getting involved in civic life and being a good citizen.

The National Standards for Civics and Government, a voluntary guide that states can use when developing standards and benchmarks for civics instruction, posits that "the well-being of American constitutional democracy depends upon the informed and effective participation of citizens concerned with the preservation of individual rights and the promotion of the common good" (Center for Civic Education,1994: 1). *The Standards* suggest that by 12th grade students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the civic responsibilities of American citizens. They should be able to assess the importance of a range of civic duties, including obeying the law, and being informed and attentive to public issues. They should know how to monitor the adherence of political leaders and governmental agencies to constitutional principles and take appropriate action when this is lacking. They should see the importance of assuming leadership roles, paying taxes, registering and voting knowledgeably, serving as a juror, and serving in the military (Center for Civic Education, 1994).

Respect for the Rule of Law

Respect for the rule of law is a foundational civic disposition. O'Donnell defines the rule of law as law that is "written down and publicly promulgated by an appropriate authority before the events meant to be regulated by it, and is fairly applied by relevant stated institutions . . ." (2004: 33). The rule of law can be viewed as a function of the government that creates and enforces laws. It also can be considered from the perspective self-governance by citizens who decide whether or not to comply voluntarily with their nation's regulations (Peterson, 2011).

A thriving democracy requires responsible self-government that is premised on public respect for the rule of law and civility. It assumes that citizens are accountable under laws that are designed to protect fundamental rights and that are applied evenly. The rule of law has a long-standing association with the protection of civil liberties. Rather than resorting to violence, people bring their disputes to the court of law, and abide by the result. Respect for the rule of law can be instrumental in promoting social change (Donnelly, 2006). Civic education in schools can convey the knowledge necessary for students to understand the importance of the rule of law and how to put that understanding into practice (Hansen, 2011).

Political Attentiveness

Citizens' attentiveness to political affairs is a core requirement of a strong democratic polity. Political attentiveness requires that people keep informed about government and politics, and that

they are able to critically evaluate information, especially as it is presented in the media. People can learn a great deal about government and politics through discussion with others. Political topics often emerge in informal conversations among peers which can be a rich source of information for people with shared values. Political conversation also can expose people to diverse viewpoints, and encourage reasoned consideration of policies and events (Walsh, 2004). A participant in a 2014 Pew Research Center study observed: "Word of mouth is a large part of how political views are formed." Another respondent stated, "Talking with other residents in our area is a useful way to keep up with local politics" (Mitchell, et al., 2014). The Pew study found that 55% of Americans enjoy talking about politics "some" or "a lot." People who enjoy talking about politics are more inclined to be attentive to political affairs.

Studies have demonstrated that students can become disposed to political attentiveness when the civics classroom environment supports open discussion of political and social issues (Niemi and Junn, 1998; Ehrlich, 2000; Torney-Purta, 2002; Feldman, et al., 2007; Hess and McAvoy, 2014). Class discussion can foster increased motivation to follow politics and find out more about important policies, processes, and events (Drew and Reeves, 1980; Campbell, 2008). Civic education can make political discussion enjoyable which can, in turn, lead to greater political attentiveness. Civics programs can initiate in students a habit of attending to political affairs that can be an incentive for political activity in the long term (Pasek, et al., 2008).

Civic Duty

Civic duty can be defined broadly as citizens' perceived sense of political responsibility based on some emotional or symbolic connection to the larger community. Duty can reflect a moral obligation to perform civic functions and/or the satisfaction that is derived from fulfilling civic responsibilities (Jankowski, 2002). A number of studies have demonstrated that a sense of civic duty is an important motivator for traditional and institutionalized political participation (Putnam, 2000; Dalton, 2008; Blais and Achen, 2012). This view of civic duty is focused on personal responsibility, and promotes traditional and formal avenues for political participation by an individual, such as voting, obeying the law, and serving on a jury. Another perspective frames civic duty in terms of society's responsibility towards other citizens. In this conception, avenues of formal political participation are less important, and responsibility to improve the lives of others in one's community becomes more central. Dalton (2009) characterizes this outlook as "participatory citizenship" whereby individuals actively take part in the organization and administration of collective action to

improve social and community problems. Activities following from the social responsibility perspective link civic duty to more informal or non-traditional activities such as protesting, boycotting, organizing food drives, and administering voter registration drives. Rational choice theorists hold a more narrow view of civic duty as a measure of citizens' obligation to vote in order to preserve democracy (Downs, 1957) or the expressive value obtained from voting for a preferred candidate (Riker and Ordershook, 1968; Fiornia, 1976; Jankowski, 2002).

