The Congressional Academy:
Building High School Students' Civic Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

What is the Congressional Academy?

The Congressional Academy is an intensive summer institute for civics and American history led by the Center for Civic Education. Based on the *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* curriculum, the Academy brings together diverse high school students and their teachers from across the country to learn about American history and government. The Academy is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Georgetown University's Civics Education Research Lab (CERL) evaluated the program's effectiveness.

Political Knowledge

- In just two weeks, **knowledge of history and civics grew by 16%** for all students
- **High-need students' knowledge grew by 20%**
- **Political knowledge** leads to **political efficacy**

"I think I trust our government a bit more now that I understand better how it works."
– 2019 Academy Student

Civic Skills

- **77%** of students felt they could **research a problem,** up from 67% pre-Academy
- **50%** of students would **attend a community meeting** post-Academy, up from 39%

"Learn as much as you can, because you never know what area might come in handy if you want to run for mayor or be a senator"
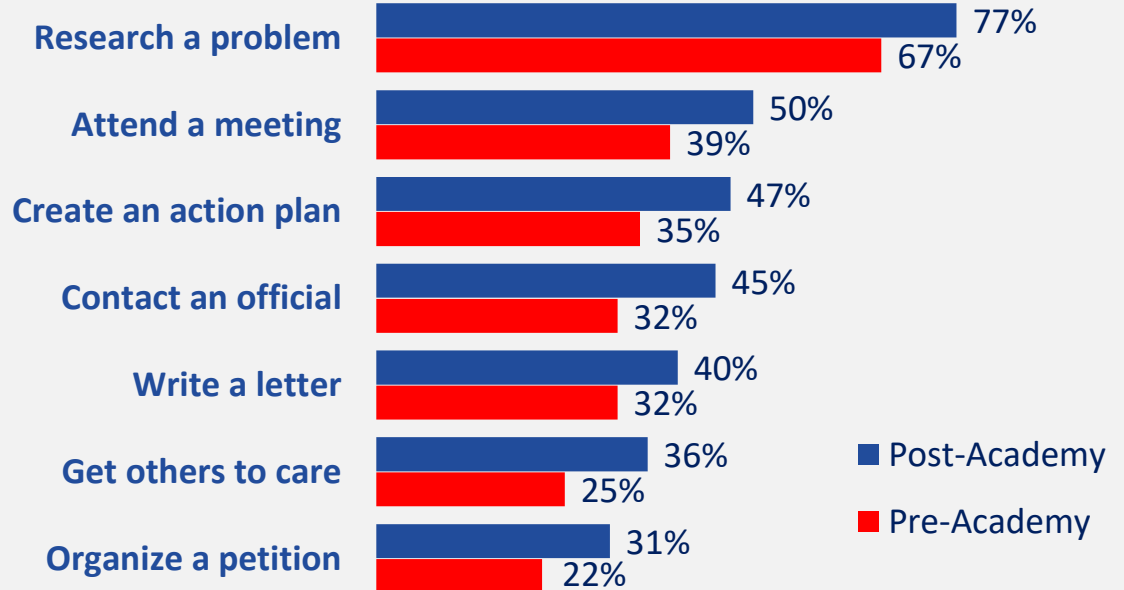*– 2019 Academy Student*

Civic Dispositions

- After the Academy, **89%** of students felt it was their **civic duty to vote**
- The proportion of high need students interested in a **career in government rose from 57% to 71%**
- **40% of high-need students** said they were **interested in running for office**, up from 26% before the Academy

"I most enjoyed interacting with students from different backgrounds and getting to know the reasoning behind their different views. The most important takeaway...is to be educated on a topic before making decisions and to always listen, especially when you don't agree." —2019 Academy Student

Civic Skills

I Can!

Civic Skill	Post-Academy	Pre-Academy
Research a problem	77%	67%
Attend a meeting	50%	39%
Create an action plan	47%	35%
Contact an official	45%	32%
Write a letter	40%	32%
Get others to care	36%	25%
Organize a petition	31%	22%

■ Post-Academy
■ Pre-Academy

Civic Dispositions

Students Gained Civic Dispositions

VOTE

Disposition	Pre-Academy	Post-Academy
Value Community Engagement	51%	63%
Value Civil Political Discussion	41%	60%
High Political Interest & Attention	33%	50%
Interest in Government Service	29%	43%
Strong Trust in Government	31%	42%
High Civic Duty	32%	37%

■ Pre-Academy ■ Post-Academy