

**We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution**  
**2008 National Finalists' Knowledge of and Support for American**  
**Democratic Institutions and Processes**

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**June 2008**

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## I. Executive Summary

**We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution** is a civics curriculum for elementary, middle, and high school students developed by the Center for Civic Education. The program is intended to foster civic competence and responsibility among America's youth. It is authorized by the No Child Left Behind Act and funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

Through its rigorous curriculum, **We the People** allows students to develop a deep understanding of America's democratic institutions and processes while reinforcing the contemporary relevance of American founding documents.

After completing the curriculum, students are expected to participate in the capstone of the course: a simulated congressional hearing. While preparing for the simulated hearing, students hone public speaking and analytical skills, and they learn to support their opinions with facts and to cooperate in small groups. Classes at the high school level have the opportunity to participate in a formal hearing, starting at the congressional district level and advancing to a state competition. The first-place class from each state goes on to compete at the national finals in Washington, D.C.

In the spring of 2008, the Center surveyed a sample of **We the People** classes participating in the national finals competition. The survey evaluates the impact of the program on those with the most extensive exposure to the curriculum: the high school national finalists. The survey instrument, which pulls from a variety of widely used surveys and tests, was designed by the Center to assess students' civic knowledge and engagement and to ascertain their perceptions of the program. This report compares the percentage of correct responses from the **We the People** survey with the percentage of correct responses from the corresponding national survey. **We the People** national finalists work very hard to compete in the simulated congressional hearings, and as a result, they are likely to be better informed than the average civics student. Therefore, the results reported here cannot be generalized to all **We the People** students.

### Major Findings:

- **We the People** national finalists outperformed the national sample on every question and category of civic knowledge tested by the 2006 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) civics assessment.
- The average proportion of correct responses from **We the People** students was 81%, whereas the correct responses from the NAEP assessment averaged 52%.
- More **We the People** finalists responded correctly to a series of questions on the national government taken from the 2005 American National Election Studies than the national sample of adults. For example, 89% of **We the People** national finalists correctly identified the political party in control of the House of Representatives, compared with only 49% of the national sample.
- **We the People** finalists were more likely than a national sample of high school seniors to say they would do, or have already done, the following: register to vote, write to public officials, research a political issue they cared about, work on a political campaign, participate in a lawful demonstration, and boycott certain products or stores.

- **We the People** national finalists were more likely than a national sample of college and university freshman students to say that the following objectives were essential or very important: keeping up to date with political affairs, influencing the political structure, developing a meaningful philosophy of life, becoming a community leader, and helping others who are in difficulty.
- **We the People** national finalists were more likely than the corresponding national sample to strongly or mildly *agree* with two statements: that people should be able to express unpopular opinions and that newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without government approval of a story. On the other hand, **We the People** students were significantly more likely to strongly or mildly *disagree* with the statement that the First Amendment goes too far in the rights it guarantees.
- An analysis of gender differences suggests that both men and women benefit equally from participation in the **We the People** program.

## II. Introduction and Purpose of Survey

**We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution** is a civics curriculum for elementary, middle, and high school students developed by the Center for Civic Education. The program is intended to foster civic competence and responsibility among America's youth. It is authorized by the No Child Left Behind Act and funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The curriculum addresses the philosophical and historical foundations of the American political system, the creation and expansion of the U.S. Constitution, the role of citizens in America, and the role of the United States in world affairs. Through its rigorous curriculum, **We the People** allows students to develop a deep understanding of America's democratic institutions and processes while reinforcing the contemporary relevance of American founding documents.

After completing the curriculum, students are expected to participate in the capstone of the course: a simulated congressional hearing. The hearing is an authentic assessment tool that allows students to demonstrate and apply what they have learned. While preparing for the simulated hearing, students hone public speaking and analytical skills, and they learn to support their opinions with facts and to cooperate in small groups. Classes at the high school level have

the opportunity to participate in a formal hearing, starting at the congressional district level and advancing to a state competition. The first-place class from each state goes on to compete at the national finals in Washington, D.C.

