



Education for Deliberative Democracy: The Long-term Influence of Kids Voting USA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This progress report provides evidence for persistent influence of Kids Voting USA, an interactive civic curriculum taught during election campaigns. The entire research project consists of multiple waves of student and parent interviews, covering a three-year period. Respondents were recruited from families in Arizona, Colorado, and Florida. The students were juniors and seniors when first interviewed in the aftermath of the 2002 election. The survey results from that year, described in an earlier report, are used as a baseline indication of the immediate influence of KVUSA. Those results provided substantial evidence for the initial effects of Kids Voting on students, on parents, and on family norms for political competence.

The question now is whether this optimistic impression is warranted once we take a look at the long-term effects. In other words, did the curriculum exert a lasting influence or was its impact fleeting and ultimately inconsequential in the lives of students and parents? Based on a second wave of interviews, this report describes the extent of Kids Voting effects one year after student participation. The results show a consistent and robust influence of Kids Voting after the passage of 12 months despite controlling for demographics such as family socioeconomic status and parent history of voting. In 25 tests of curriculum influence, KVUSA netted 21 effects in the areas of news media use, discussion, cognition, opinion formation, and civic participation.

Deliberative Democracy. We judge KVUSA as a successful catalyst for deliberative democracy, as students continued on toward a discursive path to citizenship after the end of the curriculum. Not only did the frequency of discussion increase in the long run, students became more skilled at holding political conversations. For instance, the curriculum promoted dispositions such as the willingness to listen to opponents and feeling comfortable about challenging others in discussion. Students learned to partake in passionate – but civil and respectful – discourse. Also evident is a desire that is at the heart of deliberative democracy: motivation to validate opinions by testing them out in conversations and seeing if they are persuasive.

Curriculum Components. When considering the curriculum components collectively, service learning and encouraging people to vote exerted the most consistent influence. Both activities allow older students to interact with people outside the high school, providing realistic opportunities for community involvement. Taking sides in debates and teacher encouragement of student opinion expression also stood out as particularly effective elements of Kids Voting. Thus, peer discussion that allows for uninhibited and heartfelt expression is more beneficial for civic education than safe, subdued exchanges.

High School Journalism. In light of the Knight Foundation's interest in high school journalism, this report provides a supplemental analysis of the effects of newspaper experience on various dimensions of civic involvement. In a process that seems to parallel KVUSA effects, participation in journalism increased the number of discussion partners, active processing of political information, and opinion formation.

Effects on Parents. Our prior studies showed that Kids Voting stimulates parents' civic involvement indirectly, by prompting student-initiated discussion at home. Here we were able to show that these results persist over time. This phenomenon illustrates that political socialization should not be viewed as a process that begins and ends in childhood. We present a model of second-chance citizenship in which parents increase their political involvement due to their children's participation in Kids Voting.

The Final Test. The institution of Kids Voting is perhaps most valuable to foundations and to educators as a heuristic for imagining what a school can accomplish as a learning environment that diffuses to other spheres. In this report and in previous studies, we have found that Kids Voting effects are detectable at the following levels:

- Individual student: e.g., media use, knowledge
- Individual parent: e.g., media use, knowledge
- Student-parent dyad: e.g., discussion
- Family: e.g., norm of encouragement to use news media
- Community/culture: e.g., expanded discussion networks

As we look ahead to the third wave of interviews this fall, we will keep in mind that the youth respondents were juniors and seniors when first interviewed in 2002. Some will have left home to attend college or to enter a trade; some might have gotten married. Virtually all members of this cohort would have graduated from high school. With these major life decisions as a backdrop, we will see whether Kids Voting USA makes a difference in shaping their civic lives as they leave childhood behind.

BACKGROUND

Dismay over the political disengagement of young Americans has motivated a flurry of experimentation in strategies to recapture a culture of civic commitment. Kids Voting USA, a curriculum oriented toward elections, stands out in this era of innovation by virtue of its inclusive architecture. While the program is most concretely a set of K-12 lesson plans, it represents the simultaneous involvement of teachers, students, parents, election officials, community activists, and local news media. Kids Voting is possibly unique in its incorporation of so many agents of political socialization: schools, elections, families, peer groups, and mass communication. The program attracts a great deal of scholarly attention because of the field conditions created by this coordination of effort. From such synergy has come surprising and unintended effects, such as children taking the lead in family discussions of politics and lower-income families gaining the most in political knowledge (McDevitt & Chaffee, 1998). Perhaps what is most intriguing about KVUSA is its potential for creating a microcosm of deliberative democracy out of daily life.

These impressions of the program are backed up by a growing body of research on Kids Voting. The curriculum appears to be remarkably effective at promoting political interest of students and parents during an election campaign, as shown in several studies by the principal investigator of the current project (McDevitt & Chaffee, 1998, 2000; McDevitt, 2004). Settings for these evaluations were San Jose, California, in 1994 and in 1998, and in Lubbock, Texas, in 2000. Kids Voting stimulated news media use, discussion with parents, the acquisition of knowledge, and the formation of partisan opinions. Other scholars have examined the capacity of Kids Voting to generate increases in parents' vote turnout (of 1.7 to 3.9 percent) in regions in which the program has a foothold (Merrill, Simon, & Adrian, 1994). More recently, research has investigated the community characteristics that predict the likelihood that a school district will adopt the program in the first place (Jordan, 2003). However, noticeably missing

from this literature is an assessment of long-term impacts.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

We provide evidence for persistent influence of Kids Voting in this progress report to the Knight Foundation and CIRCLE. The entire project consists of multiple waves of interviews of high school students along with one parent from each family. The panel study covers a three-year period and has recruited respondents from families in Arizona, Colorado, and Florida. These families represent a diverse sample with varying degrees of exposure to the curriculum in several community and electoral contexts. The students were juniors and seniors when first interviewed in the aftermath of the 2002 election. The initial survey findings were supplemented by a series of focus group interviews of students in Florida in the summer of 2002. The survey results, described in an earlier report, are used as a baseline indication of the immediate influence of KVUSA as taught in the fall of 2002.

These results provided substantial evidence for the influence of Kids Voting on students, on parents, and on family norms for political competence. The question now is whether this optimistic impression can be sustained once we take a hard look at the long-term effects. In other words, did the curriculum exert a lasting influence or was its overall impact fleeting and thus ultimately inconsequential in the lives of students and parents? Based on a second wave of interviews, this report describes the extent of Kids Voting effects one year after student participation. We evaluate the curriculum in the following areas: news media use, knowledge, opinion formation, intention to vote in 2004, volunteering, political activity, discussion, and deliberative habits such as the willingness to listen to opponents.

During the three-year study period, the youth respondents will have all graduated – or otherwise left – high school, and all will be of voting age when we interview them for a final time in the fall of this year, immediately after the 2004 election. Looking ahead, we will examine the voting records for the sampling regions in the three states to document whether each student and

parent voted. While it is possible that Kids Voting will account directly for a higher vote turnout, we suspect that much of this influence will be mediated by other factors such as media use, strength of partisan attitudes, and habits of discussion. Thus, KVUSA is likely to be most consequential as a catalyst for behaviors that lead to voting and other forms of active citizenship. These findings will come with our third and final report. For now we focus on effects during an intermediate stage, 12 months after the original exposure.

RESEARCH GOALS

In contemplating what the lasting influences might encompass, it does not make sense for us to confine the analysis to standard indicators of civic learning, such as textbook knowledge. Kids Voting has garnered attention from journalists and researchers precisely because its interactive, peer-centered strategy provides an alternative approach. Civic instruction in the United States, in fact, has become a kind of whipping boy for democracy. In a critique of the philosophical assumptions underlining social studies courses, Shermis and Barth (1982) concluded:

What is now clear is that social studies by most teachers has nothing to do with teaching the development of critical skills and decision-making. School practices have to do with discipline and the training of future citizens to become passive spectators (p. 33).

This harsh assessment, while perhaps overly pessimistic, is echoed in contemporary critiques. For example, a content analysis of three widely used American textbooks found that students are exposed to few messages that provide instruction on how to participate in collective activism (Strachan, Hildreth, & Murray, 2004). In parallel fashion, empirical studies have found that the top-down, learning-by-rote approach appears to do little more than transmit textbook knowledge (Niemi & Junn, 1998). In fact, we suspect that such mechanistic instruction is counterproductive by stifling any latent curiosity adolescents might have about politics.

What perspective, then, should we bring toward an evaluation of Kids Voting? Adolescents are too young to vote, of course, so turnout is not an appropriate test. And the internalization of attitudes supportive of a political regime, while necessary to any democratic system, seems outdated as a criterion for active citizenship. Deliberative democracy, which we will define shortly, is up to the task as a normative compass for anticipating how the school might contribute to information seeking, critical thinking, reflection on issues, and active discussion. Along with documenting effects of the overall curriculum, a second goal of this report is to identify components that are most consequential. Finally, in light of the Knight Foundation's interest in high school journalism, we include an analysis of this experience as an impetus to civic development.

