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Successful Practices for High School Poll Worker Programs

Capstone Paper

In Partial Fulfillment of the Certificate in Election Administration
The Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs
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Caryn Scheel

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SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES

for High School Poll Worker Programs



Introduction

Throughout most of the United States, high school students work as part of the team running polling places and serving voters on Election Day. Employing student poll workers has become an important strategy election administrators rely on to assist voters, while bringing age and ethnic diversity, familiarity with technology, and enthusiasm to the polling place. What these high school programs look like, however, varies greatly from state to state and even among jurisdictions within a state.

Goals and Motivations for High School Poll Worker Programs

High school students have been working in the polling place on Election Day since at least 1991, but more states began these programs in the early 2000s after passage of the Help America Vote Act of 2002. A part of this act sought to mobilize high school students, including home-schooled students, to participate in elections as nonpartisan poll workers across the United States. Many states passed laws setting the stage for more high school students to participate.

These programs are based on a variety of goals that focus both on the civic development of students and on the goals of elections administrators themselves. These goals are often intertwined.

Civic Development of Young People

Many election jurisdictions actively seek high school students as poll workers as part of their young voter engagement strategies and to promote civic engagement. The theory is that young people who understand how voting works are more likely to vote themselves when they are able, and early voters tend to be lifelong voters. Early civic engagement can lead to lifelong civic leadership.

Some state legislation, like that passed in Idaho in 2018, specifically outlines the reasons for engaging high school students in the process: “In order to provide for a greater awareness of the election process, the rights and responsibilities of voters and the importance of participating in the electoral process, as well as to provide additional members of precinct boards” (Idaho, 2018).

Because most states outline the conditions for students to be excused from school to work on Election Day, they recognize that there are educational benefits for young people to participate. In addition to learning about civics and government, students in the polling place are developing many of the public speaking, intergenerational teamwork, and problem-solving skills that schools value.

CIRCLE, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning at Engagement, at Tufts University, talks about civic education as a shared responsibility, with acceptable outcomes only when “all the relevant institutions invite, support, and educate young people to engage in civic life” (2013, 5). Student poll worker programs are unique in bringing together elections officials, educators, students, family members, and community members toward a shared goal. Additionally, the intensity of the polling place experience--often a 16-hour work day--becomes a memorable and meaningful civic opportunity. The characteristics of the experience as a whole very often meet high educational practice standards.¹

¹ See for example, the *Principles of Good Practice for Experiential Learning* <http://www.nsee.org/8-principles> and the *K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice*. <https://nylc.org/standards/>

Desire for Effective Poll Workers

Elections administrators, however, also have practical and programmatic reasons for recruiting high school poll workers: they often come with highly desirable attributes and skills. They are younger, usually of more diverse backgrounds, and in many jurisdictions (such as Chicago and Minneapolis) they are more likely to have second language skills and stronger technology skills than their adult poll worker counterparts.

Trustworthy and effective poll workers are vital to the successful management of elections. In addition to providing administrative expertise, poll workers also contribute to how voters view elections and their outcomes. As Thad Hall and colleagues write in their 2009 analysis of how poll workers shape public confidence in elections, “The people who apply the policy matter as much as the policy itself” (519). They found that voters who rate the quality of the poll worker as excellent are more likely to express more confidence in the process.

One way election administrators try to instill confidence is by recruiting poll workers who reflect the community of voters, and high school students often bring additional age and ethnic diversity. Called *descriptive representation*, the importance of perceived shared experience and identity for people of racial and ethnic minorities has been well documented, although it is less so for age. While some research has questioned the importance of descriptive representation of poll workers in terms of age and race (Burden and Milyo, 2013), the consensus is that this is an area ripe for more study. Indeed, recent analysis by researcher Bridgett King finds “descriptive representation can contribute to how legitimate citizens view the actions of bureaucrats . . . and encourage involvement in government (when there are more blacks in public institutions, the likelihood of involvement by blacks increases)” (2018).

Using data from the 2016 Survey of the Performance of American Elections, King found that for black voters, interacting with black poll workers resulted in greater confidence in the election. They were more likely to express greater confidence that their ballot, ballots across their local jurisdiction, and ballots across their state are counted accurately. She concludes that descriptive representation more than likely matters for other racial and ethnic groups who often do not see themselves reflected in government structures. Diverse poll workers can facilitate confidence in elections and in the legitimacy of their outcomes.