Over the last twenty years, a variety of studies have examined the effects of the **We the People** curriculum on students. In three separate surveys (1988, 1990, 1991), the Educational Testing Service found that students who used the **We the People** curriculum “significantly outperformed comparison students,” as well as college sophomores and juniors, on every topic studied. More recently, it has been found “that the benefits of involvement in the curriculum extended across different groups of students” (Tumbull et al. 2007).

Additionally, findings from *The California Survey of Civic Education* (2005), which was designed to examine the civic knowledge and skills of graduating high school seniors and to assess the impact of various educational practices, indicate, albeit indirectly, that the **We the People** program and similar curricula “help students develop the skills and knowledge they need for effective citizenship.” Specifically, the opportunity to engage in simulations, analyze different perspectives, and discuss current issues helped students become effective citizens.

In the spring of 2008, the Center surveyed a sample of **We the People** classes participating in the national finals competition. The survey was designed to evaluate the impact of the program on the civic knowledge and engagement of those with the most extensive exposure to the curriculum: the high school national finalists.

### **III. Sampling and Methodology**

One class from each of the fifty states advances to the national finals competition in Washington, D.C. These classes have all used the *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution*

text to prepare statements for the simulated congressional hearings. Twelve of the classes that went to the 2008 national finals completed the Center's survey (N = 218), which was administered by their classroom teacher between February and July.

### *Survey Instrument*

The survey instrument pulls from a variety of widely used surveys and tests. It was designed by the Center to evaluate the impact of the **We the People** program on students' civic knowledge and engagement and to ascertain students' perception of the program. The survey consisted of a total of thirty-six open- and closed-ended questions. Twenty-seven of the questions asked on the survey were drawn from national surveys. Two open-ended questions asked students about their perceptions of the skills they had gained in the program and their career interests. The remaining seven questions were used to obtain students' background information.

This report compares the percentage of correct responses from the **We the People** survey to the percentage of correct responses from the corresponding national surveys. **We the People** national finalists work very hard to compete in the simulated congressional hearings, and as a result, they are likely to be better informed than the average civics student. Therefore, the results reported here cannot be generalized to all **We the People** students.

### **IV. We the People versus NAEP**

Political knowledge is necessary for citizens to participate in the political realm and become civically engaged. It is the foundation upon which opinions and beliefs are formed and supported (Milner 2008; Galston 2001). Studies have found that older adults are more politically

knowledgeable than young adults (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, 159), but they have many gaps in their knowledge of American government (Niemi and Junn 1998, 9). The Center's survey, however, suggests that **We the People** national finalists have a firm grounding in political knowledge, thus putting them on track to be politically active and civically engaged.

Questions 1 through 20 of the **We the People** survey measured political knowledge. They were chosen from public-release items on the *Nation's Report Card: Civics 2006* by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Lutkus and Weiss 2007). NAEP is federally mandated and administered by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences. The assessment is intended to measure students' progress in a variety of subjects, including civics, science, and the arts.

The 2006 NAEP civics assessment was administered to 9,100 twelfth-graders at 590 schools across the country, which is a statistically representative sample. The questions were broken down into five content areas: what are civic life, politics, and government; the foundations of the American political system; how the government established by the Constitution embodies the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy; the relationship of the United States to other nations and world affairs; and the roles of citizens in American democracy. Within these content areas, three types of questions were asked: identify and describe; explain and analyze; and evaluate, take, and defend a position.

The percentage of correct responses on the twelfth-grade NAEP civics assessment was compared with the percentage of correct responses from **We the People** national finalists. As mentioned previously, the NAEP assessment is statistically representative of high school seniors in the United States, but the **We the People** sample is not. The NAEP sample will be referred to as the national sample for the remainder of this section.

*A. What Are Civic Life, Politics, and Government?*

The section on civic life, politics, and government produced the greatest differences between **We the People** national finalists and the national sample.

<b>Survey Ques.</b>	<b>Civic Life, Politics, and Government (percentage correct)</b>	<b>WTP</b>	<b>NAEP</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>1.</b>	The division of policy-making power among national, state, and local governments supports James MacGregor Burns’s statement that our constitutional system makes “effective, long-run leadership” impossible.	84%	57%	27%
<b>2.</b>	Parliamentary systems might now show the same fragmentation that Burns finds in the American system because in parliamentary systems, power is not divided among three branches of government.	92%	53%	39%
<b>3.</b>	Federalism is reflected in American government by the fact that citizens in the United States are subject to both state and federal laws.	80%	43%	37%

*B. What Are the Foundations of the American Political System?*

The five questions in this category tested students’ knowledge on the foundations of the American political system. On every question in this section, more **We the People** students answered correctly than the national sample.