Deliberative Democracy. For most of its career, "deliberative democracy has been something of a small, rarefied sub-field of political theory and philosophy" (Ryfe, 2004, p. 1). Recently however, there seems to be a contagion of interest in designing institutions to enact deliberation (e.g., Fishkin & Laslett, 2003) and a separate but compatible effort to test whether philosophical assumptions hold up in actual behavior (e.g., Dutwin, 2003). Deliberative democracy refers to a process in which citizens voluntarily engage in discussion to share knowledge, to express opinions, and to understand the perspectives of others. As defined by theorists, interactions must be characterized by reasoned argument, reciprocity, tolerance, and equality. Many have celebrated deliberation as an opportunity to revive grassroots participation, and this explains the pragmatic impulse to design and to study deliberative forums as testing grounds. At the individual level, this form of citizenship is thought to engender self transcendence; apart from any contribution to the political system, deliberation makes for better human beings by promoting tolerance, reflection, and civility (Warren, 1992).

We see great value in applying this perspective to civic education in general, and to Kids Voting as a specific case. Schools embody "communities in which young people learn to

interact, argue, and work together with others, an important foundation for future citizenship" (Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2003, p. 5). As the only institution with a mandate to reach virtually every child, schools can foster equality of civic preparation while engendering democratic dispositions.

While deliberative democracy implicates a literature of philosophical abstraction, it has been operationalized as concrete behaviors. These are (1) news exposure, (2) talking about politics and news, (3) refinement of opinions based on news and discussion, and (4) participation in the political system. Kim, Wyatt and Katz (1999) validated this model with a diverse sample of adult respondents, and we will use a similar approach to assess KVUSA. In the area of media use and cognition, our student and parent indicators include attention to news, knowledge, salience of the economy as an important issue, and information integration. For interpersonal communication, measures include frequency of discussion, willingness to express opinions, listening to opposing views, and willingness to disagree openly. We have also included indicators for opinion confidence, the development of strongly held views, and partisanship. For activities and behavioral intention, we created measures of support for conventional politics, support for unconventional activism (such as participating in boycotts), and intention to vote in 2004.

Curriculum Components. Kids Voting encompasses a multi-pronged approach based on peer-centered learning, information gathering, and hands-on activity. The program took root on a trial basis in six Arizona communities in 1988, and has since spread to 40 states. Approximately 4.3 million children and adolescents took part in KVUSA during 2003 elections (Jordan, 2003). The overall program includes three domains. Within the classroom, the Civics Alive! curriculum promotes the rights and responsibilities of voting, but also the principle that citizens should study candidates and issues. This emphasis is particularly important for deliberative dispositions that might carry over into other social spheres such as the family and the community. Second, KVUSA offers community

service in its Destination Democracy events. This extension of the curriculum into the community is especially important for older students as they are offered realistic opportunities to assert themselves in activities such as get-out-the vote campaigns. The final aspect of the program is the actual voting of students on Election Day – students cast ballots alongside parents in a concurrent election.

Our prior evaluations focused on influences of the entire curriculum. In this study, after looking at Kids Voting lesson plans, we selected 10 components that represent the main elements of high school instruction. For classroom interaction, we measured:

- *Frequency of discussion about election issues.*
- *Teacher encouragement to express opinions.*
- *Taking sides in classroom debates.*
- *Analyzing political cartoons.*
- *Analyzing political ads.*
- *Homework assignments that involve family discussion.*

For community involvement, we measured:

- *Service learning.*
- *Working at a polling site.*
- *Encouraging people to vote.*

Finally, we measured:

- *Mock voting (with parents).*

High School Journalism. In the first report, we documented a strong and consistent relationship between participation in high school journalism and political involvement. While this analysis is not part of the KVUSA evaluation, we will look for long-term effects given the Knight Foundation's interest in high school journalism. Findings from the first year provide an empirical affirmation for those who believe that news writing instruction should be preserved if not expanded in school districts across the country. The results showed that student journalists were superior to non-journalists in 18 out of 18 indicators of civic growth as measured in 2002. We infer that the differences between the two groups are larger

than what this analysis revealed because of design limitations. The questionnaire included only one item about journalism (“Did you write or edit for a school newspaper?”) and the number of respondents who said yes to this question was only 65.

From an empirical standpoint, we venture into uncharted territory in proposing that newspaper experience is connected with civic growth. While the study of high school journalism extends back to the early days of mass communication research (Callahan, 1998), we were unable to find any studies that explored the consequences of newspaper experience for political socialization of teenagers. How then, might writing and editing affect political behavior? As described by Brady and his colleague, the social skills that are transferable to politics are largely communicative in nature (Brady, Verba, & Scholzman, 1995). The process of interviewing, writing, editing, and receiving feedback encourages students to think critically about news reporting and about the issues they cover (Dvorak, Lain, & Dickson, 1994).

METHOD

The design calls for documenting effects in three simultaneous field experiments. Interviews of students and parents were conducted in El Paso County, CO, with Colorado Springs as the largest city; Maricopa, County, AZ, which includes the Phoenix region; and Broward/Palm Beach counties,

FL, an epicenter for the ballot-recount scandal of 2000. Each site includes both Kids Voting schools and a comparison group of schools. As described in Figure 1, the overall study is conducted in three phases, representing the consecutive years of student and parent interviews. The first phase involved interviews of juniors and seniors, along with one parent from each family, following the 2002 election. The curriculum had been implemented during the initial months of the school year to coincide with the end of the campaign. All families were likely exposed to the campaign to some extent via media coverage and spontaneous discussion. And the non-KV schools would still provide some type of civic instruction, of course. However, only the Kids Voting families are likely to include teenagers who would be exposed to the extensive experiences provided by Kids Voting. S1 and P1 in Figure 1 represent the first wave of student and parent interviews. S2 and P2 signify the interviews of the same respondents, which occurred one year after the curriculum experience. This second report to the Knight Foundation and CIRCLE describes these findings. S3 and P3 are planned interviews two years after the curriculum exposure, which will be conducted after Election Day of 2004.

QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

This study takes advantage of field settings that create condition for a series of natural

Figure 1. Panel Design: Three Waves

| | <i>First Phase</i> | | <i>Second Phase</i> | | <i>Third Phase</i> |
|-----------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| | September to Election Day 2002 | November 2002 to February 2003 | November 2003 to February 2004 | | Fall 2004 |
| | Election campaign | | | | Election campaign |
| Students: | Kids Voting for experimental group | S1 interview | S2 interview | | S3 interview |
| Parents: | | P1 interview | P2 interview | | P3 interview |

experiments. Similar demographics between the KV vs. non-KV students would help us to eliminate extraneous factors as explanations for Kids Voting effects. The design does not fit entirely the requirements for a fully controlled experiment in that we could not randomly assign students to contrasting conditions. We consequently characterize this study as a quasi-experiment, in which the selection to comparison groups is unbiased but not literally randomized. A particular student's participation in KVUSA was determined by decisions made by school administrators and teachers. We confirmed in a regression analysis that demographics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and academic prowess did not predict exposure to Kids Voting. But there is still the possibility that adolescents, by virtue of parent influence or family socioeconomic status (SES), might be predisposed to participate in KVUSA. This same regression analysis failed to show any significant relationships between parent and family background and the student's exposure to Kids Voting.

SITE SELECTION

Data collection from several regions adds to variation in instructional activities such as the frequency of classroom debates. The three sites – one in the Southwest, one in the Rocky Mountain West, and one in the Southeast – increase our capacity to make generalized inferences about curriculum influence. Furthermore, each community has a unique political environment provided by local candidates, issue controversies, and news coverage. We used the following selection criteria for the sites:

- Strong implementation of Kids Voting.
- The existence of both Kids Voting and comparison schools.
- Ethnic and SES diversity.
- Proximity to principal investigators; this is the case for the Colorado and Florida counties.

Descriptions of demographics and the electoral contexts for each site is provided in the first report (McDevitt, Kioussis, Xu, Losch, & Ripley, 2003).

DATA COLLECTION & SAMPLING

The total sample during the first wave of data collection – i.e., for time 1 (T1) – included students representing more than 150 schools. We obtained lists of students and parents from a leading vendor for survey sample frames, and completed interviews of 497 student-parent dyads (994 respondents). Here we will describe methods used for the second wave of interviews (T2). To maximize the response rate for telephone interviews, we followed up with mailed questionnaires to non-respondents. In addition, we included small incentives (\$5 phone cards) for participants. Interviews began in early November 2003 and ended in mid February, 2004. At least 25 attempts were made before coding a number as unreachable.

A confluence of design factors created a daunting challenge for us in trying to achieve a high response rate. Adolescent children represent a difficult-to-reach population, and we needed to gain cooperation from both a parent and a student to complete a dyad for both interview waves. The N for the second wave of interviews is 271 completed dyads, representing a completion rate of 55 percent from the baseline N. This rate measures up well compared to other studies that have sought to reach young adults on matters of civic engagement without the benefit of school-site administration (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2002).

The sample obtained is upwardly biased due to differential rates of cooperation, mobility, and availability of respondents. We tried to counteract the tendency for an upper-SES tilt by offering the phone-card incentives, but the total sample undoubtedly under-represents low-SES groups and parents who speak Spanish as their first language. These sampling biases should be kept in mind while interpreting the results, but they do not pose problems for inferences about Kids Voting influence given that we did not find any appreciably demographic differences between KVUSA families and the comparison group.