What We Know about High School Poll Workers

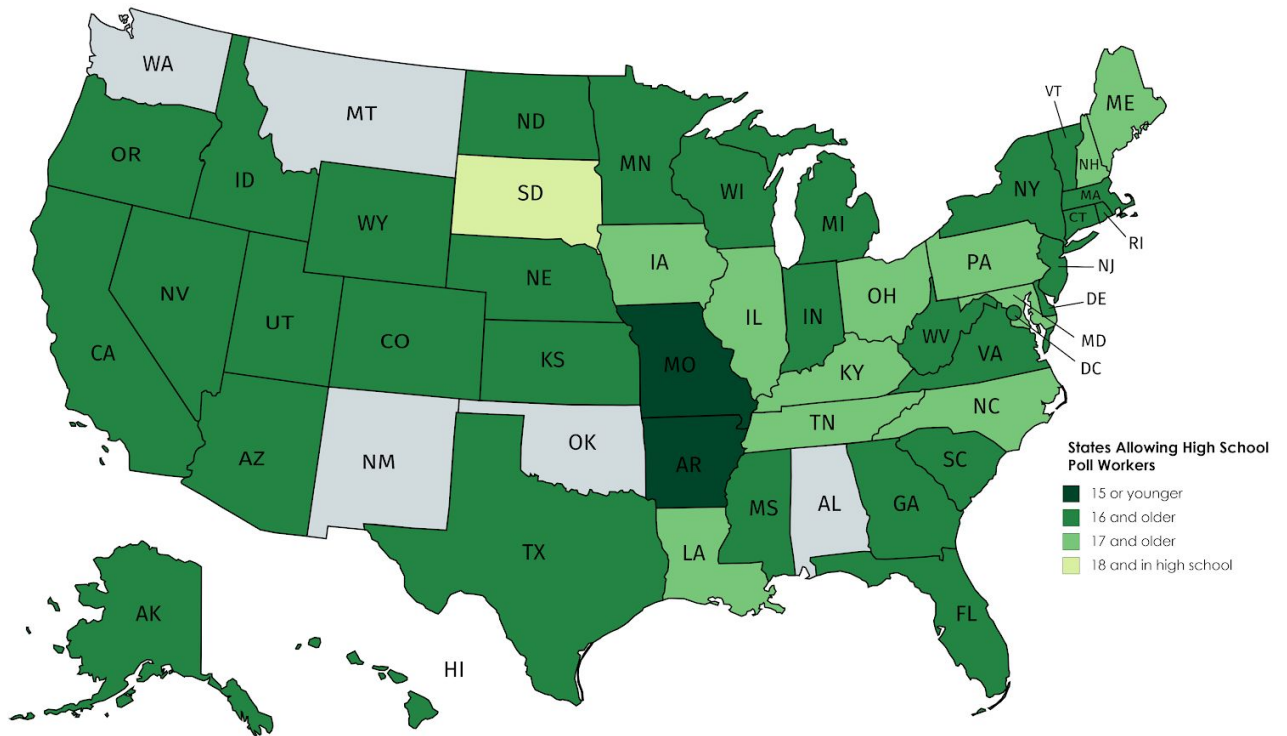
Legislation to allow high school poll workers is available in 45 states, Washington, D.C., and Guam (EAC, 2017). Washington state has no high school poll workers, given that it has turned to vote-by-mail elections. Other states, such as Montana, have had legislation allowing youth workers proposed year after year but have not been able to get it passed, according to the National Council of State Legislatures' database on election administration laws.

The most common age at which youth are allowed to work in the polling place is 16, although some states require students to be at least 17. South Dakota is alone in requiring high school students to be 18 before they are allowed to serve as a poll worker. Arkansas law doesn't set a minimum age but allows students under 18 to volunteer unpaid as an election page, and Missouri specifically allows students age 15-17.

Common restrictions states place on youth serving in the polling place include limiting the number who may serve in any one precinct, requiring a specific GPA or other academic approval, requiring them to volunteer or permitting a lower wage, and requiring parental permission. While these may be relatively low barriers to participation, their existence places an additional administrative barrier to election administrators in making sure that both the statutory requirements are met and that their policies and procedures protect the safety and privacy of minors and follow age-appropriate employment practices.

California seems to be the only state that does not require U.S. citizenship in order for high school students to work in the polls; permanent residents are also eligible.