<b>Survey Ques.</b>	<b>Foundations of the American Political System (percentage correct)</b>	<b>WTP</b>	<b>NAEP</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>5.</b>	The events at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, showed that the Supreme Court decision by itself did not do away with segregation.	87%	60%	27%
<b>14.</b>	Many congressional Republicans might object to Governor Engler’s plan for welfare reform because it involves increased government spending for transportation and child care.	67%	49%	18%
<b>15.</b>	The graph entitled “Welfare Benefits vs. the Poverty Line” shows that since about 1980, the average annual benefit of a	73%	37%	36%

	family receiving AFDC has declined relative to the poverty line.			
<b>17.</b>	The excerpt from Horace Mann’s 1848 report implies that poor people will improve their lives through studying and learning.	88%	72%	16%
<b>18a.</b>	Mann suggests that universal public education can prevent the formation of a rigid and permanent class system.	77%	45%	32%

*C. How the Government Established by the Constitution Embodies the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American Democracy*

In this section, **We the People** national finalists scored considerably higher than the national sample in each question. Question 4 was one of two questions that generated a difference of 40%, the largest difference between the two groups in the entire survey (see also section D below).

<b>Survey Ques.</b>	<b>Government and American Democracy (percentage correct)</b>	<b>WTP</b>	<b>NAEP</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>4.</b>	In the United States, when state and national laws come into conflict, the national law is enforced.	90%	50%	40%
<b>6.</b>	President Eisenhower sent federal troops to Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957 because he was required by the Constitution to enforce the rule of law.	81%	51%	30%
<b>7.</b>	Attempts at school integration led to a power struggle between state governments and the federal government.	89%	55%	34%
<b>12.</b>	The <i>New York Times</i> article entitled “Michigan Welfare Plan Draws Unlikely Support” shows that political parties are not ideologically unified and people within parties may differ over issues like welfare reform.	80%	56%	24%
<b>13.</b>	The <i>Times</i> article shows that one of the strengths of federalism is that states serve as sites for experimentation with new public policies.	74%	62%	12%

*D. What Is the Relationship of the United States to Other Nations and World Affairs?*

This category measured students’ knowledge of both the relationship of the United States to other nations and the role of the U.S. in world affairs. The most difficult question, as measured by the lowest percentage of students answering correctly, was number 11. Even there, almost half of **We the People** students answered correctly, as compared with less than one-third of students from the national sample. As with Question 4 in section C, Question 9 generated a difference of 40%, the largest difference between the two groups.

<b>Survey Ques.</b>	<b>The United States, Other Nations, and World Affairs (percentage correct)</b>	<b>WTP</b>	<b>NAEP</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>9.</b>	In the area of United States foreign policy, Congress shares power with the President.	90%	50%	40%
<b>11.</b>	In recent years, a United States President and a Japanese Prime Minister would most likely have argued over America’s desire to have greater access to Japanese markets.	48%	29%	19%
<b>16.</b>	One important way the central political principles of the United States have had a major effect on its foreign policy is that the United States has supported the growth of Western-style democracy in countries that were once Communist dictatorships.	77%	40%	37%
<b>19.</b>	From the U.S. World War II poster, you can tell that the government wanted Americans to be part of the war effort.	88%	70%	18%
<b>20.</b>	We can infer from the poster that our enemies in the war threatened the rights Americans believed were most important.	86%	50%	36%

*E. Roles of Citizens in American Democracy*

Once again, **We the People** national finalists scored significantly higher than the national sample in this section.

