

## RESEARCH ROUNDUP

The Research Roundup column highlights recent research findings commissioned or generated by CIRCLE. Also included is an update on new CIRCLE products such as Fact Sheets, Recommended Research Articles, Recent Research Abstracts, Literature Reviews, and Data Sets.

### TRUST AND YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

A new CIRCLE Fact Sheet by Judith Torney-Purta, Wendy Klandl Richardson, and Carolyn Henry Barber of the University of Maryland explores the question of whether young peoples' trust in a political system, schools, or fellow citizens influences their civic and political participation. The Fact Sheet, "Adolescents' Trust and Civic Participation in the United States", uses data collected in 1999 from the IEA Civic Education Study of 14-year-olds and compares trust levels among young people in the United States, Columbia, Bulgaria, and England.

Of the four countries examined, students in the United States were found to be most trusting of the political system (courts, legislative body, and political parties) but least trusting of people and schools. Additionally, the fact sheet looked at whether students who belong to voluntary organizations were more trusting. Simply belonging to a voluntary organization seems to be only part of the answer for increasing trust. Students surveyed showed higher levels of trust in schools when they felt confident in the voluntary organization's ability to affect change within the school.

Graph 1 illustrates the differences in average levels of trust in the government (as measured by the composite score) between students who reported low and high levels of participation in organizations and in learning about the community, as well as students who had a positive view of the value of student participation in schools.

Additionally, the researchers looked at whether trust relates to students' expectations about future civic participation. They found that trust was just one of many predictors of future participation. Reading the newspaper regularly, learning about voting at school, and discussing politics with their parents all seemed to influence whether a young person expected to participate politically and civically as an adult.

For more information on how trust relates to civic engagement please see "CIRCLE Working Paper 17: Adolescents' Trust and Civic Participation in the United States: Analysis of Data from the IEA Civic Education Study" by Dr. Torney-Purta and her colleagues. Both the Fact Sheet and Working Paper can be downloaded from CIRCLE's Web site at [http://www.civicyouth.org/research/areas/youth\\_attit.htm](http://www.civicyouth.org/research/areas/youth_attit.htm)

**GRAPH 1: AVERAGE TRUST IN SCHOOLS FOR UNITED STATES STUDENTS WHO HAVE LOW OR HIGH LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS.**