STATES ALLOWING HIGH SCHOOL POLL WORKERS 2018²



Created with mapchart.net ©

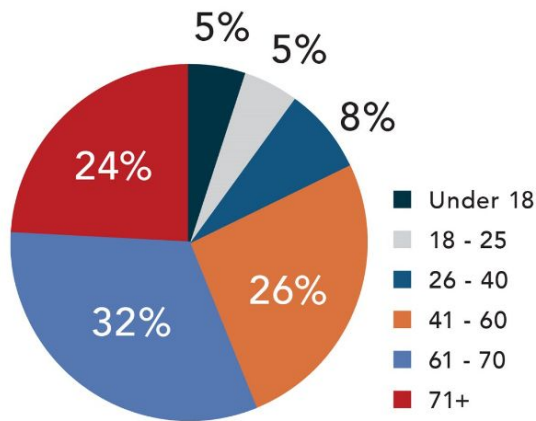
Data on high school poll workers can be difficult to find because it isn't tracked systematically, and many studies of poll workers don't include data specific to high school workers. In addition, the programs for recruiting, training, and retaining high schoolers are frequently not formally evaluated or reported on by election jurisdictions.

The Election Assistance Commission tracks poll worker data through its Election Administration and Voting Survey, and one of the measures it includes is age. In 2016, approximately 5 percent of poll workers in those jurisdictions reporting were under age 18 and about 5 percent were between the ages of 18 and 24 (EAVS 2016, p 3). Extrapolating from this data, these young poll workers comprise an estimated 52,440 high school

² Data drawn from the U. S. Election Assistance Commission (2017) *State-by-State Compendium Election Worker Laws and Statutes*. Additional data verified through state legislation scans.

students, assuming all of those under 18 and proportional share of those age 18-24 were in high school when they served.

EAVS 2016: Age of Poll Workers



Inclusive of jurisdictions that reported age data for their poll workers in 2016, nearly 10 percent of poll workers were aged 25 years and younger. At least five states exceeded this national average, including California where roughly a quarter of its poll workers were 25 and younger, as well as Delaware, Michigan, Ohio, and Washington, D.C., where between 10 and 14 percent of poll workers were 25 and younger in each state.

Two of the programs interviewed for this report, Minneapolis and Chicago, track self-reported ethnicity of student election workers, and for both programs, student poll workers are more diverse than the pool of adult election judges and more reflective of the voting age population.

Effects and Effectiveness of High School Poll Worker Programs

While the majority of states offer high school students opportunities to work in the polling place on Election Day, there is little peer-reviewed research available on the effects and effectiveness of these programs. Some programs, such as the Minneapolis Student Election Judge Program and the Mikva Challenge Student Election Judge Program in Chicago, conduct post-experience surveys of student poll workers. These provide self-reported assessments of both program satisfaction and how the programs have affected students' civic skills, beliefs, and behaviors, but they do not meet research standards. Many programs additionally collect Election Day performance evaluations on poll workers' effectiveness, including their high school participants. That information isn't necessarily analyzed in a systematic way to determine poll worker characteristics or overall effectiveness, but to identify workers who may need additional coaching or supports.



Student Election Judges attend training led by Mary Davis at South High School in Minneapolis in 2012.

Case Studies of Student Election Judge Programs

Because both election administration and education are government functions with very little federal control, high school poll worker programs vary greatly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. The age requirements, compensation, hours worked, types of tasks allowed, academic requirements, and administrative oversight vary from state to state. Counties and cities within a state conduct their programs differently as well. And likewise, different schools and school districts provide different levels of support for high school poll workers, ranging from merely excusing their absence on Election Day, to integrating the experience into a civics or AP government curriculum and requiring an academic product. Some jurisdictions connect their high school poll worker programs to other efforts to engage young people in voting and elections; others provide it as a stand-alone opportunity.

What follows is a series of four case studies outlining some of the various program structures and partnerships election administrators have developed to run an effective program.

Youth in the Booth, Franklin County Ohio

Coordinator: Deborah Koch

www.KidsVotingOH.org

Personal interview Dec. 1, 2017

Program structure: Administered by contracted nonprofit staff at Kids Voting Ohio

Student recruitment: Nonprofit staff in partnership with school staff

Training: High school students trained separately in high schools by nonprofit staff, combined with Destination Democracy curriculum to meet state civics education requirements

School role: Schools serve as partners who allows access to students and coordinating training

Student incentives: Students are paid the same rate as adults.