<b>Survey Ques.</b>	<b>Roles of Citizens in American Democracy (percentage correct)</b>	<b>WTP</b>	<b>NAEP</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>8.</b>	Two quotes by Martin Luther King, Jr. indicate that citizens have political and legal rights, as well as	88%	51%	37%

	economic rights and opportunities.			
<b>10.</b>	An example of the type of volunteer work referred to in the above statement is a youth group holding a food drive to help poor people.	81%	47%	34%
<b>18b.</b>	The freedom that is the subject of the World War II political poster is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution.	88%	62%	26%

*F. Overall Summary*

The results of this survey show that **We the People** national finalists outperformed the national sample on every individual question and every category of civic knowledge tested by NAEP. The average proportion of correct responses from **We the People** students was 81%, whereas the national sample’s average proportion correct was 52%. The finalists’ outstanding performance is a reflection of the depth and breadth of topics, such as the philosophical and historical foundations of American government, the expansion of the U.S. Constitution, and the role of the citizen in the United States, that are addressed in the **We the People** curriculum.

**V. We the People versus Adults: More Knowledge Questions**

Three open-ended survey questions (21a–c) were taken from the 2004 American National Election Studies (ANES), a series of national surveys conducted annually and funded by the National Science Foundation (National Election Studies 2004). The ANES explore the causes and effects of American voting habits, public opinion, and political participation. In this study, ANES interviewed 1,000 to 2,000 adults, ranging in age from 18 to over 80. The sample is representative of the major regions of the continental United States, as designated by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The three questions asked respondents the job or political office held by Dick Cheney, which party controlled the House of Representatives, and what party was more conservative at

the national level. The responses of **We the People** national finalists were compared with responses from the 2005 ANES survey. More **We the People** students responded correctly to this series of questions than the national sample of adults. The greatest difference resulted from question 21b. Less than half of the adults interviewed by ANES answered correctly, whereas almost 90% of **We the People** finalists gave the correct response.

Survey Ques.	Three-Item Knowledge Index (percentage correct)	WTP	2005 NES (ages 18–80+)	Difference
21a.	The job or political office held by Dick Cheney	95%	76%	19%
21b.	Party control of the House	89%	49%	40%
21c.	Party ideological location	90%	61%	29%

## VI. We the People and Monitoring the Future: Political Attitudes

A series of questions (26a–g) asked students whether they would or would not participate in a variety of political activities, such as voting, writing to public officials, or boycotting products. These questions were taken from Johnston, Bachman, and O’Malley’s (1997) *Monitoring the Future: A Continuing Study of American Youth* (MTF), which surveyed more than 16,000 high school seniors. MTF is funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institutes of Health. The study has surveyed high school seniors annually since 1975 to measure their behaviors, attitudes, and values.

The responses of **We the People** national finalists were compared with white, college-bound respondents on the MTF survey (N = 917). This comparison was made because 70% of **We the People** respondents identified themselves as white, and 97% indicated they planned on attending college. **We the People** finalists were more likely to say they would engage or have already engaged in all the political activities specified in the MTF survey. Question 26b, whether the students will vote or have already voted in a public election, was not asked on the MTF

survey, so no comparison can be made. These findings suggest that the **We the People** curriculum fosters students' sense of civic responsibility and political engagement.

Survey Ques.	Question	WTP	MTF	Difference
26a.	Will register or have already registered to vote	96%	96%	0%
26b.	Will vote or have already voted in a public election	96%	Not asked	----
26c.	Will write or have already written to a public official	69%	44%	25%
26d.	Will research or have already researched a political issue you care about	87%	19%	68%
26e.	Will work or have already worked on a political campaign	54%	15%	39%
26f.	Will participate or have already participated in a lawful demonstration	55%	26%	29%
26g.	Will boycott or have already boycotted certain products or stores	44%	34%	10%

## VII. We the People versus American College Freshmen

Another series of questions (27a–f), this time taken from *The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2006*, asked respondents what life objectives they believed were important (Pryor et al. 2006). *American Freshman: National Norms* is published annually by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, and documents findings from surveys of college and university freshmen. The 2006 report surveyed 241,441 students at 393 of the nation's four-year colleges and universities, both public and private.

**We the People** national finalists were more likely than freshman college and university students to say that the following objectives were essential or very important: keeping up to date with political affairs, influencing the political structure, developing a meaningful philosophy of life, becoming a community leader, and helping others who are in difficulty. On the other hand, **We the People** finalists were less likely to rate being very well off financially as essential or very important. There are a variety of explanations for the difference between the responses for

this question. It could be that **We the People** students are less concerned with personal finances, or that they were more likely to carefully read the question and decide that being *very* well off financially was not *very* important (other choices included somewhat important and undecided).