Research has established a link between an individual's sense of civic duty and her/his willingness to participate in politics. A study of the motivation of political activists revealed that 93% cited "civic gratification" as a reason for voting (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Other work establishes that civic duty plays a role in citizens' decisions to stay informed. Civic duty functions as an intervening variable between education and news media use, whereby respondents with a higher sense of civic duty use media to stay politically educated (Poindexter and McCombs, 2001).

Community Involvement

Citizens' involvement in their communities is central to maintaining a healthy civil society by cultivating trusting partnerships and personal commitment to the well-being of others (Tourney-Punta, 2004). Civil society represents the nongovernmental and voluntary organizations that advance common societal interests (Peterson, 2011). Social capital is the backbone of civil society, and reflects the cooperative efforts of citizens to engage in activities that benefit the wider community. According to Putnam and Feldstein, "The term social capital emphasizes not just warm and cuddly feelings, but a wide variety of quite specific benefits that flow from the trust, reciprocity, information, and cooperation associated with social networks. Social capital creates value for the people who are connected and—at least sometimes—for bystanders as well" (2003:2). A minimal level of communality is necessary for community members to work together towards shared ends, settle dispute civilly, and adhere to rules consistent with democracy (Dahlgren 2003).

For more than a decade, scholars have lamented America's diminishing social capital and the decline of vigorous community life (Putnam, 2001; Dahlgren, 2003), especially among young people (Rahn and Transue, 1998). The relationship between education and the development of social capital is contested. Important aspects of social capital, such as community engagement, have declined as aggregate education levels have increased in western democracies (Campbell, 2006). However, evidence suggests that education is positively correlated with social capital at the

individual level. Civic education, especially programs that promote active learning in an open classroom environment, can promote norms conducive to the development of social capital. Programs that incorporate learning about problems in local communities, cover material about how local government works, and emphasize the personal relevance of community activation are most successful in imparting community-related civic dispositions (Putnam and Feldstein, 2003; Kahne, Chi, and Middaugh, 2006).

Political Norms

This study examines the influence of civic education on norms of political efficacy and political tolerance. Political efficacy is the "feeling that political and social change is possible and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change" (Campbell, Gurin and Miller, 1954, p. 187). External political efficacy is a person's belief that the political system will be responsive to citizens' needs. Here we are concerned with internal efficacy, an individual's confidence in her/his own ability to influence politics and government. Bandura defines the concept of political self-efficacy as the "belief that one can produce effects through political action" (1997: 483). Acquisition of a sense of political efficacy in childhood and adolescence is conducive to active democratic participation in adulthood (Easton and Dennis, 1967; Hess and Torney, 1967; Hahn, 1998).

Political tolerance is defined as the "willingness to permit the expression of ideas or interests that one opposes" (Sullivan, et al., 1993: 23). It "refers to citizens' respect for the political rights and civil liberties of all people in the society, including those whose ideas they may find distasteful or abhorrent" (Branson and Quigley, 1998). It is a concept that encompasses many of the beliefs, values, and attitudes that are essential in a constitutional democracy. Tolerance is important for maintaining liberty. Civil debate where all voices can be expressed and heard is vital for providing stability in an adversarial political system. Sullivan, et al., state: "Although a democratic regime may be divided by fierce conflicts, it can remain stable if citizens remain attached to democratic or constitutional procedures and maintain a willingness to apply such procedures—the right to speak, to publish, to run for office—on an equal basis to all, even to those who challenge its way of life" (1979: 781).

Stouffer's (1955) classic examination of Americans' attitudes towards Communists, socialists, and atheists found a positive correlation between education and increased tolerance, a finding confirmed by subsequent analyses (Owen and Dennis, 1987; Sullivan, et al., 1993). The connection

between secondary school civics instruction and political tolerance is complicated, and varies greatly based on the curriculum employed and classroom climate. Some teachers are reluctant to raise controversial issues in class or to engage students in constructive conversations, an approach that does little to convey tolerant norms (Vogt, 1997; McNeil, 1986; Avery, 2006; Hess and McAvoy, 2014).   Evidence suggests, however, that students who have taken high school civics, social studies, American government, and history classes are more tolerant than the general public. Brody (1994) found that *We the People* students, especially those who participate in simulated congressional hearings, are more tolerant than students who were taught using other curricula.

