IMPACT OF PARTICIPATION IN SERVICE-LEARNING ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

BY EMILY KIRBY

A CIRCLE Working Paper by Shelley Billig, Sue Root, and Dan Jesse of RMC Research Corporation examines the impact of service-learning on civic engagement. The study finds that service-learning students score higher than comparison students on several outcomes, although most of the differences are not statistically significant. Service-learning students are significantly more likely to say they intend to vote and that they enjoy school.

According to Dr. Billig, "The intention of the study was to estimate the effects of service-learning compared to more traditional ways of teaching similar subject areas." The study measures civic knowledge and behaviors, as well as other factors that generally predict academic success.

The study suggests that service-learning is effective when it is implemented well, but it is no more effective than conventional social studies classes when the conditions are not optimal. Good implementation means that the program lasts at least a semester, offers direct contact with service recipients, and cognitively challenges students.

SERVICE-LEARNING WORKS, BUT ONLY WHEN WELL IMPLEMENENTED

The study compares more than 1,000 high school students who participated in service-learning programs with those who studied social studies, civics, or government in schools matched for similar demographics and student outcomes. More than half of the students in the sample are Latino.

Along with the length of the program, teacher characteristics also influence outcomes. Teaching experience is significantly related to students' tendencies to value school, enjoy math and science, and their ability to gain civic skills dispositions. Longer service-learning experiences are associated with higher civic knowledge, civic dispositions, and efficacy scores.

Finally, the success of the service-learning program depends strongly on the type of service project. Students who engage in direct service (e.g., tutoring or visiting seniors) are most attached to their communities, but they score lower in other areas such as enjoyment of specific subject matters and levels of academic engagement. Students who engage in indirect service (e.g., fundraising or research) show the highest levels of academic engagement. Students who engage in political or civic action (e.g., circulating a petition or organizing a community forum) scored highest on civic knowledge and civic dispositions.

LIKE STUDENTS IN TRADITIONAL CIVICS COURSES, STUDENTS IN SERVICE-LEARNING CLASSES GAIN FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE

Although the students in the comparison group studied civics, social studies, or American government, they did not obtain significantly more factual knowledge of these subjects than

CIRCLE hosts a discussion on "Alternatives to Large, Traditional High Schools: Can They Enhance Students' Preparation for Work, College, and Democracy?" See pages 10-12 for more information.

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the students in the service-learning programs did. It appears that schools need not sacrifice factual knowledge if they choose to employ service-learning. On the contrary, students learn as much factual information about civics and politics through direct experience as through more formal instruction.

SERVICE-LEARNING PEDAGOGY CONFERS SMALL, ADDITIONAL BENEFIT OVER OTHER ACTIVE PEDAGOGIES

Based on this study, it does not appear that the alternatives to service-learning are passive, lecture-style classes. Instead, teachers who do not use service-learning tend to employ mixed forms of instruction that include student projects, presentations, debates, and field trips. Service-learning teachers are not significantly more likely to use "active" instructional techniques than are other teachers in the study. The study finds that active teaching techniques are beneficial, and service-learning confers a small additional benefit over other active teaching methods.

Finally, the research examined what the literature has identified as a set of best practices, or "Essential Elements" of service-learning. The study found that some of these elements enabled positive student outcomes, but some did not. A table showing which elements are effective can be found in the full report.

The complete study, "CIRCLE Working Paper 33: The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning on High School Students' Civic Engagement," can be downloaded from: http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP33Billig.pdf

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The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools Seeks Civic Learning Practice Examples

The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools is a long-term effort to renew and elevate civic learning in our nation's schools. As part of this effort, the Campaign actively seeks civic learning practice examples for our online inventory—an educational resource for educators, policymakers, and advocates to discover civic learning practices by grade level and teaching approach. Teachers, school administrators, program officers, community members, and others engaged in educating K-12 students for democracy are encouraged to submit lessons, extracurricular opportunities, curricula, supplemental programs, and other resources. **Visit www.civicmissionofschools.org to find and submit new practice examples**. Questions? Email submissions@civicmissionofschools.org or call Adam at 212.367.4570.

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. Although CIRCLE conducts and funds research, not practice, the projects that we support have practical implications for those who work to increase young people's engagement in politics and civic life. CIRCLE is also a clearinghouse for relevant information and scholarship. CIRCLE was founded in 2001 with a generous grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts and is now also funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. It is based in the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy.