Survey Ques.	Objectives Considered Essential or Very Important	WTP	Freshmen 2006	Difference
27a.	Keep up to date with political affairs	81%	37%	44%
27b.	Influence the political structure	69%	23%	46%
27c.	Be very well off financially	61%	73%	-12%
27d.	Develop a meaningful philosophy of life	84%	46%	38%
27e.	Become a community leader	60%	35%	25%
27f.	Help others who are in difficulty	83%	67%	16%

### VIII. Future of the First Amendment

Three questions (22, 23, 25) asking students about different aspects of the First Amendment were taken from the *Future of the First Amendment* high school student survey (FFA), sponsored by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's High School Initiative (Yalof and Dautrich 2006). The 2005 survey was designed to measure the knowledge of and attitudes toward the First Amendment of high school students, teachers, and administrators and determine if there was a relationship between the beliefs of those in power and the beliefs of the students. More than 100,000 high school students were surveyed.

**We the People** national finalists were more likely than the national sample to strongly or mildly *agree* with two statements: that people should be able to express unpopular opinions and that newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without government approval of a story. On the other hand, **We the People** students were significantly more likely to strongly or mildly *disagree* with the statement that the First Amendment goes too far in the rights it guarantees. These results indicate that **We the People** finalists are more likely to take a broad view of First

Amendment protections. (Note: the results in the two categories for each question do not equal 100% because not all participants responded to each question.)

Survey Ques.	Question	WTP	FFA
22.	People should be able to express unpopular opinions.	Strongly or Mildly Agree: 97% Strongly or Mildly Disagree: 2%	Strongly or Mildly Agree: 83% Strongly or Mildly Disagree: 7%
23.	Newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without government approval of a story.	Strongly or Mildly Agree: 82% Strongly or Mildly Disagree: 17%	Strongly or Mildly Agree: 51% Strongly or Mildly Disagree: 36%
25.	The First Amendment goes too far in the rights it guarantees.	Strongly or Mildly Agree: 12% Strongly or Mildly Disagree: 84%	Strongly or Mildly Agree: 35% Strongly or Mildly Disagree: 44%

## IX. Gender Differences among We the People National Finalists

Differences in achievement between both boys and girls and men and women have long been a concern in American society. In analyzing the results of the **We the People** survey, a comparison was made between how male and female students responded to various questions on the NAEP and *American Freshman* surveys. Although a chi-square test of the responses on the **We the People** survey found that differences in gender were not statistically significant, the results suggest that boys and girls benefited equally from exposure to the **We the People** curriculum.

Further, the results appear to mirror the findings of other studies. The *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution Evaluation Report* (2007) found that the curriculum “did not exacerbate differences in civic development traditionally associated with gender.” Similarly, a 2001 study from the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), which surveyed 14-year-olds in twenty-eight countries, found that “gender differences are minimal with regard to civic knowledge but substantial in some attitudes” (Torney-Purta 2001).

On average, the difference in civic knowledge between boys and girls on both the NAEP and **We the People** surveys was less than two percentage points. Upon analysis of individual

questions, however, it appeared girls excelled in certain areas and boys excelled in others. For example, girls favored the category addressing the foundations of the American political system in two ways: they answered the most questions correctly in this category, and they performed better than boys. Boys performed similarly in the category addressing the relationship of the United States to other nations and world affairs. Although there are many possible explanations for these differences, one hypothesis is that boys are generally more interested in politics (Torney-Purta 2001). Two other plausible explanations stem from findings that boys are more likely than girls to watch news on television, while girls are more likely than boys to get news from radio broadcasts and newspapers (Torney-Purta 2001). It may be that the kinds of news broadcast on these different media forms are different, or that televised images resonate more strongly than the written or spoken word. A difference in the news that is broadcast, or a stronger attachment to what is broadcast, could affect a person's interest in specific news stories and the importance placed on them. Further research is needed on a larger sample of the population to determine the effects of the program based on gender.