MEASUREMENT

Kids Voting Exposure. A continuous scale represents the reality of Kids Voting

implementation better than a dichotomous indicator in that a teacher might opt to use some components but not every lesson plan. The student questionnaire at T1 included the 10 items previously listed – they were used to trigger a respondent’s recall of Kids Voting experiences. The response options, coding and reliability are provided in the Appendix. The frequencies of exposure to the various components across the three sites are included in the first report to the Knight Foundation (McDevitt et al., 2003).

Curriculum Influence. We included an array of civic involvement indicators involving media use, discussion, cognition, opinions, and civic intentions and behaviors. The Appendix provides the item wording and coding schemes for these variables along with demographics for students and parents. Univariate descriptive statistics for the outcome variables are provided in the first report.

Demographics. The following demographic variables were measured for students: gender, ethnicity, religious group membership, grade level, and grades earned in school. For parents, the indicators are gender, ethnicity, SES, religious group membership, and frequency of prior voting.

VALIDITY

Most of the criterion variables for curriculum effects are based on self-reports of political behavior. These measures are subject to exaggeration or selective recall as respondents seek to make themselves appear more civic minded than they really are. However, our concerns about internal validity are alleviated due to several design elements:

- The questionnaires included a knowledge test for students and parents, creating at least one category of effect not subject to demand characteristics of the interview. If knowledge is then strongly correlated with curriculum exposure and other criterion indicators, there is evidence that the overall pattern of curriculum influence is real.
- A general bias in reports about civic involvement might not affect correlations across an entire sample in that adding a constant to everyone’s

score would not alter correlation coefficients. And while social desirability in survey responses is potentially related to particular attributes of respondents, we controlled for demographic influence in our tests of Kids Voting effects.

- The students – not their parents – were asked about participation in Kids Voting. Consequently, the questionnaire design reduces the chance that associations between curriculum participation and parent behaviors would result as mere artifacts of measurement.

RESULTS

DIRECT EFFECTS ON STUDENTS

We begin with a look at the direct effects on students. A regression model was created that controls first for a variety of demographics frequently associated with civic development. Our intent is to assess what KVUSA might accomplish beyond what would normally occur due to the social location of a particular family. Prior studies have reported that background factors such as SES, age, gender, grades in school, membership in religious organizations, and ethnicity predict the pace of political development. We also included a measure of parent voting history to assess curriculum influence once we account for parental political involvement.

As shown in Table 1, Kids Voting continued to have a strong impact on media use a year after the baseline measurements. The curriculum exerted a persistent influence on students’ attention to news about politics and attention to news about the economy as a prominent issue. Kids Voting also fostered use of the Internet as an alternative news source. However, the lack of influence on general television viewing shows that the curriculum does not trigger an increase in all types of media use. This is a positive sign for KVUSA given scholarship that suggests excessive TV viewing – of the couch potato variety – is associated with civic inaction (Putnam, 2000). Finally, the intervention simulated adolescents to encourage their parents to pay more attention to news, thereby providing an avenue for parents to benefit from student exposure to the curriculum. This finding is significant for the students

themselves in that the behavior suggests that they view public affairs as relevant to their daily

lives; otherwise they would not make the effort to motivate parents.

Table 1: Effects of Kids Voting on Student Media Use One Year Later (Regression)

| | Demographics R ² | Kids Voting R ² Change | Beta | Total R ² |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------|----------------------|
| Media Use Outcomes | | | | |
| Attention to political news | .02 | .06*** | .25*** | .08*** |
| Attention to Internet news | .07* | .03** | .18** | .10** |
| Attention to economic news | .04 | .04*** | .22*** | .08*** |
| General TV viewing | .12*** | .00 | .01 | .12*** |
| Encourage parent to pay attention | .04 | .05*** | .23*** | .09*** |

* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Note: The first column reports the amount of variance accounted for by the following variables: ethnicity, year in school when exposed to Kids Voting in 2002, grades earned, gender, religious group membership, parent SES, and voting history of parent (1996, 2000, & 2002 elections), which were entered simultaneously in the first equation. The second column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to exposure to Kids Voting, which was entered in the second equation. The third column reports the beta produced by the second equation. The final column reports the total variance explained.

Several long-term effects on interpersonal communication were documented, as shown in Table 2. The increase in peer and parent conversation replicates our prior evaluations of Kids Voting in Lubbock and in San Jose. The finding for size of discussion network ($\beta = .31$) is particularly promising because students are probably expanding the range of viewpoints they are exposed to. This result in particular seems to reveal the capacity of KVUSA to alter the civic culture of a community beyond individual-level effects. The curriculum seems to have spawned a web of networks for the diffusion of discussion and interpersonal influence. Kids Voting also promoted conversational skills and related dispositions such as the willingness to disagree, willingness to listen to opponents, testing out opinions in conversation, and challenging the views of parents.

With respect to cognition (Table 3), we documented the long-term impact of the curriculum on how students learn and think about the political environment. Kids Voting impacted all three indicators. The influence on knowledge is especially important because it strengthens the internal validity of the study — unlike other measures derived from questionnaire data, knowledge is not subject to exaggeration or selective recall. This long-lasting influence demonstrates that interactive instruction can help students develop cognitive skills that persist beyond the immediate stimulation of an election. The curriculum also increased active processing of information and salience of the economy as an important issue. These findings suggest that KVUSA expands the capacity to assimilate information from various sources while

Table 2: Effects of Kids Voting on Student Discussion One Year Later (Regression)

| | Demographics | Kids Voting | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| | R ² | R ² Change | Beta | Total R ² |
| Discussion Outcomes | | | | |
| Discussion with parents | .11*** | .07*** | .28*** | .18*** |
| Discussion with friends | .11*** | .08*** | .29*** | .19*** |
| Size of discussion | .04 | .09*** | .31*** | .13*** |
| Willingness to disagree | .08* | .10*** | .33*** | .18*** |
| Listening to opponents | .05 | .07*** | .27*** | .12*** |
| Testing opinions for response | .02 | .05*** | .23*** | .07*** |
| Testing opinions to persuade | .02 | .04** | .20** | .06** |
| Challenging parent | .06 [^] | .02 [^] | .13 [^] | .07 [^] |

[^] p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Note: The first column reports the amount of variance accounted for by the following variables: ethnicity, year in school when exposed to Kids Voting in 2002, grades earned, gender, religious group membership, parent SES, and voting history of parent (1996, 2000, & 2002 elections), which were entered simultaneously in the first equation. The second column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to exposure to Kids Voting, which was entered in the second equation. The third column reports the beta produced by the second equation. The final column reports the total variance explained.

motivating concern about public affairs. A plausible explanation for the knowledge effect is that students had developed habits of news exposure and interpretation that endured well after the curriculum ended.

Table 3: Effects of Kids Voting on Student Cognition One Year Later (Regression)

| | Demographics | Kids Voting | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------|----------------------|
| | R ² | R ² Change | Beta | Total R ² |
| Cognition | | | | |
| Knowledge | .08* | .03** | .18** | .11** |
| Salience of economy | .01 | .05*** | .24*** | .06*** |
| Active Processing | .07* | .07*** | .27*** | .14*** |

* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Note: The first column reports the amount of variance accounted for by the following variables: ethnicity, year in school when exposed to Kids Voting in 2002, grades earned, gender, religious group membership, parent SES, and voting history of parent (1996, 2000, & 2002 elections), which were entered simultaneously in the first equation. The second column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to exposure to Kids Voting, which was entered in the second equation. The third column reports the beta produced by the second equation. The final column reports the total variance explained.

Moving on to opinions (Table 4), Kids Voting exposure was linked with increased skepticism toward news media. This again reveals that the curriculum helps ensure that students are not just passive recipients of information, but are critical of content they consume. Of course, the line between skepticism and cynicism can blur, which could have negative outcomes for civic development. This possibility will be explored further with the T3 data. The modest linkage with opinion confidence and the significant association with ideology indicate that KVUSA exposure leads to attitude formation and crystallization. These are important outcomes given the perspective of Sears and Valentino (1997) that "individuals should be regarded as well-socialized if they have well-informed crystallized attitudes toward the important political objects of the day" (p. 46). The lack of stimulation of partisanship, we suspect, is a consequence of Kids Voting efforts to

be non-partisan. Another explanation involves the growing tendency of youth to not align with one of the two major parties.

Table 4: Effects of Kids Voting on Student Political Opinions One Year Later (Regression)

| | Demographics | Kids Voting | | Total R ² |
|----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| | R ² | R ² Change | Beta | |
| Opinion Outcomes | | | | |
| Perceived media bias | .12** | .04** | .19** | .16*** |
| Opinion confidence | .01 | .01 [^] | .11 [^] | .02 [^] |
| Party identification | .07* | .01 | .11 | .08* |
| Ideological identification | .05 | .02* | .16* | .07* |

[^] p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Note: The first column reports the amount of variance accounted for by the following variables: ethnicity, year in school when exposed to Kids Voting in 2002, grades earned, gender, religious group membership, parent SES, and voting history of parent (1996, 2000, & 2002 elections), which were entered simultaneously in the first equation. The second column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to exposure to Kids Voting, which was entered in the second equation. The third column reports the beta produced by the second equation. The final column reports the total variance explained.