CENSUS DATA CONFIRMS SHARP RISE IN YOUTH VOTER TURNOUT IN 2004
BY JARED SAGOFF

Contrary to much of the media reportage directly following the 2004 presidential election, youth voter turnout surged in 2004 across most demographics, according to new research from CIRCLE.

A recently published CIRCLE Fact Sheet, "The Youth Vote 2004," shows turnout among America's youngest voters, those age 18-24, increased from 36 percent in 2000 to 47 percent in 2004, marking the largest increase in turnout among any age group.[1] This figure marks the widest turnout among young voters since 1992, when turnout temporarily spiked in a highly contested, three-party election.

Overall, 64 percent of voters went to the polls in 2004, an increase of four points over the 2000 election. In the November election, 125.7 million votes were cast, of which approximately 11.6 million were cast by young voters age 18-24. That number represents an increase of more than 3 million votes from the 2000 election.

PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICANS ESPECIALLY STRONG IN 2004

All ethnic and racial groups showed increased turnout over 2000 as well. African-Americans posted especially large voting increases, as nearly half of blacks age 18-24 voted in last November's election, up from fewer than 40 percent in 2000. Whites showed similarly large gains, while Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans each achieved smaller, but still significant, improvements.

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH MORE EDUCATION MORE LIKELY TO VOTE

While young people with at least some college education have consistently turned out approximately twice as often as their less-educated counterparts since 1972, both groups still increased their turnout rates significantly over the last election cycle. However, the gap between the more- and less-educated continued to widen, as close to 60 percent of college-educated 18- to 24-year-olds cast a ballot last November, while only 35 percent of non-college-educated young people did so.

GENDER GAP WIDENED IN 2004 FOR YOUNG VOTERS

With 50 percent of 18-24 year old women and 44 percent of young men voting last year, the so-called gender gap widened to nearly six percentage points among this age group. That's the largest margin since 18-year-olds began voting in 1972, when there was virtually no difference between the turnout rates of young women and men, and nearly two percentage points wider than in 2000. For the 18-29 age group, the gender gap has widened to almost 7 percentage points. The turnout rates for both 18-24 year old men and women rose sharply between 2000 and 2004, by 12 points for women and 10 points for men.

Single young people, particularly women, were more likely to vote than married young people. The turnout among single women age 18-24 led the way and increased 12 percentage points, or about a third, since 2000. Single young men jumped by over 10 points. But the turnout rates for young married

TABLE 1: VOTER TURNOUT AMONG CITIZENS NOVEMBER 2000 AND 2004			
AGE GROUP	**2000**	**2004**	**PERCENTAGE POINT INCREASE**
18-24	36%	47%	+11% points
25-34	51%	56%	+5% points
35-44	60%	64%	+4% points
45-54	66%	69%	+3% points
55-64	70%	73%	+3% points
65-74	72%	73%	+1% point
75+	67%	69%	+2% points
All Ages	*60%*	*64%*	*+4% points*

[1] All voter turnout estimates presented in this article are calculated for U.S. citizens only, and according to the "Census Citizen Method" described in CIRCLE Working Paper 35.

RESEARCH ROUNDUP

HAMPTON, VA: A CITY-WIDE EFFORT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
BY EMILY KIRBY

In the early 1990s the civic and political leaders of the city of Hampton, VA began a process of including youth in their efforts to restructure the city government and their town. Faced with serious problems of economic development and shrinking local revenues, the city manager and others in Hampton began to look at new ways to give citizens more responsibility for the running of the city. These new efforts to bring citizens back into the legislative process eventually led to a rare type of city planning: planning in which young people are given a voice in decisions affecting the management of city resources.

A new CIRCLE Working Paper by Carmen Sirianni, Professor of Sociology and Public Policy at Brandeis University, details the process by which a city itself has taken responsibility to help institutionalize youth civic engagement. The paper also provides suggestions for other cities that wish to embark on this type of government reform.

HOW THEY DID IT: BRINGING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE CITY PLANNING PROCESS

Integrating young people into the city planning process did not happen overnight. Instead it evolved out of the growing needs of the city and the ideas of many innovative leaders. In building a system of youth civic engagement, Hampton's leaders focused on several core principles which could be adapted to any city's planning process:

1. First, youth need a wide array of opportunities to contribute actively to the community, from the relatively simple and episodic, such as tutoring a younger child after school or cleaning up a river on the weekend, to the increasingly complex, which might involve long-term planning, policy development, and problem-solving in partnership with other youth and adults.