Hypotheses

We test the following hypotheses about the effectiveness of teachers who received *We the People* professional development and the WTP curriculum in imparting civic dispositions to high school students:

H_1: High school students who took civics from a teacher with WTP PD will have higher levels of support for the rule of law, civic attentiveness, civic duty, commitment to becoming involved in their community, commitment to government service, political efficacy and political tolerance than students whose teacher did not have WTP PD.

H_2: High school students who took a *We the People* class will have higher levels of support for the rule of law, civic attentiveness, civic duty, commitment to becoming involved in their community, commitment to government service, political efficacy and political tolerance than students who took a traditional civics/social studies/American government class.

Data

A quasi-experimental design without random assignment was employed to compare students in civics, social studies, and American government classes taught by teachers with and without *We the People* PD at multiple school sites across the state of Indiana in the fall semester of 2014. Schools with teachers who had participated in WTP PD and who taught WTP classes were recruited to take part in the study. Teachers without WTP PD from the same schools constitute the comparison group. Twenty-one teachers from twelve high schools from across the state took part in the study. In three of the schools there is only one instructor who teaches all of the civic education classes. The WTP teachers taught other civics/social studies classes in addition to their WTP class with one

exception. The schools vary in size, location (urban/suburban/rural), and type (neighborhood/selective enrollment/technical; public/private). The student samples per school range in size from 39 to 169, with a mean of 85 students.

Teachers completed a baseline survey in September 2014 prior to the administration of the student surveys. The comparison group teachers were matched to the extent possible with the WTP PD teachers based on their educational background and years of experience. The WTP PD and comparison group teachers in the study are highly comparable on these indicators. The average number of years teaching civics—twenty—is identical for each group, and ranges from 5 to 36 for the WTP PD teachers and 7 to 34 for the comparison group teachers. 27% of the WTP PD teachers have bachelor's degrees and 73% have advanced degrees (master's/law degree). 33% of the comparison group teachers hold bachelor's degrees and 67% have master's degrees. All of the teachers in the study had participated in professional development of some type. The WTP PD teachers took part in five to seven day WTP summer institutes that conveyed the content knowledge and specialized skills required of instructors in the program. These teachers also had follow-up services, including one-day seminars and engagement in a network of WTP instructors.

Complete data were collected on 1,015 students. 663 students were in classes taught by WTP PD teachers; 386 of these students were enrolled in the We the People program and 277 took a traditional civics class. 351 students took civics with the comparison group teachers. There were no statistically significant differences in the gender composition of the students in the comparison and intervention groups. The majority of students in the sample are white. However, the comparison group has a greater percentage of black students than the WTP PD teacher groups, which have more Asian American/Pacific Islander students. All groups have approximately the same percentage of Latino students. 87% of the students in the sample were seniors in high school, and the rest were mostly juniors. There were a higher percentage of seniors in traditional classes taught by WTP PD teachers than in the other groups. The vast majority of students in the comparison (98%) and WTP PD teacher/traditional (nonWTP) class (96%) groups were taking civics as a required class. 58% of students took *We the People* as a required class and 42% took it as an elective (See Table 1).

Table 1
Student Characteristics by Comparison Group, WTP Teacher/nonWTP Class, and WTP Teacher/WTP Class

	Comparison Group	WTP Teacher/ nonWTP class	WTP Teacher/ WTP class	Sign. χ^2
Male	47%	50%	49%	
Female	53%	50%	51%	.605
White/Caucasian	67%	76%	74%	
Black/African American	17%	4%	6%	
Latino	7%	7%	6%	
Asian American/Pacific Islander	2%	8%	7%	
Multiracial	7%	5%	8%	.000
Junior	17%	6%	9%	
Senior	82%	94%	87%	
Freshman/Sophomore	1%	0	4%	.00
Required Class	98%	96%	58%	
Elective Class	2%	4%	42%	.00

n=1015

This analysis is based on pre/posttest student survey data. In addition to items measuring students' civic dispositions, skills, and knowledge, the questionnaire includes measures of classroom climate, instructional approaches, classroom resources, students' media use, demographic variables, and grade point average (GPA). Teachers administered the tests to students online near the beginning (early September) and at the end (late December) of the fall semester 2014 during class periods. There are no confounding factors in the study, as the teachers with WTP PD had no contact with the comparison group students, and the tests were administered to all students during the same time period in each school. Close contact with teachers was maintained by the researchers throughout the study in an effort to minimize sample attrition. All teachers were provided with a stipend for participating in the study, and there was no teacher attrition. Students who were absent could make up the test on another day. Thirty-eight students dropped out of the study, for an overall attrition rate of 3.6%. There is no evidence of differential attrition for the comparison or intervention groups, or for particular schools.