Turning to civic behaviors and intentions (Table 5), Kids Voting enhanced support for conventional political participation as measured one year later. This support seems to translate into actual behavior as curriculum exposure was associated with political activity at school and volunteering in the community. The latter finding suggest that Kids Voting helps to build social capital outside of the political arena (Putnam, 2000). These young adults are not just becoming more active citizens in the political sense, but more active members of their communities in a social sense. Although a direct effect of KVUSA on intention to vote was not observed, it is likely that Kids Voting has an indirect effect by initiating processes that lead to vote intention. We will explore such influence later when we consider the indirect effects of the curriculum.

Table 5: Effects of Kids Voting on Student Civic Intentions and Behavior One Year Later (Regression)

| | Demographics | Kids Voting | | Total R ² |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|------|----------------------|
| | R ² | R ² Change | Beta | |
| Behavior & Intention | | | | |
| Support for conventional politics | .10*** | .02* | .15* | .12*** |
| Support for unconventional activism | .10*** | .01 | .08 | .11*** |
| Participation in political activities | .02 | .02* | .15* | .04* |
| Volunteering for organizations | .07* | .02* | .14* | .09* |
| Intention to vote in 2004 | .17*** | .01 | .10 | .18*** |

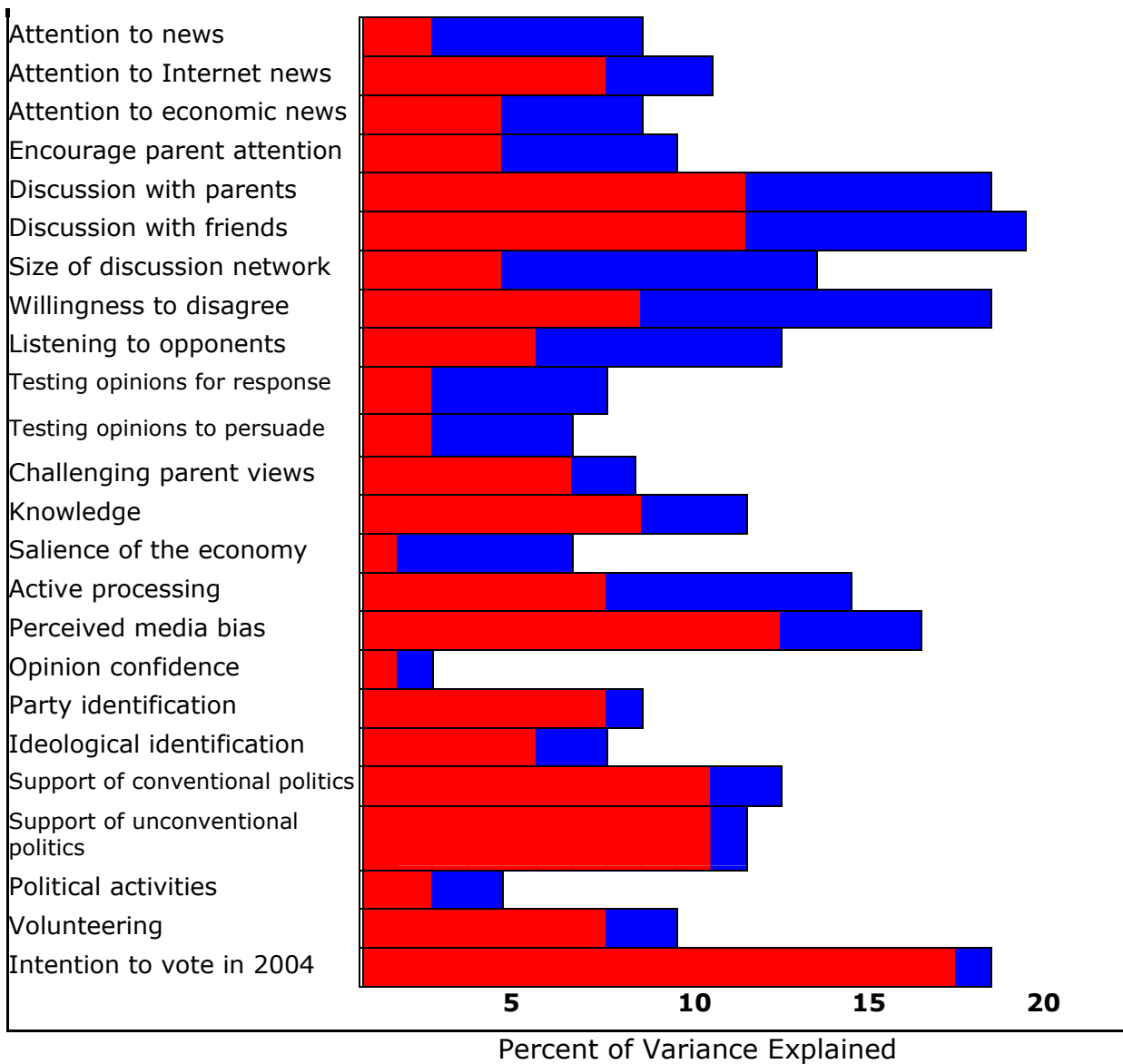
^ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Note: The first column reports the amount of variance accounted for by the following variables: ethnicity, year in school when exposed to Kids Voting in 2002, grades earned, gender, religious group membership, parent SES, and voting history of parent (1996, 2000, & 2002 elections), which were entered simultaneously in the first equation. The second column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to exposure to Kids Voting, which was entered in the second equation. The third column reports the beta produced by the second equation. The final column reports the total variance explained.

In summary, Kids Voting's long-term effects were systematic across multiple dimensions of civic involvement. For the 25 indicators, the average amount of variance explained by the curriculum was 4 percent. This stacks up well against the average of 7 percent for the block of demographics, which include multiple competing predictors. Table 6 illustrates curriculum influence in relationship to effects of individual and family background.¹ Two patterns are quickly evident – KVUSA makes a difference in students lives beyond demographics, and the program is more consequential for media use and discussion than for cognition, opinion formation, and activity. However, media use and discussion provide motivation and competence for the other aspects of political involvement.

Kids Voting, consequently, can impact these other behaviors directly as well as indirectly through political communication.

Table 6: Summary of Kids Voting Effects One Year Later (% of Variance Explained)



| | |
|--------------|--|
| Demographics | |
| Kids Voting | |

EFFECTS OF CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

With influence of the *cumulative* curriculum evident in so many areas, we are left to wonder about aspects of KVUSA that make the most difference. We will highlight only the main findings

here to keep the discussion brief, but complete tables of results are included in the Appendix. The evaluation is based on partial correlations generated from regression equations that control not only for demographics but for the simultaneous influence of the other curriculum components. This in effect pits curriculum components against

each other to see which ones stand out. These curriculum components are probably symbiotic or interactive with respect to influence, and in this regard it might seem counter-intuitive to parse out distinct effects. From a pragmatic perspective, however, we recognize the importance of generating insight as to which activities are most effective, particularly for civic educators and administrators.

With respect to media use (Appendix Table 1), the activity of encouraging people to vote has the strongest impact as it is associated with attention to Internet news, attention to news about the economy, and encouraging parents to pay attention to news. Serving learning is also linked to increased attention to news on the Internet and encouragement of parental media use. Interestingly, encouragement of parent media use is the most influenced outcome variable among this array of media-use behaviors. As suggested by our model of "trickle-up influence," student-initiated discussion extends to efforts to influence parents. In this case we can see a kind of role reversal with children encouraging parents to become more civic-minded. We note finally that taking sides in debates at school is linked with *decreased* attention to general TV viewing (as opposed to TV news). As noted above, this is probably a positive outcome in terms of citizenship in light of Putnam's (2000) argument that the passivity of TV viewing soaks up time that could otherwise be used to build social capital.

In terms of discussion (Appendix Table 2), several curriculum components are positively associated with a variety of interpersonal communication outcomes. Teacher encouragement for expressing opinions, taking sides in a political debate, service learning, and encouraging people to vote are the most consequential of the Kids Voting components. These effects encompass more than just the frequency of discussion – they include several pro-social habits associated with deliberative democracy, such as the willingness to openly disagree and to listen to opponents, and the motivation to test out opinions in conversation. Among our various dimensions of civic growth, Kids Voting components have the strongest influence on

political discussion.

Specific elements of Kids Voting were less effective in predicting cognition, but all outcome variables were influenced by at least one component (Appendix Table 3). For example, voting with a parent was positively associated with increased knowledge, and frequency of class discussion was linked with salience of the economy as an important issue. Analyzing political ads, service learning, and encouraging people to vote led to active processing of political information. This outcome is normatively important in that it equips adolescents with skills needed to synthesize disparate ideas from news and from conversation. The ability to integrate information is also a central mediating variable that facilitates other civic outcomes such as knowledge, opinion formation, and confidence in voting decisions.