2. Second, developing civic leadership skills among youth requires the city to make serious investment in training and mentoring by adult professionals. By investing in training, the city enables youth to add genuine public value today as well as to provide an expanded pool of dynamic civic and political leaders for tomorrow's Hampton.

3. Third, productive youth engagement in city affairs is not just a task for young people. It is an ongoing challenge for the adults who run and staff municipal agencies. Effective engagement requires significant culture change within agencies so that adult staff come to view young people as potential resources and partners, rather than as passive clients to be served or problems to be controlled.

CREATING INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING BASED ON CORE PRINCIPLES

These principles, in turn, can be seen in many of the programs the city offers to engage young people. For example, in 1997 the city formed the Hampton Youth Commission, which is made up of 24 students from four public and three private high schools. The commission meets twice a month during the school year and then presents formally to the city council twice a year. The commission has been involved in many policy debates and provided much leadership in the development of a joint strategy with the Citizens Unity Commission on supporting diversity in Hampton. In addition, the city offers other programs such as Youth Planners, where two young people each year work for the city planning department, and the Principals' and Superintendents' Advisory Group, a group which includes students from all four public high schools.

Integrating young people into the city planning process did not happen overnight. Instead it evolved out of the growing needs of the city and the ideas of many innovative leaders.

While the early results of Hampton's efforts look promising, there is still much work to be done.   Dr. Sirianni concludes, "Hampton provides the most ambitious case to date of institutionalized youth civic engagement across the city in ways that have much in common with other models of youth engagement. None, of course, is without its problems, and much needs to be done in the coming years to make these systems more robust. Together, however, they provide a map of possibilities for how the city—and city government—can be a dynamic generator of democratic public work, co-production, and problem solving."

*Hampton, VA was recently awarded the **prestigious Innovations in American Government Award,** a program of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and administered in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government.*

GENERATION Y: INFORMALLY RELIGIOUS, SOCIALLY PROGRESSIVE, AND CIVICALLY ENGAGED
BY BRENT ELROD

In a nationwide survey, 18-25 year olds from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations, including youth who do not identify themselves with a religion, overwhelmingly demonstrated their openness to religious diversity. Clear majorities also expressed more liberal political views than older generations on issues such as gay marriage and legal abortion. Additionally, a majority of respondents reported participating in some kind of community service and volunteer activity within the past year.

The survey—conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and sponsored by Reboot and funded partially by CIRCLE—reached 1,385 youth respondents, and included over-samples of Muslim, Jewish, Asian, African-American, and Hispanic youth. For full survey results, see "OMG! How Generation Y Is Redefining Faith in the iPod Era," which can be downloaded from http://www.civicyouth.org/research/areas/youth_attit.htm.

GENERATION Y IS INFORMALLY RELIGIOUS AND OPEN TO RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

To help clarify how religion fits into young people's lives, Reboot grouped its respondents into three categories: those for whom religion is a central part of their lives ("The Godly" 27 percent), those for whom religion plays little role, although they may have spiritual aspects to their identity ("The God-less" 27 percent), and those who are "uncertain, yet positive" about their religious identities and lean toward informal and expressive practices ("The Undecided Middle" 46 percent).

The survey—conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and sponsored by Reboot and funded partially by CIRCLE—reached 1,385 youth respondents, and included over-samples of Muslim, Jewish, Asian, African-American, and Hispanic youth.

For "The Godly" and "The Undecided Middle," overwhelming majorities say that they have an informal religious attachment that is both communal (where they interact with others outside of the institutional setting, e.g., talking with friends about their religion) and individualistic (e.g., praying before meals, reading religious materials, etc.). And, when forced to characterize the nature of their religious attachment, a plurality of young people call themselves "religious" (44 percent), but a majority describe themselves as either "spiritual but not religious" (35 percent) or "neither spiritual nor religious" (18 percent). Across the three groups, most young people report that at least a few of their friends identify with a different religion, and a majority feels that their own personal identity is not primarily defined by a formal religion. In fact, many respondents cannot identify what faith tradition or denomination they belong to, and 23 percent do not identify with any denomination at all.

GENERATION Y IS ETHNICALLY DIVERSE, SOCIALLY PROGRESSIVE, AND CIVICALLY ENGAGED

Based on responses to Reboot's survey, Generation Y is the most ethnically diverse—and the most open to such diversity—of any living generation. Compared to the 84 percent of Americans older than 65 years who identify themselves as white, only 61 percent of Generation Y respondents call themselves white.