Measures

Civic Dispositions

The study includes sixteen items tapping the six dimensions of civic dispositions we analyze here: 1) respect for the rule of law; 2) political attentiveness; 3) civic duty; 4) community involvement; 5) commitment to government service; and 6) political norms of personal efficacy and tolerance. All items are measured on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 where a high score indicates agreement with the disposition.

A single indicator of respect for the rule of law measures the extent to which students think it is important to follow rules and laws. Attentiveness to politics and government is gauged by four items. The first assesses the degree to which students agree that it is their responsibility to follow government and politics in the media. Another question indicates how much students enjoy talking about politics and political issues. Two items deal with students' proclivity to think critically about political events covered in the press: "When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if they are just telling one side of the story" and "When I hear news about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on." Four civic duty items are included in the study. They measure students' intention to vote in presidential elections, vote in local elections, serve on a jury, and serve in the military. Two variables are used to measure community involvement. One question asks students if they agree that it is their responsibility to be actively involved in their community and the other asks if being concerned about state and local issues is an important responsibility for everybody. Students' commitment to government service is gauged by two items: interest in a career in government and politics and the possibility that they might run for office one day. Internal political efficacy is measured by two variables that reflect the extent to which students believe they can make a difference in their community and that by working with others they can make things better in their community. One item taps political tolerance: "I listen to people talk about politics even when I know that I disagree with them." (Disposition categories and question wording appear in Appendix A.)

Teacher/Class Type

The teacher/class type variable designates the comparison and the intervention groups. The analysis examines the knowledge scores of three categories of students: 1) students who took a traditional civics/social studies/American government class with a teacher who had gone through *We the People* professional development (n=277); 2) students who took a We the People class with a

teacher who had WTP PD (n=386); and 3) the comparison group of students in a traditional civics class whose teacher did not have WTP PD (n=351).

Analysis

This study demonstrates empirically that civic education contributes to students' acquisition of civic dispositions thus increasing their penchant for political participation. Respondents were asked in the posttest if they are more or less inclined to participate in politics as a result of their civics class. As Table 2 indicates, 32% of the students in the study stated that they were "a lot more" inclined to participate in politics, while only 15% indicated that they were "not at all" inclined. A substantially higher percentage of students taking a *We the People* class (44%) or a traditional civics class from a WTP teacher (37%) reported that they were "a lot more" inclined to participate than students in the comparison group (16%). 53% of students in the comparison group were either "slightly more" or "not at all" inclined; half as many students in classes instructed by WTP teachers felt this way.

Table 2
Student Inclination to Participate in Politics Post Civics Class
by Teacher and Class Type

	Comparison Teachers	WTP Teacher/ Non WTP Class	WTP Teacher/ WTP Class	Total
A lot more inclined	16%	37%	44%	32%
Somewhat more inclined	32%	37%	29%	32%
Slightly more inclined	28%	18%	16%	21.%
Not at all inclined	25%	8%	11%	15%

n = 1,015 χ^2 p = .00

A hierarchical linear model was estimated using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to determine the effects of *We the People* teacher professional development and class type on students' acquisition of political dispositions. A random factor representing the schools in the sample accounts for clustering of students within schools. The three category teacher/class type measure is a fixed factor in the model. The WTP teacher groups and the comparison group scores on the dispositions indicators were not equivalent at baseline for most items. A statistical adjustment was made, with pretest knowledge scores entered as covariates. Effect size is estimated using Hedge's g.

Where there are more than two categories, estimating the effect size between the control and a group receiving the intervention is preferable (Durlak, 2009). We compute effect size for the comparison group and the WTP PD teachers/WTP class intervention, as the difference of means between these groups is largest in every instance but one, where the difference is the same. The assumption that the greatest difference in means will exist between the comparison group and the WTP teacher/WTP class condition is consistent with our hypotheses.

The model was run for each of the sixteen civic disposition measures. We entered controls for gender and race that generally were nonsignificant. The relationship between students' grade point average (GPA) and the civic disposition measures was weak, non-linear, and nonsignificant for virtually all of the measures. Thus, we did not include controls for gender, race, or GPA in the analyses presented here.

From the outset, students had a fairly high respect for the rule of law. A strong majority of students (81%) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that it is important for people to follow rules and laws during the pretest; this percentage increased (86%) in the posttest. (A comparison of the percentage of students in the pretest and posttest reporting "strongly agree" for each disposition for the entire sample appears in Appendix B.)