While the cumulative curriculum stimulated attitude formation in several areas, the component analysis revealed only a few instances of specific effects (Appendix Table 4). The totality of KV activities is perhaps required for a substantial benefit. However, analyzing political ads and encouraging people to vote did lead to increased opinion confidence. Meanwhile, service learning was linked with partisanship.

In the final area – civic behaviors and intentions – taking sides in a political debate and service learning wielded the most influence (Appendix Table 5). Both variables predicted increased support for conventional politics and participating in political activities on a school campus. The latter finding is of particular significance because it represents an impact on students' actions in the political arena a full year after exposure to the curriculum. Encouraging people to vote and voting with a parent in 2002 were positively correlated with intention to vote in 2004. This suggests that lesson plans and activities focusing on the act of voting itself are effective in fostering motivation for future voting.

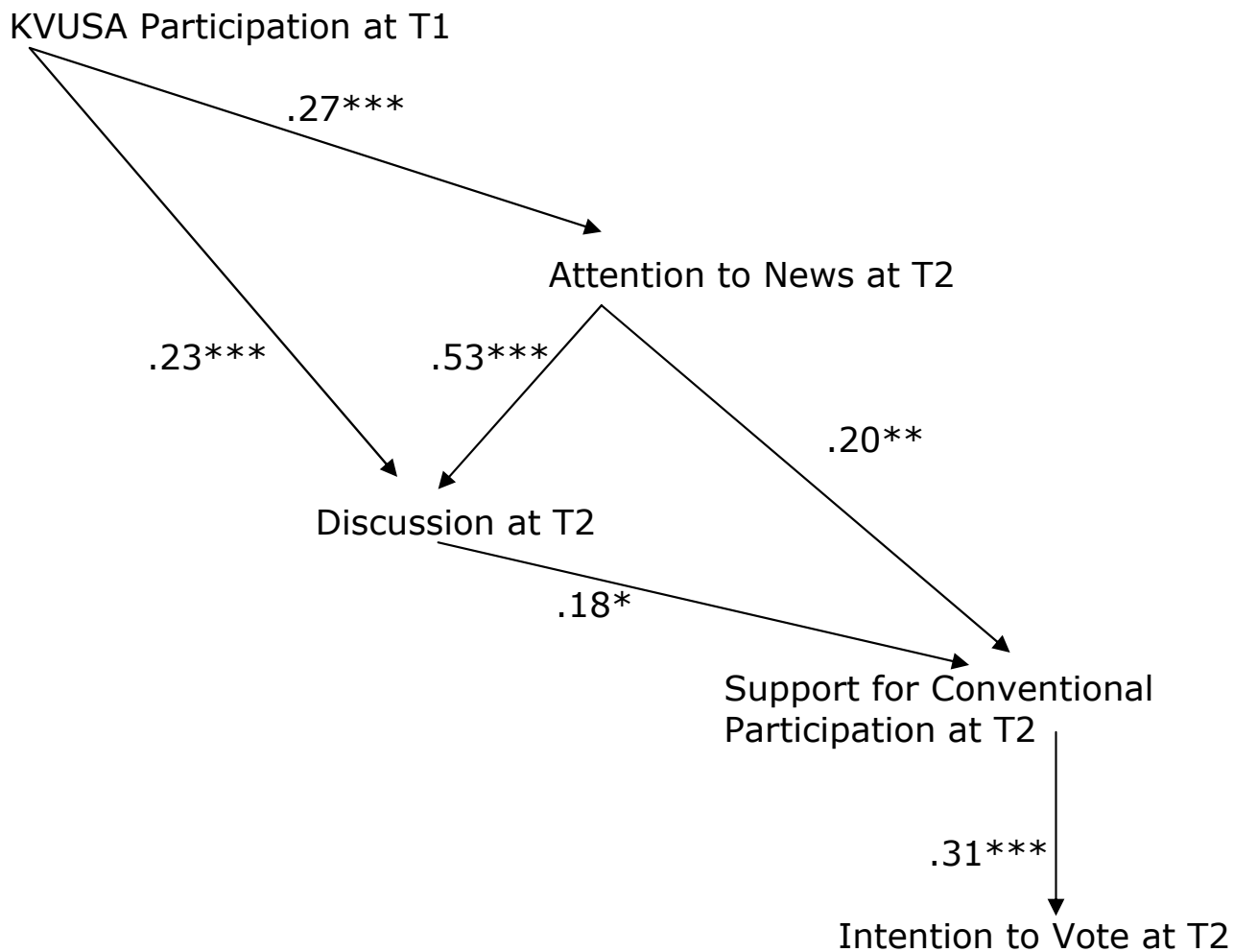
INDIRECT EFFECTS ON VOTE INTENTION

Next we map the process by which Kids Voting might contribute to voting intention as students inch closer to their first chance to cast an

official ballot. Prior research exploring the empirical dynamics of deliberative democracy offers guidance by suggesting that attention to news prompts increased discussion, which subsequently leads to opinion formation and finally to motivation for political participation (Kim, Wyatt, & Katz, 1999). It is our expectation that exogenous interventions

such as Kids Voting can serve as a triggering force, which sets in motion a process that results in greater intention to vote. Path modeling was used to test this premise. Figure 2 presents a "trimmed" path model in that only statistically significant paths are shown.² While not depicted in the figure, demographics are controlled for in the analysis.

Figure 2: Path Model Predicting Student Intention to Vote



* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

The sequence of this model is derived from theoretical assumptions about how deliberative democracy should work, and we are gratified to see here that the empirical results match up with this expectation. Kids Voting acts as a catalyst to initiate the overall process. By stimulating habits of news media use and discussion that endure over many months, the curriculum promotes opinions and orientations that seem to make voting more relevant and important for young adults. Students, in effect, appear primed to participate in the presidential election of 2004.

EFFECTS OF HIGH SCHOOL JOURNALISM

The curriculum works, in part, by asking students to gather information from various sources to evaluate campaign issues and candidates. This vetting of partisan perspectives and the integration of multiple perspectives are also the stuff of journalistic reporting. Thus, by analogy, we anticipate that writing and editing for a newspaper would lead to the same deliberative outcomes promoted by Kids Voting. To examine this possibility, we compared the means of the criterion variables for students with and without newspaper experience. Only 65 students from the T1 sample indicated that they wrote or edited for a campus paper, restricting the statistical power to detect differences, and this number decreased to 39 respondents in T2. Consequently, we present the findings for T2 as an exploratory analysis to illustrate the value of future research on high school journalism effects.

The single most impressive result involves size of discussion network. The difference in means for the number of conversation partners at T2 was significant at $p < .01$ despite the small sample size. This effect makes intuitive sense in that reporters of all ages must cultivate sources to share information about public affairs. Another finding apparently related to reporting experience entails active processing of political information. This difference in means was significant at $p < .05$. Those with journalism experience at T2 also possessed on average more opinion confidence ($p < .10$). Interestingly, they also tended to hold stronger perceptions of media bias ($p < .10$). This

final effect is probably a positive outcome in that it might reflect increased sophistication, from an insider's point of view, about how media portrays politics.

EFFECTS ON PARENTS

A small group of parents might volunteer for certain KVUSA activities, but generally parents are not exposed directly to the curriculum. However, we would not be surprised if many parents were influenced by the program even though they never heard of Kids Voting. This indirect influence, from school to student to parent, does not necessarily occur because of homework assignments that direct students to interview parents about politics. Instead, student-initiated discussion seems to reflect an intrinsic desire of students to share with parents what they learned in school or from media. Our prior studies confirm this theoretical inference. As shown in Table 2, the curriculum's influence on student-parent discussion persisted a year later. This is noteworthy in that many of the youth respondents would have graduated from high school; many would have moved into their own apartments or moved entirely out of town to attend college. And yet this discursive bond with parents survived.

Thus, we expect that KVUSA continued to influence parents through the medium of family discussion. Nevertheless, some parents might be exposed directly to some aspect of the curriculum by reading through student materials or participating in a community event sponsored by Kids Voting. To assess the long-term influence of Kids Voting on parents, a regression model was generated by first controlling for demographics, then assessing the influence of student curriculum exposure in 2002, and finally measuring the variance explained by student-parent discussion as measured in 2003. Table 7 reports the effects on parent media use one year later.

Table 7: Effects of Kids Voting and Student-Parent Discussion on Parent Media Use One Year Later (Regression)

| | Demographics | Kids Voting | Child-Parent Discussion | | | Total R ² |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------|----------------------|
| | R ² | R ² Change | Beta | R ² Change | Beta | |
| Media Use Outcomes | | | | | | |
| News attention | .04 | .00 | -.03 | .03* | .18* | .07* |
| Economic news attention | .05 [^] | .01 | -.13 | .01 | .08 | .07 [^] |
| General TV viewing | .09*** | .00 | -.07 | .00 | .03 | .09*** |
| Encouragement of child | .01 | .01 | .05 | .03* | .18* | .05* |

[^] p<.10; * p<.05; *** p<.001

Note: The first column reports the amount of variance accounted for by the following variables: ethnicity, gender, SES, religious group membership, and prior voting (1996, 2000, & 2002 elections), which were entered simultaneously in the first equation. The second column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to student exposure to Kids Voting, which was entered in the second equation. The third column reports the beta produced by the second equation. The fourth column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to student-parent discussion, which was entered into the third equation. The fifth column reports the beta produced by the third equation. The final column reports the total variance explained.