Franklin County high school student in the distinctive Youth @ the Booth assisted a voter in central Ohio.

In Ohio, youth may serve as election workers if they are a high school senior, at least 17 years old, a U.S. citizen, and county resident. The Franklin County student poll worker program is run in partnership between the Franklin County Board of Elections and Kids

Voting Ohio, with Kids Voting being contracted to handle the student recruitment and training. They receive about 700 student applications each year, and about 500 end up serving in the election.

Franklin County Board of Elections chose to partner with Kids Voting because the organization already had strong partnerships and relationships in the schools. With three Kids Voting staff coordinating, a team of 35 contract trainers offer combined training using Kids Voting's Destination Democracy curriculum and election judge training. Youth are trained to serve as machine judges in the polling place, rather than to take on all roles, but they receive the same pay level as adults (\$150 stipend in 2017). Both adult and youth workers are required to work the full day at the polls, typically from 5:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Students must also be willing to work at any Franklin County voting location, and are given the opportunity to opt out of working in a polling place located in a place of worship (because of religious reasons).

One of the challenges for Ohio is that the social studies curriculum sequences no longer complements the Youth in the Booth program. U.S. government has shifted to be taught in 11th grade rather than 12th, which makes serving in the polling place less of a curricular fit during the school year. As a result, the program has focused on building connections with school service clubs and National Honor Society. Teachers remain vitally important partners in making the program successful. They go above and beyond the classroom to make sure students are supported in this role.

Mikva Student Judge Program, Chicago

Coordinator: Meghan Goldenstein, Mikva Challenge

<http://www.mikvachallenge.org/mikva-student-judge-program/>

Personal interview Feb. 1, 2018

Program structure: Recruitment and support coordinated by contracted nonprofit staff with an elections department point person.

Recruitment: Teacher advisers receive a stipend for recruiting and supporting students.

Training: Board of Elections training specific for high school students.

School role: Recruit students and assist through the application process. Certify students meet the GPA requirements to serve.

Student incentives: Students are paid the same rate as adults. Some may also receive hours to fulfill the Chicago service-learning requirement.



Mikva Challenge aims to help young people lose their cynicism about politics and become active, informed citizens. The organization offers a variety of opportunities for youth to learn about elections through the student judge program, internships with political office holders and a campaign program that offers direct political participation experience.

Chicago Board of Elections contracts its high school poll worker program to Mikva Challenge, a organization founded on the premise that “youth voice and participation matter, and that our civic and political life will be stronger when youth participate and help shape their own destinies.” Like KidsVoting in Ohio, Mikva has strong relationships with schools in Chicago and has leveraged those relationships to streamline recruitment, by working with teachers who receive stipends to recruit students. Mikva seeks to place a high school student in each of the 2000 Chicago precincts. Approximately 2000 students apply each year, and roughly 1500 meet all the requirements to serve on Election Day.

In Illinois, high students must be U.S. citizens and a junior or senior with a 3.0/4.0 GPA to serve as a student judge. Chicago teachers coordinate recruitment in their respective schools. They spread the word about the program, help students fill out the online application, and track that parents or guardians fill out the required electronic permission form, that students attend the training, and that they are academically eligible.

About 30 trainings specifically for high school students are offered by the Board of Elections. In addition to teaching the mechanics of their work in the polling place, the training includes the history of voting in the United States, spelling out how in the early days renters, women, and people of color were denied the right to vote. Mikva staff frequently participate in the student training as well to provide Mikva t-shirts, help troubleshoot, and to step in and energize if needed. Mikva supplies teachers with the list of students who have successfully completed the required training, and the school principal must approve those students’ participation. Students receive \$40 for attending the training and \$150 for working on Election Day, but the training is unpaid if they do not serve.

Mikva conducts a post-election survey as part of its evaluation and program improvement efforts. Completing the survey is a requirement of the program. Mikva gathers student demographic data, feedback on that can be used to improve the procedures, and student self-reports of student civic skills, beliefs, and attitudes. They share these results with the Chicago Board of Elections, who works closely with them to monitor the program.

Mikva is also able to cross-promote its other youth programs to allow student judges opportunities to pursue deeper civic engagement, including working on campaigns for candidates competing in elections and interning in the offices of elected officials.

Student Poll Worker Program, Orange County, California

Coordinator: Espy Martinez, Orange County Registrar of Voters Office

<https://www.ocvote.com/volunteer/student-poll-worker-program/>

Personal interview Apr 3, 2017

Program structure: Administered by dedicated elections staff person with assistants to help process applications

Student recruitment: Elections staff in partnership with school staff.