Based on responses to Reboot's survey, Generation Y is the most ethnically diverse—and the most open to such diversity—of any living generation.

Generation Y also holds more progressive views on a number of "moral" issues. Overall, a majority of respondents (54 percent) favor rights for gays and lesbians to get married legally and nearly two-thirds (64 percent) support legal abortion. Furthermore, this generation embraces the concept of immigration, with 84 percent agreeing that immigrants share American values of democracy and freedom.

In addition, Generation Y demonstrates an interest in volunteering and contributing to civic life. Overall, 56 percent of respondents report participating in some kind of volunteer activity or community service within the last year, and volunteering with a civic or a community organization actually ranks above other forms of participation in religious, cultural, or academic life (such as sports teams, theater, etc.). However, while religious youth are far more likely to report that they volunteer on a regular basis, for the most part, Generation Y only volunteers "every once in a while." ★

RESEARCH ROUNDUP

MAKING NEWS FUN AND FUNCTIONAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
BY EMILY KIRBY

Many young people are turning away from traditional news sources such as the local newspaper or nightly news and opting for other sources such as John Stewart's *The Daily Show*.[1] Recent research by Susan Sherr of The Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University examines what news producers are doing to attract a younger audience and asks whether there are formats for news that would be more engaging and informative for young adults than current media offerings.

To test the effectiveness of different news formats Dr. Sherr utilized an experimental design where subjects were assigned to view one of four different news Web sites: 1) a traditional site 2) a site with a youthful design and traditional text 3) a site with traditional design and youth-oriented text and 4) a site with youthful design and youth-oriented text. The research included a total of 266 18-24 year old college students, mainly from Rutgers University.

Her research suggests that for young people there is a tradeoff between news that is informative and news that is enjoyable; to prepare this next generation to be politically engaged it is important that news producers find a way to balance fun and function. According to Dr. Sherr, "It is not clear how to strike a balance between what is informative and what is enjoyable to ensure that people are willing to consume the information they 'should' learn. The results of this research provide some clues as to where the boundaries between education and entertainment might lie and provides realistic suggestions for creating an informative youth news media."

WHAT THEY LIKE ISN'T ALWAYS WHAT THEY LEARN FROM

Dr. Sherr found that while young people preferred the news Web sites with the youthful design and youth-oriented text, they actually learned more from the traditional Web sites. One reason young people may have learned less from the youth sites is that the sites appeared to lack a certain amount of credibility. Interviews after the experiment revealed that many respondents did not like the use of quotes by people without obvious credentials or the inclusion of satire pieces on a news Web site. In addition, some reported that the moving ads on the youth sites made it difficult to concentrate on the articles. According

to Dr. Sherr, "It is very possible that the motion and bright colors found on the youth design sites reduced the number of cognitive resources available for learning the information provided."

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORM

The research suggests that presenting news using a modern, dynamic design format certainly makes the source more attractive to young audiences. However, these features must be employed judiciously. Overloading a TV program or Web site with too many moving elements or colorful features may not only distract consumers but may also make the information seem unreliable. The author notes, "People are not attracted to those things that would make them the most educated or best able to function in a democratic society. Instead they seek out those stimuli that are more likely to produce less lofty satisfactions. Those of us who would like to achieve the idealistic goal of creating an informed citizenry must acknowledge this reality." ⬧

YOUTH SOCIAL REPRESENTATION IN THE U.S. MILITARY
BY JARED SAGOFF

Although some minority groups are over-represented in the United States military as compared to the nation's population, there is no correlation between race and a willingness to join the military, according to a recent study.

A recently-released CIRCLE report by Capt. Mark Adamshick indicates that white and minority youth are roughly equally willing to join the U.S. Armed Forces, even though minority representation in the military has increased steadily since 1980. In 2002, for example, minorities comprised 36 percent of all active duty soldiers as well as 39 percent of enlistees. This figure is significantly higher than the minority representation (31 percent) in the U.S. civilian population. This difference can be largely attributed to the 22 percent of enlistees who are African-Americans as opposed to the 12 percent of the civilian population who are of that ethnicity.

GENDER AND EDUCATION PLAY A ROLE IN DECISION TO JOIN THE MILITARY

While the study demonstrates a discrepancy between the representation of African-Americans in the armed forces as compared to the civilian population, the author finds no significant difference

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[1] http://peoplepress.org/reports/display.php3?PageID=834

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in the willingness of members of either group to join the military. Nineteen percent of whites expressed willingness to join, while 20 percent of African-Americans did so, according to a survey of 1,490 U.S. youth by Lake Snell Perry & Associates and the Tarrance Group.

