



citizens. not spectators.
promoting youth civic and political engagement.



Center for Civic Education

5145 Douglas Fir Road • Calabasas, CA 91302-1440 • 818-591-9321 • www.civiced.org

Citizens, Not Spectators

OVERVIEW

Citizens, Not Spectators is a voter education program developed through a cooperative effort by the Center for Civic Education and the Aarsalyn Program of Ludwick Family Foundation.

The goal of Citizens, Not Spectators is to increase the voting rate among young Americans by providing engaging voter education to high school and elementary students. To accomplish this goal, the curriculum demystifies the voting process by teaching students how to cast a vote, how the voting process works, how to become an informed voter, and why it is important to cast an informed vote.

The curriculum focuses on hands-on, active learning. Using actual voter registration forms and ballots, students receive instruction in how to register and cast a vote in a simulated election. Citizens, Not Spectators can be taught at any time, but is most effective when the course culminates around the time of an actual federal, state, or local election.

PILOT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

During the spring of 2010, seven high school classrooms in Arizona, California, Rhode Island, and Tennessee completed the Citizens, Not Spectators curriculum. Students learned how to complete a registration form, analyze their community's actual election ballot, and cast an informed vote in a simulated election.

Ninety percent of students completing the end-of-program questionnaire indicated that they had gained the knowledge and skills necessary to register to vote. Ninety-one percent reported they would be very likely to vote in the next election for which they would be eligible.

A fall pilot program curriculum has been created in advance of the November 2010 election. Approximately twenty schools in Arizona, California, Rhode Island, and Tennessee are expected to teach the curriculum. A minimum of three high school classes and two elementary school classes in each of the four states are expected to participate. In addition, at least one juvenile correction facility for high school-aged students in Texas will teach the curriculum.

WEBSITE

For more information about Citizens, Not Spectators, please visit www.civiced.org/citizens/.