Training: High school students participate in same training as adult team judges, but schools that recruit more than 25 students have the option of an on-site training at the school.

School role: Teacher advisors (generally government or social studies teachers) volunteer to promote the opportunities and assist students with fulfilling the requirements. Elections staff also promote the program top-down with school superintendents, principals, and other teachers to ensure robust recruitment.

Student incentives: Students are paid the same stipend as adult poll workers, potential to certify community service hours as well if students need them.



Orange County high school poll workers at a school election event.

Orange County, California, is the nation's fifth largest voting jurisdiction, recruiting approximately 10,000 poll workers for 1300 polling places for each countywide election. Approximately 2000 high school students serve as poll workers during a general election, and about 600-800 during a primary election. Roughly 40 percent of student poll workers are bilingual, mirroring the proportion of adult poll workers who are. In California, high school students who are at least 16, in good academic standing (at least 2.5/4.0 GPA), and either a U.S. citizen or permanent residents serve as poll workers.

Orange County recruits its high school poll workers through the county's high schools. Out of about 200 schools in the county, 50-60 schools actively participate in a given year. The Registrar office takes a multi-pronged approach to recruitment. Many schools have a dedicated teacher who volunteers to help coordinate the recruitment, application, and parent permission process, but the program also sends program packets out to school superintendents, principals, associated student body directors, and a number of social studies and other teachers at each school. Martinez emphasized the importance of this over-recruitment, saying that working with just one person is not a sustainable strategy. Teachers move to other schools or other roles, and a team at each school is more likely to have the passion to sustain and grow the program. In areas where recruitment is more difficult, the office has turned to the parent organizations to supplement recruitment.

Martinez says that unlike some jurisdictions, Orange County doesn't provide stipend incentives to teacher-coordinators. Instead, it offers on-site training to students at schools with more than 25 participants. About seven or eight schools each election take advantage of that offer. Like their adult counterparts, students have two options for training: a three-hour traditional training or a hybrid option that combines online training with hands-on practice session on the three weekends leading up to the elections. The hybrid option is the one most attractive to students. Returning student poll workers are able to complete all their required training online, like their adult counterparts.

Unlike some other jurisdictions, Orange County keeps a separate database of its student poll workers to ensure that information about minors remains private.

Orange County also runs another high school program through its Voter Outreach area. The My Ballot Student Election Program offers in-class instruction on the history of voting,

followed by a field trip to the ballot production facilities in Santa Ana, where they learn the complex process of ballot creation (design, vote target placement, ballot security, graphic design). The end result is a completed ballot for an upcoming election at their school (student council, homecoming, other). The county then sets up polling places at the school using Orange County voting machines and the student-designed ballots. Program participants tally the votes and certify a secure election.

My Ballot and the High School Poll Worker Program coordinate on recruiting students who are interested in civic engagement. They both participate in California's High School Voter Education Week, held annually during the last two weeks in April, which can help maintain connections with school partners during election off-years.

Minneapolis Student Election Judge Program

vote.minneapolismn.gov/judges/student-judge

Personal interview with Mary Davis, Jan. 28, 2018

Program structure: Administered by part-time, temporary elections staff dedicated to the program.

Student recruitment: Elections staff in partnership with school staff.

Training: High school students participate in same training as adult team judges.

School role: Teacher advisors volunteer to promote the opportunities and assist students with fulfilling the requirements.

Student incentives: Although state law allows a lower wage for high school student election judges, Minneapolis pays students the same rate as adults. A minimal number of students volunteer for documented service hours.



Minneapolis student election judges from Venture Academy participate in testing the usability of new instructions for judges on how to set up the electronic poll books station in the polling place.

In Minnesota, high school students age 16 and older who are U.S. citizens and have permission from their parents and the approval of the principal to be absent from school may serve as election judges. Minneapolis has had a Student Election Judge Program since 1991, and it has been a key component in building and sustaining a long-term corps of election workers. For primaries and municipal elections, Elections & Voter Services strives to place an average of two student election judges in each of its 132 precincts. In general elections, the goal is an average of three students per polling place.

The program is staffed by a dedicated seasonal program assistant who works with 17 district, charter, and private school partners to recruit students and help them complete the requirements to participate. The teacher-adviser within the school is typically a U.S. government or social studies teacher, but in some schools it might be the career development center or a service-learning coordinator. Some schools use the opportunity to integrate the experience into the curriculum, which students producing videos, presenting on voter registration to their peers, or other activities.