Kids Voting did not appear to directly influence parent news habits in the long run. Student-parent discussion, however, had a positive impact on parents' attention to news and encouragement of child media use. The second effect – coupled with the corresponding result of students encouraging parents – demonstrates that Kids Voting can function as a triggering force for reciprocal influences between parents and children. These findings have important implications for how we might think about the family's contribution to citizenship. Once energized by a civics curriculum, the family might take the form of a domestic

sphere in which household norms for civic competence persist (McDevitt & Kioussis, 2004). The reciprocal encouragement of media use is probably both a cause and a consequence of this emergent family norm.

KVUSA also failed to predict any of the parent discussion behaviors in terms of direct influence (Table 8). Student-parent discussion, however, was associated with increased discussion of parents with friends, willingness to openly disagree, and testing out opinions to see how others respond.

Table 8: Effects of Kids Voting and Student-Parent Discussion on Parent Interpersonal Communication One Year Later (Regression)

| | Demographics | Kids Voting | Child-Parent Discussion | | | Total R ² |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------|----------------------|
| | R ² | R ² Change | Beta | R ² Change | Beta | |
| Discussion Outcomes | | | | | | |
| Discussion with friends | .06* | .00 | -.03 | .04*** | .23*** | .10*** |
| Size of discussion network | .11*** | .00 | .02 | .00 | .04 | .11*** |
| Willingness to disagree | .06* | .00 | -.08 | .02* | .14* | .08* |
| Listening to opponents | .04^ | .00 | .00 | .01 | .10 | .05^ |
| Testing opinions for response | .05^ | .00 | .00 | .03** | .19** | .08** |
| Testing opinions to persuade | .04^ | .00 | .02 | .00 | .06 | .04^ |

^ p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Note: The first column reports the amount of variance accounted for by the following variables: ethnicity, gender, SES, religious group membership, and prior voting (1996, 2000, & 2002 elections), which were entered simultaneously in the first equation. The second column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to student exposure to Kids Voting, which was entered in the second equation. The third column reports the beta produced by the second equation. The fourth column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to student-parent discussion, which was entered into the third equation. The fifth column reports the beta produced by the third equation. The final column reports the total variance explained.

Shifting to parent cognition and opinions (Table 9), KVUSA did provide direct stimulation for partisan and ideological identity. These represent impressive and perhaps surprising outcomes for a school-based intervention aimed mostly at students. The findings help us to challenge the perspective that individuals are locked into stable patterns of civic involvement – or disengagement – once they reach adulthood.

Student-parent discussion was linked with increased knowledge and active processing. The knowledge finding is impressive given that 21 percent of the variance was already accounted for by the control variables. These two outcomes probably reinforce each other as processing

skills make knowledge acquisition easier, and a foundation of knowledge provides perspective for integrating new information. The point we want to emphasize is that this upward spiral of reinforcement appears to be stimulated by family discussion. This makes sense in light of prior studies showing that anticipation of future conversations motivates information seeking from news media (e.g., Kanihan & Chaffee, 1996).

Table 9: Effects of Kids Voting and Student-Parent Discussion on Parent Cognition and Opinion One Year Later (Regression)

| | Demographics | Kids Voting | Child-Parent Discussion | | | Total R ² |
|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------|----------------------|
| | R ² | R ² Change | Beta | R ² Change | Beta | |
| Cognition, Opinion Outcomes | | | | | | |
| Knowledge | .21*** | .00 | -.04 | .04*** | .21*** | .25*** |
| Issue salience | .03 | .00 | -.02 | .00 | -.03 | .03 |
| Active processing | .06* | .01 | .07 | .02* | .15* | .08* |
| Perceived media bias | .03 | .00 | .02 | .00 | .04 | .03 |
| Opinion confidence | .04 | .00 | .04 | .00 | .01 | .04 |
| Party identification | .08** | .02* | .14* | .00 | .01 | .10** |
| Ideological identification | .09*** | .03* | .14* | .01 | .09 | .13*** |

* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Note: The first column reports the amount of variance accounted for by the following variables: ethnicity, gender, SES, religious group membership, and prior voting (1996, 2000, & 2002 elections), which were entered simultaneously in the first equation. The second column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to student exposure to Kids Voting, which was entered in the second equation. The third column reports the beta produced by the second equation. The fourth column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to student-parent discussion, which was entered into the third equation. The fifth column reports the beta produced by the third equation. The final column reports the total variance explained.

Table 10: Effects of Kids Voting and Student-Parent Discussion on Parent Civic Behaviors and Intentions One Year Later (Regression)

| | Demographics | Kids Voting | Child-Parent Discussion | | Total R ² | |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------|
| | R ² | R ² Change | Beta | R ² Change | | Beta |
| Behavior & Intention Outcomes | | | | | | |
| Support of conventional politics | .12*** | .02* | .11 [^] | .00 | .06 | .14*** |
| Support of unconventional activism | .01 | .00 | .03 | .01 | .07 | .01 |
| Volunteering at school | .08** | .01 | .07 | .00 | .01 | .08** |
| Neighborhood activism | .02 | .01 | .10 | .01 | -.09 | .04 |
| Intention to vote in 2004 | .34*** | .02** | .14* | .00 | .04 | .36*** |

* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Note: The first column reports the amount of variance accounted for by the following variables: ethnicity, gender, SES, religious group membership, and prior voting (1996, 2000, & 2002 elections), which were entered simultaneously in the first equation. The second column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to student exposure to Kids Voting, which was entered in the second equation. The third column reports the beta produced by the second equation. The fourth column reports the amount of incremental variance attributed to student-parent discussion, which was entered into the third equation. The fifth column reports the beta produced by the third equation. The final column reports the total variance explained.

In terms of behavioral influence (Table 10), student exposure to Kids Voting was a marginal predictor of parents' support for conventional politics. Most notably, it prompted greater intention to vote. While the effect is again modest, this influence is worth pondering because the curriculum's direct impact is stronger for the parents than the students. And we should emphasize again that the control variables include prior voting along with a host of demographic factors that tend to predict participation. These controls, in fact, accounted for a hefty percentage of variance in parents' vote intention (34 percent). This demographic predictability is consistent with prior research, which has shown that once an individual reaches adulthood, her probability of voting remains fairly constant from election to election. And yet KVUSA seemed to have induced greater motivation to vote among the parent

respondents. Another intriguing twist is that student-parent discussion does not seem to play a major role in this outcome, as shown in Table 10. We are left to speculate as to the mechanism of influence. Perhaps parents' mere awareness of a child's participation in Kids Voting – without the need for discussion – creates a lasting impression about the value of voting. Adults might begin to realize that their duties as parents extend to citizenship and that they should provide good role models. However, we are cautious with such conjecture because this indicator only measures intention. We will assess the relationship between intention and actual voting in the final phase of this study when we examine county voting records following the 2004 election.

CONCLUSION

Taken together, the results show a consistent and robust influence of Kids Voting on students and parents after the passage of one year. We would not assess the magnitude of effects as remarkable across the board, but the overall pattern is impressive given the time between exposure and the T2 measurements and given the numerous demographics used as controls. In other words, we tried to account for as many competing influences as possible with respect to factors that predict political engagement. A particularly strong control, for example, is parent's history of voting or non-voting. This indicator, along with measures such as family SES and student grades, help us to interpret the strength of Kids Voting effects in relationship to other socializing influences.

In this light, we conclude that KVUSA makes a difference above and beyond what we could otherwise predict from social background. In 25 tests of curriculum influence, Kids Voting netted 21 effects, involving news media use, discussion, cognition, opinion formation, and civic participation. We are particularly pleased to show that the program resulted in the long-term acquisition of political knowledge. This is a key finding in terms of the internal validity of this study in that the knowledge test is not subject to respondents' selective recall or exaggeration. Because knowledge is correlated with the other indicators of civic involvement, we can be confident that the overall pattern reflects actual growth.

Deliberative Democracy. The knowledge effect also helps us to interpret the meaning of the long-term effects. The measure does not capture the absorption of textbook content but knowledge that is most likely obtained outside the classroom, via media use and discussion. Unlike in many evaluations of medical or behavioral interventions, we are not assessing the persistence of effects in a traditional sense. Certainly the curriculum had a beginning and ending point – from September to early November 2002 to coincide with the final lap of the election campaigns. But we are not measuring effects analogous to a half life or to a gradual decay. Instead, the nature of Kids Voting

effects involve the induction of civic habits that are intrinsic and self-perpetuating. Ideally these dispositions would take root in an individual and would grow with the passage of time. It is up to the individual to sustain growth by paying attention to news and initiating conversations.

From this perspective, we judge KVUSA as a successful catalyst for deliberative democracy, as students continued on toward a discursive path to citizenship after the end of the curriculum. Students became more skilled at holding political conversations by embracing many of the ideals for discourse espoused by theorists of deliberative democracy. For instance, the curriculum promoted dispositions such as the willingness to listen to opponents and feeling comfortable about challenge others. In other words, students are learning to partake in passionate – but civil and respectful – discourse. Also evident is a desire that is at the heart of deliberative democracy – motivation to validate opinions by testing them out in conversations and seeing if they are persuasive.