The ANCOVA analysis presented in Table 3 indicates that students of WTP teachers have higher adjusted posttest mean scores on this item than the students in the comparison group, although the mean difference is minimal. The difference is statistically significant for the WTP teachers/WTP class condition only, and the effect size is small (see Maher, et al., 2013).

Table 3
Estimated Impacts of WTP Teacher PD and Class Type on Civic Dispositions
Rule of Law

	n	Unadjusted $\bar{x}$	SD	Adjusted $\bar{x}$	SE	$\bar{x}$ Difference	p	Effect size
Follow rules and laws								
Comparison	335	4.00	.93	4.06	.06			
Non WTP Class	267	4.31	.79	4.26	.07	.21	.14	.24
WTP Teacher/Class	367	4.31	.85	4.27	.04	.22	.02	

Students were less inclined to agree that it was their responsibility to be attentive to political affairs than they were committed to the necessity of following rules and laws. For the entire sample, 52% of students in the pretest agreed somewhat or strongly agreed that they should follow government and politics in the media compared to 60% in the posttest. The percentage of students reporting that they enjoyed talking about politics and government increased from 40% to 50% over the course of the study. Approximately 63% of students in both the pre and posttests agreed strongly or somewhat that they should try to determine if a news story is presenting just one side. However, there was an increase in the percentage of students who "strongly agreed" with this statement between the pretest (20%) and posttest (27%). The percentage of students who agreed that they should try and find out what is really going on in political news rose from 55% in the pretest to 62% in the posttest.

The impact of *We the People* professional development and taking a WTP class on students' levels of political attentiveness is positive and statistically significant. In fact, the findings for this civic disposition are among the strongest in the study. The adjusted mean scores for the WTP teacher groups are greater than for the comparison group in every instance. The scores are highest for the WTP teacher/WTP class condition. The mean differences are statistically significant for all but the contrast between the comparison group and the WTP teacher/nonWTP class group for finding out what is really going on in the news. The effect size for all four variables is moderate to moderately high. The positive effect of teacher/class type on students' propensity to follow politics is especially robust (See Table 4).

Table 4
Estimated Impacts of WTP Teacher PD and Class Type on Civic Dispositions
Civic Attentiveness

	n	Unadjusted $\bar{x}$	SD	Adjusted $\bar{x}$	SE	$\bar{x}$ Difference	p	Effect size
Follow politics								
Comparison	335	3.07	1.17	3.21	.08			
Non WTP Class	269	3.82	1.05	3.78	.09	.57	.00	.56
WTP Class	365	3.94	1.07	3.83	.06	.61	.00	
Enjoy political talk								
Comparison	340	2.70	1.35	2.91	.08			
Non WTP Class	271	3.34	1.30	3.26	.09	.35	.03	.41
WTP Class	363	3.73	1.25	3.50	.06	.57	.00	
Figure out both sides of story								
Comparison	341	3.29	1.18	3.39	.08			
Non WTP Class	271	3.87	1.03	3.85	.09	.46	.00	.51
WTP Class	369	4.05	.98	3.94	.06	.55	.00	
Figure out what is really going on								
Comparison	338	3.27	1.21	3.43	.07			
Non WTP Class	265	3.78	1.04	3.66	.09	.23	.20	.46
WTP Class	366	4.08	1.01	3.93	.06	.50	.00	

We examine civic duty by asking students how likely it was that they would vote regularly in presidential and local elections, serve on a jury, and serve in the United States military. Students were much more inclined to anticipate fulfilling their duty to vote than to serve on a jury or in the military. Half of the total sample in the pre and posttests responded that it is "extremely likely" that they would vote in presidential elections. Far fewer—34% of students in the pretest and 38% in the posttest—responded "extremely likely" to the proposition that they would vote in local elections on a regular basis. Since voting is emphasized in many civics curricula, this trend is anticipated. 18% of students in the pretest stated that it would be "extremely likely" that they would serve on a jury; this percentage increased to 23% in the posttest. Only a small percentage of students—8% in the pretest and 9% in the posttest—stated that they would be "extremely likely" to serve in the military.

The results of the ANCOVA analysis reveal that students taking classes from WTP teachers were significantly more inclined to anticipate that they would vote in presidential elections, vote in local elections, and serve on a jury than students in the comparison group. For each of these civic duties, students in WTP classes scored higher than students in the comparison group and those who

took a traditional civics class with a WTP teacher. The mean differences between the WTP

teacher/WTP class intervention and the comparison group are statistically significant for all three

variables. However, the difference of means for the WTP teacher/nonWTP class and the

comparison group is statistically significant only for voting in local elections (p=02), and is not

significant for voting in presidential elections or serving on a jury. The effect size for the two voting

indicators is moderate and weak/moderate for serving on a jury (See Table 5).

