# Building Students into Citizens

C+ +V+ +X



### WHY CIVIX?



**Democracy is under threat around the world.** From the spread of false and misleading information, to declining trust in politicians and media, and poisoned online discourse, democratic countries face significant challenges that require immediate attention and action.

A healthy and robust democracy demands an informed and committed citizenry that understands the value of our political system, and how to act within it. Being able to evaluate claims and sources has become an essential skill of citizenship in the digital age.

We need a concerted effort that allows all of us to work together to tackle these issues. At CIVIX we believe addressing issues should start at a young age – and within schools – so that all young people develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills to become active and informed citizens.

### **WHO WE ARE**



**C** \* **V** \* **X** is a registered charity dedicated to strengthening democracy through citizenship education for school-aged youth.

Our vision is a strong and inclusive democracy where all young people are ready, willing, and able to participate.

Since 2003, CIVIX has provided authentic, non-partisan learning opportunities to help more than 5 million students in 12,000 schools across Canada develop the habits of active and informed citizenship.

# **OUR HISTORY**

In 2002, CIVIX founders, Taylor Gunn and Lindsay Mazzucco initiated a civic education program to teach kids about democracy and voting through a hands-on experience that culminates in a vote on the real candidates. With a handful of staff, they ran the first "trial" Student Vote in parallel with the 2003 Ontario Provincial election, engaging more than 800 schools and 300,000 students.

Encouraged by the results, they began to expand their network across the country, offering the parallel election program in other jurisdictions. Student Vote soon became a meaningful tool for Canadian teachers as they delivered curriculum on democracy and the electoral process.

Recognizing that democratic engagement goes beyond voting, the team began exploring opportunities to grow its programming beyond elections. In 2011, Student Vote merged with Operation Dialogue, a citizenship initiative founded by the late Warren Goldring of AGF Management. Operations were consolidated in 2013 and the organization was re-named CIVIX.



# **STUDENT VOTE**

#### **Practice Makes Perfect**

The program has four key steps:



**School registration:** The program is open to all schools and there is no cost to participate.



**Distribution of materials:** Registered schools are supplied with print and online learning resources, posters and election supplies.



**Campaign activities:** Students learn about government and democracy, research the parties and candidates, and discuss the election with family and friends.



**Student Vote Day:** Students take on the roles of election workers and coordinate a vote on the official election candidates.



"The best part of Student Vote is watching students become excited about what they're learning. They follow and engage in campaigns, think critically about what the candidates are promising and learn about the issues affecting their communities."

Alisha Mohammed, Educator

### **STUDENT VOTE: FEDERAL GROWTH**



### **STUDENT VOTE: PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL STATISTICS**

Below is a summary of the best participation statistics in each province and territory.



# **STUDENT VOTE: QUEBEC**

#### **Increased Participation in Quebec**

With a \$1 million donation from the Rossy Family Foundation in 2017, CIVIX opened its Montreal office with the goal of increasing participation in all programming.



#### **Election Results Comparison**

After each election, the results are shared publicly and with media for broadcast and publication.

	2019 FEDERAL RESULTS				2015 FEDERAL RESULTS			
	STUDENT VOTE		GENERAL ELECTION		STUDENT VOTE		GENERAL ELECTION	
Party	Vote %	Seats	Vote %	Seats	Vote %	Seats	Vote %	Seats
Liberal	22%	109	33%	157	38%	226	<b>39%</b>	184
Conservative	25%	92	34%	121	<b>26%</b>	70	32%	99
NDP*	25%	101	16%	24	20%	40	20%	44
	18%	27	7%	3	12%	4	3%	1
<b>V</b> BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS	1%	12	8%	32	1%	0	5%	10

#### **Program Outcomes**

An independent evaluation commissioned by Elections Canada in 2015 confirmed the positive impact of the program on student knowledge and understanding of Canadian politics and elections, on their interest and confidence in discussing politics, and on their future intention to vote.



99% of educators said they would like to participate in Student Vote again.



9 out of 10 students said they believe that it is our responsibility as citizens to vote in elections.





9 out of 10 parents said the program gave their family an opportunity to learn more about politics.

## **VOTO ESTUDIANTIL COLOMBIA**

This year, CIVIX organized its second Voto Estudiantil Program in **Colombia**, coinciding with the **2019 regional and municipal elections**. The project took place in **209 schools** schools in the cities of Bogotá, Buenaventura, Cali, Cartagena and Medellin, and saw **76,245** students cast a Voto Estudiantil ballot.



### **DEMOCRACY BOOTCAMP**

#### **Building Ambassadors for Democracy**

Democracy Bootcamp is a professional development conference for teachers designed to improve their democratic engagement and delivery of CIVIX programming. By sharing an insider's look at campaigns, exploring research and trends, and introducing new tools for citizenship, Democracy Bootcamp **enhances teachers' capacity and commitment to civic education**.

Between February and August of 2019, CIVIX trained 1,750 teachers, with 17 conferences organized across the country.



I thought this was by far the best PD I have ever attended. You provided us with excellent resources and speakers. It was so professionally organized with experts in the field.

Diana Letra, Educator

## **STUDENT BUDGET CONSULTATION**

#### **Exploring the Dollars Behind Democracy**

The Student Budget Consultation is a civic education and financial literacy initiative that directly involves students in the government budget consultation process.

Students learn about the government's **revenues and expenditures** and discuss important political issues and offer their insights on the upcoming budget. Those opinions are recorded in a survey and the results are presented to high level officials within the Department of Finance, including the Minister of Finance or the Parliamentary Secretary, as well as all Members of Parliament.

CIVIX has conducted eight Student Budget Consultations, engaging more than 40,000 students throughout the country.





The Student Budget Consultation is by far the best tool for helping students understand the importance of the budget and how governments attempt to prioritize spending.

Anonymous educator

### **REP DAY**

#### **Bringing Question Period to the Classroom**

Rep Day connects students with their elected representative at the federal or provincial level for a **meaningful discussion about their concerns and interests**. The purpose of the project is to help youth develop a better understanding of and sense of trust in the people and institutions within our democracy, and foster respectful political discourse.

Since 2013, CIVIX has conducted Rep Days annually and the participation of elected officials continues to grow.







# **DIGITAL LITERACY INITIATIVE**

#### Information Literacy Skills for the Digital Age

CIVIX has developed a variety of classroom-ready resources to help students recognize the standards of fact-based journalism, develop an appreciation for journalism and traditional media, and identify whether a claim or source is credible.

The materials are available throughout the school year and many of the activities have been incorporated into the Student Vote teacher guides to ensure widespread impact.



Key survey findings:

**91%** said the resources and activities improved their students' **media literacy skills** 

- 89% said the resources and activities improved their students' ability to determine fact from fiction online
- 82% said the resources and activities enhanced their students' understanding of journalism's role in democracy



CIVIX is a registered charity. Registered Charitable #: 873006829RR0001

O @civix\_canada @studentvote | civix.ca | 1-855-488-8775
@civixquebec @voteetudiant | civix.quebec | 1-833-503-3366

Francis LeBlanc – Chair

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**Robert Asselin** Senior Director, Public Policy, Blackberry

Megan Beretta Policy Analyst, Canadian Digital Service **Rachel Curran** Senior Associate, Harper & Associates

**Peter Donolo** Vice-Chairman, Hill+Knowlton Strategies Canada

**Dr. Elizabeth Dubois** Assistant Professor of Communication, University of Ottawa **Michelle Mackenzie** Founding Member and Principal, The Associates Consulting Group

**Bob Medland** Former CFO, CSNX

Kathleen Monk Principal, Earnscliffe Strategies