Although race does not seem to be a significant factor in determining willingness to join the military, several other variables have a strong impact on that decision. The gender of the survey respondents provides a stronger indicator of willingness to join the military, as women were nine percentage points less likely to be willing to sign up for service than men. Also, education plays an important role as well – "less-educated" and "unsuccessfully-educated" young people were 8 and 12 percentage points more likely to express willingness to join than successfully-educated youth. This result is largely due to a 28-point difference between "unsuccessfully-educated" and "successfully-educated" Latino youth. The study also shows a correlation between immigration status and willingness to join the armed forces.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO WILLINGNESS TO JOIN THE MILITARY

The study also examined several psychological factors that might influence an individual's proclivity to enlist: how empowered the respondents felt, how much of a difference they thought they could make in society, and their desire to "get ahead." Of these

three, only the last demonstrated any significant effect on willingness to join. According to the report, whites who viewed the armed forces as a way to get ahead were 11 percentage points more likely to be willing to join than those who did not. The study also examined whether the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 had any effect on the respondents' willingness to join up. Surprisingly, the attacks had no significant impact on the respondents' interest in joining the military and even made some age groups less likely to consider signing up. The study also found no relationship between the factors that influence a young person's willingness to join the military and his or her willingness to practice other community-oriented occupations, such as teaching or working as a police officer.

Determining minority representation in the armed forces represents a necessary field of inquiry for several reasons. First, minority representation in the military continues to grow, from 23 percent in 1980 to 36 percent three years ago. Second, according to the author of the study, "recruitment of minorities to serve in the active component of the U.S. military service is an important priority for military force planners." Finally, this study attempts to address the question of whether the burden of military service is distributed unfairly across society. The author writes: "This analysis seems to suggest that it is the nation's under-educated and less empowered youths who are joining the military, all else being equal." ⋆

CIRCLE FACT SHEETS

CIRCLE has produced a number of Fact Sheets which are brief documents with basic information and graphs on various topics. The following Fact Sheets can be found on CIRCLE's Web site:

≡ ***How Teachers' Preparation Relates to Students' Civic Knowledge and Engagement in the United States: Analysis from the IEA Civic Education Study*** (June 2005) reports American student performance on knowledge measures in relation to the international mean, home background, topics studied in school, and attitudes about types of civic participation.

≡ ***The Youth Vote 2004*** (July 2005) compares voter turnout for 18-24 year olds and 18-29 year olds to that of older voters.

≡ ***Youth Voter Turnout in the States during the 2004 Presidential and 2002 Midterm Elections*** (July 2005) shows a substantial variation in voter turnout rates by state in the 2002 and 2004 elections.

≡ ***Electoral Engagement Among Non-College Attending Youth*** (July 2005) provides information on the voting rates of non-college attending youth.

≡ ***Electoral Engagement Among Minority Youth*** (July 2005) presents data on the characteristics of the youth population and youth voting trends through 2004 by race and ethnicity.

≡ ***Voter Turnout Among Young Women and Men*** (July 2005) presents information on one measure of civic engagement, voter turnout, across men and women. It also highlights some of the similarities and differences between young women and young men in their attitudes towards voting.

RESEARCH ROUNDUP

LESSONS ON CIVIC EDUCATION FROM THE PAST AND PRESENT
BY KIMBERLEE MOORE

The cultivation of democracy in the United States has traditionally and predominately been linked to educational institutions. But, should schools be the only groups responsible for civic education?

A new CIRCLE Working Paper by Nicholas Longo suggests that relying soley on educational institutions to create active citizens is harmful to both education and democracy. Dr. Longo concludes civic education should reach beyond the schools into communities and community institutions.

The research is based on a historical and ethnographic case-study analysis of three community organizations that were able to provide rich models of community learning. The three organizations studied are: Hull House in Chicago, the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee, and the Neighborhood Learning Community in St. Paul, Minnesota. The complete findings can be found in "CIRCLE Working Paper 30: Recognizing the Role of Community in Civic Education: Lessons from Hull House, Highlander Folk School, and the Neighborhood Learning Community" which can be downloaded from http://www.civicyouth.org/research/products/working_papers.htm.

EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

The author describes three models of community-based learning in which community organizations provided civic learning. First, Hull House, began by Jane Addams in the late 19th century, used community-based learning in order to promote democracy. Jane Addams started Hull House as "a protest against a restricted view of education." Hull House was not a school but a "settlement" or neighborhood institution built for and by new immigrants. It addressed pressing social and political issues of the time, including the corruption of elected officials, child labor, labor organizing, arts education, war and peace, treatment of new Americans, and the need for sanitary streets.

Next, the Highlander Folk School, established in 1932 by Myles Horton under Addams' direct influence, linked education and social change. The school was instrumental in many social movements, serving as a training center, gathering place, and partner for union organizers and both blacks and whites in the Civil Rights Movement. Lastly, the author reviews the Neighborhood Learning

Community (NLC), which began in St. Paul in 2001. The NLC was largely inspired by the democratic traditions of Hull House and Highlander and works to cultivate the link between community-learning and civic engagement.

LESSONS LEARNED

The research highlights several lessons learned from these three cases. First, educators must realize that change takes time and commit accordingly. Horton spent 58 years at Highlander; Addams spent 46 years at Hull House. Educators should also consider all the institutions that educate for democracy, including schools, colleges, universities, community centers, non-profits, libraries, museums, retreat centers, local businesses and other models of traditional schooling. Additionally, the author suggests that emphasis must be placed on the relevancy of people's own everyday experiences. The author notes, "People are the experts of their own stories; they also are best able to solve their own problems. The iron rule of community organizing applies to community-based civic learning: never do for others what they can do for themselves."

Other lessons for educators include the importance of using a community-learning approach, respecting cultural, gender, age and racial differences and creating ways for diverse people to contribute to solving public problems; the value of incorporating and utilizing the talents and instincts of non-professionals and ordinary citizens; the need for reciprocal relations among individuals who learn and teach one another; and the importance of flexibility and trust in an ever-changing democratic process.

The research concludes that civic education can not be successfully provided in isolation. According to the author, "The powerful stories and lessons from Hull House, Highlander, and the Neighborhood Learning Community make clear—in very different contexts—that 'community matters' for civic learning. Put simply, we cannot do civic education in isolation." As such, the role of community must be recognized and included in the educational process. In addition, community-based learning must be connected to civic outcomes in order to effectively produce active citizens. ★

GRANTS

CIRCLE ANNOUNCES YOUTH-LED RESEARCH GRANTS

CIRCLE is happy to announce the winners of our youth-led community research grant competition sponsored by the Cricket Island Foundation. We received nearly 300 project proposals from teams doing amazing work around the country. While we wish we could fund many more projects, we are proud to support the youth-led teams below:

Austin Voices for Education & Youth, Austin, TX
What changes do youth in Austin want for their high schools and how can they make their priorities heard during the reform process?

Cabrini Connections, Chicago, IL
What do residents and former residents of Cabrini Green think about the demolition and gentrification of the Greens?

Community IMPACT! Nashville, TN
What supports actually exist and what supports are needed to help students in our low-income community get to college?

Covenant House, New Orleans, LA
What are the experiences of homeless youth with police in New Orleans?

East Point Youth Action Team, Fulton County, GA
What disparities and inequalities exist between schools in the Northern and Southern regions of Fulton County, GA?

Summer Enrichment Program, Greencastle, IN
What is the extent of hunger among children in our community during summer?

Teen Leadership Inst. at the Penn Center, St. Helena Island, SC
How many African Americans on the island have lost land in recent years and what are the stories behind their landloss?

TINCAN, Spokane, WA
Why have some teens chosen to have babies and how did their lives change once they did?

Youth Dreamers, Baltimore, MD
How does the community perceive youth in Baltimore and why might they oppose a youth center in their community?

Youth Resiliency Project of PROP, Portland, Maine
Does being poor, an immigrant, and/or young relate to job opportunities, and what skills are needed to get good jobs in Portland?

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women only grew by six points and for young married men by four points. And, for the first time since 1992, single men turned out more than married women. Among 18-24 year olds:

- 51% of single young women voted in 2004, up from 39% in 2000
- 45% of single young men voted in 2004, up from 34% in 2000
- 44% of married young women voted in 2004, up from 38% in 2000
- 38% of married young men voted in 2004, up from 34% in 2000

"The huge growth in the number of young voters going to the polls was a hallmark of the 2004 elections," said CIRCLE Director William A. Galston. "But taking a closer look, there are very telling and wide gaps within the overall positive trend. While the conventional wisdom used to be that married young people were more likely to vote than singles, we see that the opposite is now true, and the divide is significant."