Military service is distinct from the other dimensions of civic duty. The majority of students

in both the pre and posttests report that they are unlikely to serve in the military. Taking a civics

class appears to have no influence on students' attitudes toward military service. As Table 5

indicates, there are no significant differences of means between the groups, and the effect size shows

no relationship.

Table 5
Estimated Impacts of WTP Teacher PD and Class Type on Civic Dispositions
Civic Duty

	n	Unadjusted $\bar{x}$	SD	Adjusted $\bar{x}$	SE	$\bar{x}$ Difference	p	Effect size
Vote presidential election								
Comparison	340	3.77	1.17	3.82	.07			
Non WTP Class	269	4.15	1.05	4.07	.08	.25	.14	.43
WTP Class	364	4.37	.95	4.28	.05	.46	.00	
Vote local election								
Comparison	333	3.59	1.10	3.66	.07			
Non WTP Class	270	4.00	1.03	3.98	.08	.33	.02	.40
WTP Class	365	4.16	1.03	4.08	.05	.42	.00	
Serve on a jury								
Comparison	335	3.07	1.16	3.21	.08			
Non WTP Class	367	3.31	1.26	3.35	.09	.14	.91	.32
WTP Class	361	3.74	1.22	3.61	.06	.39	.00	
Serve in military								
Comparison	337	2.46	1.26	2.49	.08			
Non WTP Class	268	2.42	1.23	2.50	.09	.10	1.00	.06
WTP Class	365	2.51	1.35	2.56	.06	.08	1.00	

Students were more inclined to believe that it was their responsibility to become involved in community issues after taking a civic education class. The percentage of students in the full sample who were "extremely likely" to become involved in the community increased from 19% to 25% between the pre and posttests. Students' who strongly believed that concern for state and local issues should be relevant for everyone grew from 26% to 30% during the study. Approximately 75% of students in the posttest agreed that they personally and people in general have a responsibility to become involved in their community.

Students who took a *We the People* class scored higher on both community involvement measures than students in traditional civics classes. The mean differences between the WTP class and the comparison group students are statistically significant. While the WTP teacher/nonWTP class group had higher average scores than the comparison group, the mean difference was not statistically significant, although it approached significance for involvement in community issues. The effect size is moderate for both measures, and is stronger for involvement in community issues (See Table 6).

Table 6
Estimated Impacts of WTP Teacher PD and Class Type on Civic Dispositions
Community Involvement

	n	Unadjusted $\bar{x}$	SD	Adjusted $\bar{x}$	SE	$\bar{x}$ Difference	p	Effect size
Involvement in community issues								
Comparison	343	3.53	.94	3.59	.07			
Non WTP Class	272	3.92	.88	3.84	.07	.25	.07	.42
WTP Class	367	4.06	.97	3.92	.05	.39	.00	
Concern for state/local issues								
Comparison	341	3.67	.91	3.79	.06			
Non WTP Class	270	4.09	.83	3.95	.07	.16	.34	.37
WTP Class	370	4.21	.88	4.12	.04	.33	.00	

Students' scores on the commitment to government service as measured by their consideration of a career in government and running for office are among the lowest in the study. This trend is to be expected, as these items ask students to anticipate career choices that they may perceive as being far in the future. Commitment to government service improved slightly over the course of the study. On the pretest, 16% of students in the entire sample indicated that they would

be "extremely likely" or "somewhat likely" to pursue a career in government and politics. This number improved to 25% in the posttest. Only 11% of students on the pretest and 17% on the posttest revealed that they would be "extremely" or "somewhat" likely to run for office one day.

As the results of the ANCOVA analysis in Table 7 reveal, students who took a WTP class were significantly more inclined to anticipate having a career in government and politics than the comparison group. It may be the case that students who take an elective class, as is the case for approximately half of the WTP student sample, have a predilection for government service. Students in the WTP teacher/non WTP class condition also were more likely to consider pursuing a government career than the comparison group, but the mean difference was not statistically significant. Both WTP teacher groups were significantly more inclined to consider running for office than students in the comparison group. The effect size for both variables is moderate/weak.