Student election workers have become vital in providing language accessibility in the polling place in Minneapolis. Minneapolis has identified 56 precincts that serve voters needing language assistance, and aims to staff those precincts with election workers who speak the desired languages, including ASL, Hmong, Oromo, Somali, and Spanish, and, to a lesser extent, Amharic, Russian, and Vietnamese.

In 2016, 13 percent of all election judges reported being bilingual, but 45 percent of student election judges were. Ninety percent of these students reported using their second language in the polling place on Election Day. Students who are bilingual serve in precincts with voters who may need assistance in those languages. While students are not specifically trained in interpreting, they provide a much-needed bridge to making the voting experience accessible to those who need language support. Bilingual students assist with Election Day registration, answering voter questions about the voting process, and assisting voters with low literacy skills in their preferred language. Minneapolis is seeing an increasing trend of family members of student election judges with language skills also stepping up to serve when they become eligible.

High school students were instrumental in helping with the introduction of electronic poll books. Making the move from paper rosters to electronic during the municipal election in 2017 went more smoothly because of technology-adept youth. Some students returning in 2018 have been promoted to a poll book and registration specialist role, taking charge of overseeing the poll book station in their precinct.

After years of training student poll workers at their high schools, Minneapolis integrated the youth training into the adult election judge training. Part of the reason is philosophical: Students are being hired to do the same job as adults, and it's helpful for them to meet their election judge peers before Election Day. But changing pressures on the school-day have also made it more difficult to coordinate times that fit both a busy school calendar and student activity schedules. It's logistically easier to slot students in to the multiple centralized training sessions, and it has been popular with students and families. Head judge training includes a component on working effectively with youth and safety guidelines.

Students and adults in Minneapolis receive the same rate of pay (\$15.75 an hour) even though Minnesota law allows paying students a lower rate. This has been a significant help in recruiting and has led to gains in desired student populations, such as those who are bilingual or from an underrepresented community. Minneapolis increasingly draws students who live in surrounding counties and cities as well, in part because of the comparatively high wages.

Students provide feedback on the program through a voluntary post-Election Day survey designed to guide program improvements and offer an opportunity for students to report on the civic skills, behaviors, and dispositions they gain.

In 2018 Minneapolis is piloting a new Elections Ambassadors program at two area schools. The goal is to engage experienced student election judges as recruiters, particularly in schools where there are large numbers of students with second language skills.

Peer-to-peer recruitment has proven successful in schools with large concentrations of Somali and Spanish speakers. This model is also proving popular with our school partners because it lessens some of the administrative burden while giving students additional opportunity to practice new skills.

Suggested Strategies for Successful High School Poll Worker Programs

The Election Assistance Commission (2017) *Election Worker Successful Practices: Recruitment, Training, and Retention* (pp. 13-15) offers the most widely disseminated best practices on recruiting high school and college-age poll workers, including highlighting specific challenges and tips to overcome them. This information is gleaned from election officials across the United States and reviewed annually based on field-tested strategies. EAC collects information from the field through focus groups, media coverage, discussions with election administrators, and its Clearie Award applications, wherein jurisdictions highlight successful strategies and programs. Award winners feature innovative methods that others in the field can emulate. Many elections administrators turn there first when seeking ideas for improving their programming.

The information below offers additional detailed suggestions for strategies that can help ensure success based on interviews with election administrators, educators, nonprofit professionals, and students who have worked with these programs.

High school poll worker programs are more time-intensive than working with other poll workers because of the additional legal requirements and because of the nature of working with youth. They require strong partnerships in order to achieve the highest outcomes both for the elections jurisdiction and the students. In addition, high school students turn over each year as many graduated and move on, so recruitment needs to be ongoing.

Plan your strategy and timeline

- Start early in the process, at least six months ahead of an election, to develop a timeline that fits both your election needs and the school calendar in your jurisdiction. Often you will need to connect with schools in the spring to begin to recruit for a November election. Develop key dates for recruitment, training, and approval timelines together with your school partners whenever possible so you aren't surprised if they are not available at key times.