In calculating their turnout figures, CIRCLE researchers switched from their previous method of excluding non-responders on the voting question of the survey from the final tallies and instead decided to count them as non-voters. This aligns CIRCLE's method with the turnout calculations performed by the Census Bureau among the U.S. citizen population.

For more information on youth voting, please visit http://www.civicyouth.org/research/areas/pol_partic.htm

RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

From Research to Practice, a column dedicated to recognizing successful "bridges" between researchers and practitioners, reports on research with practical implications for youth civic engagement. Additionally, it presents concrete examples of how practitioners have applied this research to encourage the participation of young people in civic and political life.

THE CIVIC EFFECTS OF SMALL SCHOOL REFORM: A DISCUSSION
BY CARRIE DONOVAN

On July 6, CIRCLE convened an all-day meeting to discuss the civic and academic outcomes of small school reform. Some education leaders are arguing that traditional, large, omni-purpose, relatively anonymous high schools should be transformed into institutions of smaller size, with more coherent focus, more student participation, and more connections to the surrounding community. Students would then have more choice about which school to attend, but fewer choices about their classes and co-curricular activities once they enroll. New York City is building 200 such small schools; Los Angeles, 130, and Chicago, 100. Proponents hope that these schools will graduate a much higher proportion of their students and prepare their graduates better for school and college. It is also possible that they will produce better civic outcomes. On July 6, policymakers, school administrators, teachers, and students all shared their perspectives on the small schools movement. The meeting was held at the National Press Club and covered by C-SPAN.

Participants all agreed that schools can deeply affect the civic attitudes and engagement of students. High schools matter in particular, as they are the last place where messages about democracy can reach all young people regardless of their socio-economic status or future educational goals. Not only civics classes and co-curricular groups matter; the organization, location, and overall philosophy of a school are also important. However, there was uncertainty and some disagreement about the extent to which size directly affects a school's ability to teach civic content effectively and instill the virtues of good citizenship.

A panel of CIRCLE grantees discussed their research findings on the subject. Joe Kahne of Mills College conducted a study in partnership with Chicago Public Schools assessing the relationship between classroom content and students' commitment to civic engagement. He found that civic opportunities in the classroom—including discussion of current events, community service learning, student voice in the classroom, simulations of democratic procedures, and civic role models in the classroom—all had strong correlations with students' civic commitment. Teaching subject matter interesting to students and civic after-school activities had smaller effects on student commitment. Celeste Lay, from Tulane University, considered the relationship between school size and civic outcomes and concluded that students in small schools

were more likely than students in large schools to participate in activities and volunteer. While large schools usually offer a wider array of activities, it appears that such opportunities do not always lead to student participation. However, there was no correlation between school size and political knowledge, efficacy, or tolerance, and in fact, students in small schools are, on average, slightly less tolerant than their peers, most likely because the majority of small schools in her sample were rural and fairly homogenous.

Homogeneity in schools was seen by many as a barrier to teaching skills necessary to democratic decision-making. David Campbell, of Notre Dame University, found that students in social studies classrooms that encourage discussion of political and social issues did better on civic knowledge tests than their peers. But, such discussions are less likely to occur in classrooms that are racially diverse. Diana Hess from University of Wisconsin at Madison added to the concern about classroom composition, citing excessive tracking as a homogenizing factor in high schools. While small schools may have an easier time building trust among students and teachers, they need to consciously create opportunities for students to discuss multiple, and possibly conflicting, viewpoints.

Other participants highlighted hopeful trends from small schools. Michele Cahill, of the New York City Department of Education, described the city's experience with extensive secondary reform. To date, students in New York City small schools have better attendance and a higher promotion rate—90 percent compared to only 68 percent city-wide. Sixty-seven percent of students in small schools are testing at Level 1 and Level 2 compared to 60 percent for traditional schools. Thomas Toch, the Co-Director of Education Sector, reiterated the potential for small schools to increase attendance for both students and teachers. He emphasized that small schools have been successful at building relationships that reduce anonymity, which he categorized as "the enemy of academic success." In addition, Toch recommended small schools as a way to bring coherence to a large sprawling high school curriculum.

But some questions about the importance of school size remained. Susan Sclafani, Assistant Secretary at the Department of Education, cited a randomized experiment. RMDC evaluated

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high school career academies and found no difference in the academic outcomes of students in traditional high schools and those in career academies. Four years after graduation, however, the male graduates of career academies had higher collective wage earnings than their peers. Sclafani cautioned that popular support for small schools may rely too heavily on anecdotes and extraordinary examples from schools that are excellent all-around and may be difficult to replicate. She urged schools undergoing reform to make academics their core focus and ensure that all teachers have content area expertise in the subjects they teach.