Table 7
Estimated Impacts of WTP Teacher PD and Class Type on Civic Dispositions
Commitment to Government Service

	n	Unadjusted $\bar{x}$	SD	Adjusted $\bar{x}$	SE	$\bar{x}$ Difference	p	Effect size
Career in politics								
Comparison	343	2.24	1.21	2.32	.08			
Non WTP Class	272	2.50	1.27	2.57	.10	.25	.23	.34
WTP Class	368	2.90	1.31	2.75	.06	.43	.00	
Run for office								
Comparison	340	1.97	1.17	1.98	.08			
Non WTP Class	271	2.17	1.28	2.36	.09	.37	.02	.30
WTP Class	369	2.48	1.34	2.36	.06	.38	.00	

Students were more likely to agree that they could work with others to help make things better in their communities than to believe that individually they can make a difference. Students' levels of political efficacy for the comparison group and the WTP teacher/nonWTP class remained relatively stable between the pretest and the posttest. A majority of students in the whole sample (approximately 65%) agreed that they could make a difference in their community. There is, however, a statistically significant improvement in the scores of students who took a WTP class over the course of the study. 26% of WTP students "agreed strongly" that they could make a difference in their community compared to 32% on the posttest. The difference is more modest for the "working with others" measure.

The results of the ANCOVA model depicted in Table 8 reflect the significantly higher levels of political efficacy for students who took a WTP class compared to both the comparison group and the WTP teacher/nonWTP class group on both measures. The effect size for the two efficacy measures is moderate/weak.

Table 8
Estimated Impacts of WTP Teacher PD and Class Type on Civic Dispositions
Efficacy

	n	Unadjusted $\bar{x}$	SD	Adjusted $\bar{x}$	SE	$\bar{x}$ Difference	p	Effect size
Make a difference								
Comparison	342	3.58	.92	3.66	.06			
Non WTP Class	268	3.90	.84	3.80	.07	.14	.49	.33
WTP Class	369	4.02	.89	3.95	.05	.29	.00	
Work with others								
Comparison	341	3.84	.80	3.87	.06			
Non WTP Class	271	4.03	.81	3.96	.06	.08	1.00	.31
WTP Class	366	4.16	.81	4.12	.04	.24	.00	

Political tolerance increased as a result of taking a civics class for students in our study. The percentage of students agreeing that they listen to people talk about politics even when they disagree with them grew significantly for students who took a class from a teacher with WTP PD. In the pretest, 17% of students who took a traditional civics class from a teacher with WTP PD "strongly agreed" that they listen to people with whom they disagree compared to 29% in the posttest. The trend is similar for the comparison group. The percentage of students who took a WTP class who "agreed strongly" that they listen to people with opposing views increased from 25% in the pretest to 38% in the posttest.

The results of the ANCOVA analysis show that the adjusted means for both of the WTP teacher groups are significantly higher than for the comparison group. The effect size is moderate/strong. These findings are consistent with prior research indicating that civic education promotes political tolerance, and that the positive impact is especially strong for WTP class students (Brody, 1994). Our results expand upon the findings of previous research to include students of teachers with WTP PD more broadly (See Table 9).

Table 9
Estimated Impacts of WTP Teacher PD and Class Type on Civic Dispositions
Tolerance

	n	Unadjusted $\bar{x}$	SD	Adjusted $\bar{x}$	SE	$\bar{x}$ Difference	p	Effect size
Disagree about politics								
Comparison	344	3.35	1.13	3.44	.07			
Non WTP Class	272	3.91	.98	3.91	.08	.47	.00	.48
WTP Class	368	4.06	1.02	3.95	.05	.52	.00	

Conclusion

Civic education contributes positively to high school students' acquisition of civic dispositions. Our results show a positive relationship for the six categories of dispositions we examine. Students' scores on indicators of support for the rule of law, political attentiveness, civic duty, community involvement, commitment to government service, the norms of political efficacy and political tolerance increased to varying degrees after taking a civic education class. The development of civic orientations was most apparent for students who took a *We the People* class followed by those who took a traditional civics course with a *We the People* PD teacher.

Over 80% of WTP students reported that they were at least somewhat more inclined to participate in politics as a result of taking the class. 44% of WTP students indicated that they were "a lot more" inclined compared to 37% of students in traditional classes taught by WTP PD teachers and 16% of students in the comparison group.

Students strongly respected the rule of law from the outset of the study. Still, the level of respect for the rule of law increased after taking a civics class, particularly among students of WTP teachers.

Students' level of attentiveness to government and politics was low to moderate prior to taking a civics class, and increased substantially over the course of the study. WTP students were the most likely to follow politics, enjoy talking about government and politics, and critically consume political news.