We also pursued a supplemental analysis of the effects of high school journalism. In a process that seems to parallel KVUSA effects, this experience increased the number of discussion partners while stimulating active processing of information and opinion formation.

Curriculum Components. The analysis of curriculum component effects can provide funding organizations and educators guidance regarding priorities for program implementation. KVUSA is, after all, a complicated and time-intensive endeavor and not every school district will be convinced that it has the time and resources to conduct the entire program. When considering the components separately, service learning and encouraging people to vote exerted the most consistent influence. Both activities allow students to interact with people outside the school, providing realistic opportunities for community involvement. Taking sides in debates and teacher encouragement of student opinion expression also stood out as effective elements of Kids Voting. Thus, peer discussion that allows for uninhibited and heartfelt expression is more beneficial for civic education than safe, subdued exchanges.

Prior evaluations have tended to show that the strongest KVUSA effects occur in the middle grades as young adolescents have reached a cognitive level in which they can appreciate the significance of citizenship (Chaffee et al., 1995). Older adolescents, on the other hand, are less likely to be enchanted by the pomp and symbolism of patriotic appeals. Our results seem to indicate, however, that high school students will respond when challenged to assert themselves as autonomous citizens in their communities. Students apparently build self esteem and a sense of civic efficacy by making a difference in service learning and in campaigns to get out the vote.

Effects on Parents. Our prior studies showed that Kids Voting stimulates parents' civic involvement indirectly, by prompting student-initiated discussion. Here we showed that these results endure. This phenomenon illustrates that political socialization should not be viewed as a process that begins and ends in childhood. The impression created by a great deal of political behavior research is that an individual is either recruited for active citizenship early in life or that person is relegated to civic apathy throughout adulthood (e.g., Brady et al., 1995). This is the demographics as destiny view of citizenship, and while this view is troubling in terms of democratic philosophy, it is the reality of social science research. Or is it? We have validated instead a model of second-chance citizenship in which parents increase their political involvement due to their children's participation in Kids Voting.

The Final Test. As we contemplate the meaning of the overall influence of KVUSA, it strikes us how far we have ventured from the traditional indicators of civic instruction, such knowledge of textbook content. And this expansive view of civic learning makes sense given the mission of the public school system to promote citizenship in social realms that extend beyond the classroom. In this sense, the institution of Kids Voting is perhaps most valuable to foundations and to educators as a heuristic for imagining what a school can accomplish as a learning environment that diffuses to other spheres. In this report and in previous reports, we have found that Kids Voting

effects are detectable at the following levels:

- *Individual student*: e.g., media use, knowledge
- *Individual parent*: e.g., media use, knowledge
- *Student-parent dyad*: e.g., discussion
- *Family*: e.g., norm of encouragement to use news media
- *Community/culture*: e.g., expanded discussion networks

As we look ahead to the third wave of interviews this fall, we will keep in mind that the youth respondents were juniors and seniors when first interviewed in 2002. Some will have left home to attend college or to enter a trade; some might have gotten married. Virtually all members of this cohort would have graduated from high school. With these major life decisions as a backdrop, we will see whether Kids Voting USA makes a difference in shaping their civic lives as they leave childhood behind.

NOTES

1. We did not include general TV viewing in the illustration because the lack of Kids Voting influence is probably a positive outcome, as we discussed.

2. For this analysis, media use and interpersonal discussion indices were created. The items for the media use index were attention to news about politics and attention to news about the economy ($r = .45$, $p < .001$). The items for the discussion index were student-parent discussion frequency, student-peer discussion frequency, and frequency of discussing the economy with others ($\alpha = .73$).

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APPENDIX: ITEM WORDING & CODING FOR MEASURES

Student Demographics

These measures were assessed during the first year of data collection (T1).

Grade Level

A single item determined year in school:

What grade are you in at school? Coded: 11th=1, 12th=2.

Grades Earned

A single item measured grades received in school.

Would you say your grades are mostly A's, B's, C's or D's? mostly A's=4, mostly B's=3, mostly C's=2, mostly D's=1.

Gender

A single item determined gender.

What is your gender? female=1, male=2.

Ethnicity

An item asked about ethnic background.

Of what ethnic group do you consider yourself? Hispanic (including Chicano and Spanish), Native American, African American, Asian, and other= dummy 1; white=dummy 2.

Religious Group Membership

One item asked about membership in religious organizations.

Are you a member of a religious group or club?" no=0, yes=1.

Parent Demographics

Gender, ethnicity, and religious group membership were identical to the student measures. Data for these measures were also assessed at T1.

SES

A two-item scale measured family socioeconomic status based on the parent's report of income and education. We standardized the coded values for each item and summed the scores.

For statistical purposes, we need to estimate household income before tax. Indicate the category that fits you. less than \$15,000=1, \$16,000 to \$25,000=2, \$26,000 to \$40,000=3, \$41,000 to \$60,000=4.

Indicate your level of formal education completed. some high school=1, graduated from high school=2, some college=3, graduated from college=4, attended graduate school=5.

The correlation is .36 ($p < .001$).

Prior Voting

A summed, three-item scale assessed frequency of prior voting.

Did you vote in this year's election (2002)? Coded no=0, yes=1.

Did you vote in the 2000 presidential election between Al Gore and George W. Bush? no, don't recall=0, yes=1.

Did you vote in the 1996 presidential election between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole?

The alpha is .79.

Student Exposure to Kids Voting at T1

The questionnaire items are provided earlier in the report. For the first two questions, students used a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "never" and 5 meaning "very often." Students then answered "yes" or "no" to the remaining questions. These items were coded as yes=1 and no=0. We also asked students, with a single item, to recall how often they participated in these activities in prior grades: Please recall what you did in previous grades. How many of the activities just mentioned did you participate prior to this year? Coded: none=0, 1-2=1, most=2, all or nearly all of them=3.

We combined the eleven items to create a composite measure of curriculum influence. Cronbach's alpha for the scale is .63.

Student & Parent Indicators of Civic Involvement at T2

The following variables, measured during the second year, were identical or nearly identical for students and parents:

Attention to Political News

A single item was used. Respondents answered with a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "none" and 5 "a great deal."
How much attention do you pay to news about politics?

Attention to News about the Economy

A single item was used; respondents answered with the same 1-to-5 scale.
How much attention do you pay to news about the economy?

General TV Viewing

For this single-item measure, we used the original number provided by respondents.
On average, how many hours per day, if any, do you watch TV?

Encouragement of Media Use

For this single-item measure, the options and coding were as follows: not at all like me/not sure=1; somewhat like me=2; a lot like me=3.
I frequently encourage a parent to pay attention to news events.

Frequency of Discussion with Friends

Respondents answered using a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "never" and 5 meaning "very often."
How often did you talk about politics with your friends?

Size of Discussion Network

We used the original number provided by respondents for this measure.
How many friends do you have who like to talk about politics?

Willingness to Openly Disagree

A single item was used. Respondents answered with a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "never" and 5 meaning "frequently."
In conversations, how often do you openly disagree with people about politics?

Willingness to Listen to Opposing Views

A single item was used; respondents answered with the same scale.

How often do you listen to people talk about politics when you know that you already disagree with them?

Testing Opinions for Response

Respondents used the same scale for this item.

How often do you test out opinions in conversations to see how people might respond?

Testing Opinions to Persuade

Students and parents used the same scale for this item.

How often do you test out opinions in conversations to see if your views are persuasive?

Political Knowledge

For students, seven questions were used to create a summed scale. Answers were coded 0 for incorrect, 1 for don't know (DK), and 2 for correct.

Which party do you consider more liberal?

Which party is more in favor of tax cuts to help stimulate the economy?

Which party controls the U.S. House of Representatives?

Which party controls the U.S. Senate?

What is the party affiliation of General Wesley Clark?

What is the party affiliation of Richard Cheney?

What is the party affiliation of Howard Dean?

The alpha is .60.

For parents, the questions above were used along with the following:

Which party would you say is more in favor of school vouchers?

Which party is more in favor of reducing government regulations to help stimulate the economy?

What is the party affiliation of Tom Daschle?

The alpha is .72.

Salience of Economy as an Issue

A single question was used; respondents answered with a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "not important" and 5 meaning "very important."

How important is the issue of the economy?

Active Processing of Information

For students, four items comprised a summed scale. The response options and coding were as follows: not at all like me/not sure=1; somewhat like me=2; a lot like me=3.

When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased.

News about people running for office makes me wonder how they might change things.

When I hear news about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on.

When I join in political conversations, I find myself tying the arguments to ideas I had before.

The alpha is .67.

For parents, the items about people running for office and about conversations were dropped to improve reliability. The remaining items were correlated at .42 ($p < .001$).

Perceived Media Bias

For students, a three-item scale measured perception that news media are biased.
 How much bias is there in TV news?
 How much bias is there in newspapers you read?
 How much bias is there in Internet news?
 The alpha is .79.