To gauge differences between boys and girls in their attitude towards civic engagement, a comparison was made between responses from *The American Freshman* survey and **We the People** national finalists to Question 27a–f. The responses of college freshmen with high SAT scores attending public and private schools were averaged, and then compared to the responses of **We the People** finalists. Although the IEA study found substantial gender differences in some attitudes, the attitudinal differences among **We the People** national finalists were less pronounced. Similarities between boys and girls were found on half of the questions, which parallels findings in the IEA civic education study that gender explains some differences in attitudes (Torney-Purta 2001). Men were more likely than women to rate being well off

financially as essential or very important. There are a variety of reasonable explanations for this difference, but it may be as simple as the historical view that men are supposed to provide for, and take care of, women. Women were more likely than men to rate being a community leader and helping others as essential or very important. Again, there are many hypotheses that could explain this difference, and it may also be a remnant of past gender stereotypes that women are supposed to take care of others, or of women's motherly instincts. Although there is evidence to suggest the above, further research is needed to make a definitive statement.

## **X. Student Feedback on the We the People Program**

In the survey of national finalists, students were asked to provide short answers to two questions: the first elicited students' feedback on whether they believed that participating in the **We the People** program gave them skills that would be useful in their future careers; the second question sought to find out what fields and careers **We the People** students were most interested in.

Students identified more than fifteen skills that they learned by participating in **We the People**, and most students said they learned multiple skills. The top five were: public speaking and discussion skills (152), research skills (60), critical thinking (49), working with a group (49), and leadership (40). Responses indicate that students not only recognize the skills they have learned, but know how those skills will be applicable in the future. A student from Florida said, "For approximately three years, I have been interested in pursuing a legal career. The **We the People** program has taught me essential public speaking and leadership skills that will become necessary in the future." A student from Nevada points out that the skills learned in **We the People** apply across a broad spectrum of professions: "Hard work, dedication, and teamwork

will help me in my career as a professional musician.” One Alabama student indicated that the skills learned in **We the People** will “make me a more competitive worker in the global market. I learned how to delegate and how to speak publicly about complex issues, and discovered many different resources that I will continue to use.” Many comments (49) are summed up by a student from Virginia: “More than anything else, I learned how to work on a team. My unit members are now some of my best friends, and I have learned how to trust others in a work setting, how to admit my own mistakes, and how to discuss (not to argue) with others.” On a more general note, a student from Arkansas noted, “**We the People** has given me lessons I can use in my career and life. To be involved with your political system is so important because it shapes who you will become.”

With regard to the second question (what majors and professions interested them), **We the People** students could not be pigeonholed into one field or another, and many listed numerous areas of interest. Responses ranged from dairy farmer to sports agent to college professor to Supreme Court justice. A majority of students (153) expressed interest in political science or a related field, such as international studies, law, or public service. A significant number of students (55) also said they were interested in science and medicine. Other noteworthy fields of interest included business and economics (23), communication and the arts (24), and humanities (27). Some students, like this one from South Carolina, revealed that **We the People** influenced their career path: “At the beginning of this year I wanted to be a medical doctor, but now I am very interested in the political process and government. A judge at the state level even said I already ‘sound like a professor.’ Constitutional law, here I come!” For others, **We the People** opened their eyes to how the knowledge they acquired would be useful in a seemingly unrelated field. A student from Nevada wrote, “I plan to go into geriatric medicine,

but [**We the People**] has shown me that even a science/health profession is still related to government, with the question of socializing health care.”

## **XI. Conclusion**

This report was designed to evaluate the impact of the **We the People** program on the civic knowledge and engagement of those with the most extensive exposure to the curriculum: the high school national finalists. By surveying this select sample of students, the effectiveness of the **We the People** program is assessed at the highest level.

An analysis of the survey responses revealed that **We the People** national finalists obtained more civic and political knowledge than their peers and adults, and suggests that **We the People** affects boys and girls equally in respect to gains in civic knowledge and skills. In addition, these students were more likely to take a broad view of First Amendment protections and say they valued and were engaged in political activities. This finding suggests a correlation between level of political knowledge and likelihood of civic engagement that is similarly seen in civic education research. The idea that the **We the People** curriculum provides students with both the knowledge and skills to be effective citizens is supported by feedback from two students in the Carolinas. One commented that “the ability to analyze ... opinions, media bias, and my personal ideology” would allow him to “be successful in many capacities.” Another wrote that the class had “learned how to ... take on leadership roles.”

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