WTP PD teachers' students were significantly more inclined to anticipate that they would vote in presidential elections, vote in local elections, and serve on a jury than students in the comparison group. Civic education had little influence on students' perception of their duty to serve in the military.

Students were more likely to believe that it is their responsibility to become involved in their community after taking a civic education class. WTP students scored significantly higher on the community involvement measures than students in traditional civics classes.

Students' desire for a career in government service or to run for office was low at the outset of the study, and improved only slightly as a result of taking a civics class. WTP students were the most inclined toward government service. Students of WTP PD teachers were significantly more likely to consider running for office one day than students in the comparison group.

WTP students had higher levels of political efficacy than students in traditional classes. Students generally were more likely to agree that they could work with others to help make things better in their communities than to believe that they can make a difference individually. Students of teachers with WTP PD became more tolerant of others whose views disagreed with their own as a result of their civics class than students in the comparison group.

The extant literature is somewhat mixed about the influence of education on students' acquisition of civic dispositions. The present research supports the position that high quality civic education can have a substantial positive impact on high school students' development of a range of civic dispositions that are conducive to good citizenship.

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APPENDIX A
Civic Disposition Categories and Question Wording

Respect for the Rule of Law

I think it is important for people to follow rules and laws

Political Attentiveness

It is my responsibility to follow government and politics in the media
I enjoy talking about politics and political issues
When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if they are just telling one side of the story
When I hear news about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.

Civic Duty

(Intention to) Vote in presidential elections on a regular basis
(Intention to) Vote in local elections on a regular basis
(Intention to) Serve on a jury
(Intention to) Serve the United States in the military

Community Involvement

Being actively involved in community issues is my responsibility
Being concerned about state and local issues is an important responsibility for everybody

Commitment to Government Service

I am interested in a career in politics and government
I may run for office one day

Political Efficacy

I believe I can make a difference in my community
By working with others in the community I can help make things better

Political Tolerance

I listen to people talk about politics even when I know that I disagree with them

APPENDIX B

Percentage of Students Responding Extremely Likely
on Civic Disposition Measures Pretest and Posttest
Entire Sample

DISPOSITION: RULE OF LAW	% EXTREMELY LIKELY PRETEST	% EXTREMELY LIKELY POSTTEST	CHI-SQUARE SIGNIFICANCE
I think it is important for people to follow rules and laws	45.3	42.8	.000

DISPOSITION: CIVIC ATTENTIVENESS	% EXTREMELY LIKELY PRETEST	% EXTREMELY LIKELY POSTTEST	CHI-SQUARE SIGNIFICANCE
I enjoy talking about politics and political issues	14.4	22.2	.000
It is my responsibility to follow government and politics in the media	17.8	24.8	.000
When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if they are just telling one side of the story	20.3	28.5	.000
When I hear news about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on	21.8	29.0	.000

DISPOSITION: CIVIC DUTY	% EXTREMELY LIKELY PRETEST	% EXTREMELY LIKELY POSTTEST	CHI-SQUARE SIGNIFICANCE
Vote in presidential elections on a regular basis	53.1	49.1	.000
Vote in local elections on a regular basis	36.0	38.0	.000
Serve in the United States military	7.6	8.7	.000
Serve on a jury	18.4	23.2	.000

DISPOSITION: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	% EXTREMELY LIKELY PRETEST	% EXTREMELY LIKELY POSTTEST	CHI-SQUARE SIGNIFICANCE
Being Actively Involved in Community is my responsibility	18.9	25.2	.000
Being concerned about state and local issues is an important responsibility for everybody	25.7	30.2	.000

DISPOSITION: COMMITMENT TO GOVERNMENT SERVICE	% EXTREMELY LIKELY PRETEST	% EXTREMELY LIKELY POSTTEST	CHI-SQUARE SIGNIFICANCE
I am interested in a career in politics and government	6.6	9.9	.000
I may run for office one day	3.6	8.0	.000

DISPOSITION: INTERNAL EFFICACY	% EXTREMELY LIKELY PRETEST	% EXTREMELY LIKELY POSTTEST	CHI-SQUARE SIGNIFICANCE
I believe I can make a difference in my community	22.7	24.2	.000
By working with others in the community I can help make things better	29.3	27.2	.000

DISPOSITION: TOLERANCE	% EXTREMELY LIKELY PRETEST	% EXTREMELY LIKELY POSTTEST	CHI-SQUARE SIGNIFICANCE
I listen to people talk about politics even when I know that I disagree with them	18.1	26.7	.000