For parents, the Internet news item was dropped to improve the reliability. The correlation for the remaining items is .60 ($p < .001$).

Confidence in Opinion

To assess degree of opinion confidence, respondents were initially asked, What best describes your feelings about the government's handling of the economy? Using a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "none" and 5 meaning "a great deal," they considered the following:
 How much confidence do you have in this opinion?

Partisan Identity

A single item measured whether a respondent identified with one of the major parties. Which of the following best represents your political beliefs? Response options and coding: Republican, Democrat=2; Independent, other=1.

Ideological Identity

One item assessed whether a respondent identified with a political ideology.
 Would you say you're liberal, conservative, moderate, neither, or are you not sure? Coded: liberal, conservative=2; moderate, neither, not sure=1.

Support for Conventional Politics

Three items were summed to create a composite measure. Respondents used a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "do not support" and 5 meaning "strongly support."
 Voting on a regular basis.
 Contributing money to a political party.
 Wearing a Republican or Democrat campaign button.
 The alpha is .69 for students and .60 for parents.

Support for Unconventional Activism

Six items were summed to create a composite measure. Respondents used the same response options.
 Confronting police in a protest.
 Participating in a boycott against a company.
 Refusing to wear clothes with corporate logos.
 Creating a Web site to embarrass a corporation.
 Trespassing on private land to protest the cutting down of ancient forests.
 Refusing to pay taxes in order to protest a government policy.
 The alpha is .71 for students and .68 for parents.

Intention to Vote

Respondents were asked how well the following statement described them:
 I DEFINITELY plan to vote in the 2004 presidential election. Coded: not at all like me/not sure, DK=1; somewhat like me=2; a lot like me=3.

Student-Only Measures of Civic Involvement at T2

Attention to News on the Internet

Respondents used a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "none" and 5 meaning "a great deal."
How much attention do you pay to news on the Internet?

Frequency of Discussion with Parents

A single item was used. Students answered with a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "never" and 5 meaning "frequently."
How often do you talk about politics with your parents?

Challenging Parents

Students answered with a 1-to-5 scale with 1 meaning "never" and 5 meaning "frequently."
How often do you express opinions to challenge a parent?

Participation in Political Activities

We used a "branching question" to first identify whether a respondent was still a student in high school or a student in college. If so, the student was asked:
At your campus this year, have you participated in any political activities such as protests or demonstrations? Coded: yes=1, no=0.

Volunteering

A single item measured political volunteering.
Have you volunteered this year for any political organizations or causes? The same coding was used.

Parent-Only Measures of Civic Involvement at T2

Volunteering at School

Have you volunteered at a school within the last year? The same coding was used.

Neighborhood Activism

Have you gotten together informally with others to try to deal with a neighborhood problem or a community issue? The same coding was used.

Appendix Table 1: Effects of Kids Voting Components on Student Media Use One Year Later (Partial Correlations)

| | Curriculum Components | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|--|
| | Teacher encouragement to express opinions | Taking sides in debates | Analyzing political cartoons | Analyzing political ads | Service learning | Working at polling sites | Encouraging people to vote | Family homework assignments | Vote with parent | |
| Attention to political news | .09 | .10 | .00 | .11 | .07 | .00 | .06 | .00 | -.01 | |
| Attention to news on the Internet | .03 | .00 | .03 | .01 | .12 [^] | -.11 | .18** | -.01 | -.02 | |
| Attention to news about the economy | .04 | .06 | .00 | .04 | .05 | .03 | .19** | -.02 | -.01 | |
| General TV viewing | .01 | -.12 [^] | .04 | -.09 | -.04 | .05 | -.06 | .06 | -.08 | |
| Encourage parent to pay attention | -.07 | -.04 | -.01 | .06 | .22*** | -.14* | .14* | .07 | -.05 | |

[^] p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Note: The partial correlations are generated from a regression equation that first controls for the following variables: ethnicity, year in school when exposed to Kids Voting in 2002, grades earned, gender, religious group membership, parent SES, and voting history of parent.

Appendix Table 2: Effects of Kids Voting Components on Student Discussion One Year Later (Partial Correlations)

| | Curriculum Components | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-----|
| | Teacher encouragement to express opinions | Taking sides in debates | Analyzing political cartoons | Analyzing political ads | Service learning | Working at polling sites | Encouraging people to vote | Family homework assignments | Vote with parent | |
| Discussion with parents | .08 | .13 [^] | .09 | -.01 | .07 | .16* | .00 | .11 | -.05 | .05 |
| Discussion with friends | .05 | .12 [^] | .15* | -.05 | .04 | .10 | -.10 | .14* | .09 | .05 |
| Size of discussion network | .07 | .05 | .11 [^] | .00 | .05 | .08 | -.04 | .19** | .16* | .02 |
| Willingness to openly disagree | .07 | .12 [^] | .14* | -.04 | .06 | .19** | -.05 | .11 | .03 | .09 |
| Listening to opponents | .00 | .14* | .11 | -.01 | .07 | .07 | -.01 | .10 | -.01 | .05 |
| Testing out opinions for response | -.03 | .03 | .08 | .09 | .04 | .17* | .06 | .18** | -.03 | .06 |
| Testing out opinions to persuade | -.01 | -.01 | .15* | .04 | .04 | .19** | -.01 | .13 [^] | -.02 | .02 |
| Expression to challenge parents | .03 | -.04 | .17* | -.08 | -.01 | .04 | .04 | .22** | .00 | .02 |

[^] p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Note: The partial correlations are generated from a regression equation that first controls for the following variables: ethnicity, year in school when exposed to Kids Voting in 2002, grades earned, gender, religious group membership, parental SES, and voting history of parent.

Appendix Table 3: Effects of Kids Voting Components on Student Cognitions One Year Later (Partial Correlations)

| | Curriculum Components | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| | Teacher encouragement to discuss election in class | Teacher encouragement to express opinions | Taking sides in debates | Analyzing political cartoons | Analyzing political ads | Service learning | Working at polling sites | Encouraging people to vote | Family homework assignments | Vote with parent |
| Knowledge | -.02 | .10 | .08 | .09 | .00 | .05 | .04 | .03 | .01 | .12 [^] |
| Issue salience | .17* | .11 | .07 | -.02 | .01 | .10 | .04 | .06 | -.06 | .07 |
| Active processing | .09 | .07 | .10 | -.07 | .20** | .19** | -.06 | .15* | -.15* | .02 |

[^] p<.10; * p<.05; ** p<.01

Note: The partial correlations are generated from a regression equation that first controls for the following variables: ethnicity, year in school when exposed to Kids Voting in 2002, grades earned, gender, religious group membership, parent SES, and voting history of parent.

Appendix Table 4: Effects of Kids Voting Components on Student Political Opinions One Year Later (Partial Correlations)

| | Curriculum Components | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| | Discussing election in class | Teacher encouragement to express opinions | Taking sides in debates | Analyzing political cartoons | Analyzing political ads | Service learning | Working at polling sites | Encouraging people to vote | Family homework assignments | Vote with parent |
| Perceived media bias | -.02 | .05 | -.01 | .07 | .11 | .09 | .00 | .07 | .02 | .01 |
| Confidence in opinion | .00 | .01 | .03 | -.02 | .13 [^] | -.13 [^] | .03 | .12 [^] | -.01 | .10 |
| Partisanship | .02 | .08 | -.04 | .09 | -.09 | .12 [^] | -.04 | -.01 | .04 | .08 |
| Political ideology | -.06 | .10 | .09 | .04 | -.01 | .00 | -.09 | .02 | .09 | .01 |

[^] p<.10

Note: The partial correlations are generated from a regression equation that first controls for the following variables: ethnicity, year in school when exposed to Kids Voting in 2002, grades earned, gender, religious group membership, parent SES, and voting history of parent.

Appendix Table 5: Effects of Kids Voting Components on Student Civic Behaviors and Intentions One Year Later (Partial Correlations)

| | Curriculum Components | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| | Discussing election in class | Teacher encouragement to express opinions | Taking sides in debates | Analyzing political cartoons | Analyzing political ads | Service learning | Working at polling sites | Encouraging people to vote | Family homework assignments | Vote with parent |
| Support for conventional politics | .10 | -.01 | .12 [^] | -.01 | -.08 | .13 [^] | -.03 | .02 | -.01 | .06 |
| Support for unconventional activism | .01 | .02 | .03 | -.04 | .01 | .06 | .03 | .10 | .01 | .02 |
| Participated in political activities | -.03 | .04 | .16* | -.01 | .05 | .12 [^] | .03 | -.03 | .03 | .01 |
| Volunteered for organizations | .01 | .01 | .02 | .04 | .07 | .05 | .02 | .10 | -.04 | .10 |
| Intention to vote in 2004 | .06 | -.09 | .05 | .00 | .00 | .04 | -.02 | .13 [^] | .01 | .13 [^] |

[^] p<.10; * p<.05

Note: The partial correlations are generated from a regression equation that first controls for the following variables: ethnicity, year in school when exposed to Kids Voting in 2002, grades earned, gender, religious group membership, parent SES, and voting history of parent.

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