Some contributors to the day's agenda felt that size did not affect the quality of a school at all. Gene Bottoms, of the Southern Regional Education Board, argued that if a school met a set of conditions, it would be a good school regardless of its size. He named strong district leadership as the best way to ensure school success. In his view, strong leaders are committed to improvement, new ideas, and data-based decisions, and still find ways to involve students in meaningful ways. At the school level, he advised that teachers require reading and writing in all classes, plan multi-day units, use modern technology, and share responsibility for helping students meet challenging standards. Schools should offer students opportunities for real work, and provide a comprehensive guidance system with counselors who will work with students for all four years.

The majority of participants felt that while size can be an advantage to student success, other factors were at least as important, if not more. Daniel Fallon, the Chair of the Education Division at Carnegie Corporation of New York, suggested that while small schools are good, they should not be thought of as a "silver bullet." Teachers and staff have collective responsibility for the learning and development of students, and their investment is key. Students from Indianapolis Public High Schools who had conducted school-based surveys and interviews agreed and offered additional insight from a student perspective. According to Luke Kashman, a junior at Arsenal Technical High School, "It's not the smallness that counts, but building relationships with students and having teacher training." Toya Cosby, a junior at Northwest High School, affirmed that students want open comfortable relationships and added that they also want to know why information being taught is important. In the students' survey of teachers they found that 64 percent did not think it was their

responsibility to keep students in school. Teachers felt they were responsible for content, but not for maintaining student interest or ensuring class attendance. Student researchers Che Jones and Bianca Bullock explained that in a district where only a minority of students makes it to graduation day, teachers need to do more. They need to market education and demonstrate how content is relevant to the lives of students and to their futures. As Bullock stated, "We see that you can make money working, we know that you can leave school and go to the streets, but we don't always see what school can do for us."

Two practitioners, a Superintendent and a school founder, offered concrete recommendations for schools to structure civic education. Shelley Berman, the Superintendent of public schools in Hudson, MA, offered the model of Hudson High School where service-learning is integrated into the curriculum and all students take a core civics class that includes both English and social studies. Hudson students learn democratic decision-making by doing it. The school is divided up into thematic clusters or small learning communities that allow students to easily engage in dialogue and deliberation.   In addition, the school holds town hall meetings and puts key decisions up for discussion and vote at meetings of the Community Council—which is made up of students and faculty. All Council recommendations return to the student clusters where they must be approved before enactment.

Sarah Kass co-founded City on A Hill Public Charter High School in Boston, MA in 1995. Like Hudson High School, City On A Hill operates under the belief that democratic citizens must be made. The school teaches the practices of democracy through town hall meetings, a community internship program for all students, and community-based projects. All students spend their final year researching a civic issue. Their work culminates in a final project that is reviewed by a jury of students and community members who hold them accountable to exceptionally high standards, but standards that are transparent to students from the very start. Kass recommends that schools demonstrate democracy by making authority legitimate and not arbitrary. School staff and faculty need to themselves be committed to constant learning and revision. Standards need to be integral to the school and transparent to students, and academic challenges need to be real so that students "sweat" intellectually and can have a true sense of accomplishment. Kass argues that true democracy requires

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understandiing of tradition and history and not merely concern for the future. According to Kass, "schools need to see the hallways as places for learning." It is in the hallways where students will understand that their behavior and what they are learning about democracy are related. These things are all part of the disposition of schools, and it is this disposition—linked to internal accountability—that make schools civic, not their size alone.

The Honorable Bob Wise, the former governor of West Virginia and now president of the Alliance for Excellent Education, shared his thoughts in a keynote lunch address. Stating that the opportunity for high school reform is a narrow window that might close, he underlined the importance of citizen involvement in the process. He noted that in order to achieve effective high school reform, we need civic engagement; and to enhance civic engagement, we need reformed high schools.

William Galston, the Director of CIRCLE, ended the day with the suggestion that civic education is a term with two dimensions: it describes a set of distinct curricular practices and it also describes education in general, since the way information is taught has implications for student's efficacy and civic competencies. He concluded that while the research on the effects of small schools is limited, there is hope—particularly for the potential of small schools to counter anonymity and provide internal accountability. While size alone may not guarantee results, the advantage of smallness can give schools a head start in building a school culture and curriculum that model democracy. ★

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