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- If you seek students with particular demographics, identify the schools where those students are located and over-recruit for the number of students you think you might need.
 - Identify a point person at each school site, but know that you will need a multi-pronged strategy to find that champion. Work both top-down from the administration (district supervisors, principals curriculum leads) and bottom-up (teachers, parents, students, or other staff at a targeted school). Communicate with multiple people at the same school whenever possible, even after identifying a lead.
 - Local nonprofit staff with knowledge of the schools and youth programs in your area can be invaluable as partners. Your program will be stronger if you can cross-promote civic opportunities for youth. Look at student clubs, leadership groups, summer programs, and extracurricular activities as recruitment partners as well.
 - Understand the transportation needs of your student workers. How will they get to training or the polling place? What ways can your office or the school facilitate that for families? Transportation can be a particular barrier for students, and their difficulties often arise at the last minute.

Plan your communications

Communicate regularly with your student workers and their schools: before, during, and after the election. Remember that you are building relationships, and everyone's goals are more likely to be met when you have a strong understanding of each other's motivations, expectations, and timetables.

- Different school cultures respond to different messages about serving as an election worker. For many, the wages are important. For others, an initial employment opportunity and prospect of a good recommendation is a strong draw. Many students see this as a desirable activity for college applications. Other students are seeking to serve their community and be a welcoming presence to neighbors who may not be seasoned voters. Tailor your pitch as necessary.

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- You also may need to sell the program to school administrators: why should they release their students from important school activities to do this? Some schools may find it disruptive to have a number of students out of class on Election Day. Be sure you can articulate the educational benefits.
 - Prepare a variety of recruitment materials and messages that can be distributed to students both electronically and in print. Ask about multiple venues to reach your audience: morning announcements, assemblies, e-newsletters, and social media.
 - Use your required documentation, like parent permission forms and school authorization form, not only to meet legal requirements but also to gather any additional information you need (e.g., emergency contact numbers, medical issues).
 - Use multiple forms of communication with students. High school students are more likely to respond to text than to email. If your main form of communication is email, make sure they know that as well as your expectations for response. Emphasize this with your teacher adviser as well, who can encourage students to be more responsive.
 - Some youth need multiple reminders and messages. That is not necessarily a reflection on their work ethic. Despite the stereotype of teens welded to their smartphones, many youth have intermittent access to cell phones or email.
 - Expect to spend some time talking with youth outside normal business hours.
 - Communicate expectations and guidelines with your head poll workers so that they can be more effective in supporting younger workers in the polling place.
 - Provide students and schools with timely feedback from voters and team members so they know their contributions are meaningful.
 - If you survey youth about their experiences, remember to supply them with your survey report.

Plan your training

Whether you conduct your training on site at the high school or alongside adult judges, consider the training needs of these young workers.

- Know that high school workers may be more likely to miss a training than adult workers. Many have complicated schedules, family responsibilities, and depend on other people for transportation. Plan for that contingency so that they have options to make up a missed training.

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- Let students know what to expect in the training. Communicate about the format, the types of activities, and any follow up they will need to do. The more they are prepared for the training, the more they will get out of it.
 - Make sure youth have hands-on opportunities to use any equipment or machines because many will not have seen a polling place before. Help put the learning in context for them.
 - Use the opportunity to remind students about any expectations for dress or behavior on Election Day and to remind them what they will need to bring.

Plan for Election Day

- Designate who students should call if they are going to be late or have any problems on Election Day. Provide multiple means of contact, including text, email, and phone.
- Although it rarely happens, plan how you will communicate with schools and families if a student does not show up at the polling place. Different schools may want you to follow different procedures.
- Develop procedures for how you will collect attendance information and transmit it to the schools.

Plan follow-up

- Use a variety of information to evaluate program effectiveness. Follow-up student surveys can provide a wealth of information, as can feedback from colleagues in the polling places and your school partners.
- Focus groups following the election can be an effective tool to solidify relationships with students and schools. Meeting informally to recognize the students' service, gather information, and provide survey results and feedback helps you both improve the program and ensure investment.
- Offer student poll workers other opportunities for civic engagement. Student volunteers can test new directions and manuals, serve as partners in recruiting their peers, staff outreach tables at events, present on their experiences at conferences and events, serve as interns on a special project, and more.

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- U. S. Election Assistance Commission (2016) *State-by-State Compendium Election Worker Laws and Statutes*. Washington, D.C.

U.S. Election Assistance Commission (2016) *Election Worker Successful Practices: Recruitment, Training, and Retention*. Washington, D.C.

2017 Student Election Judge Survey Results

Overall Experience



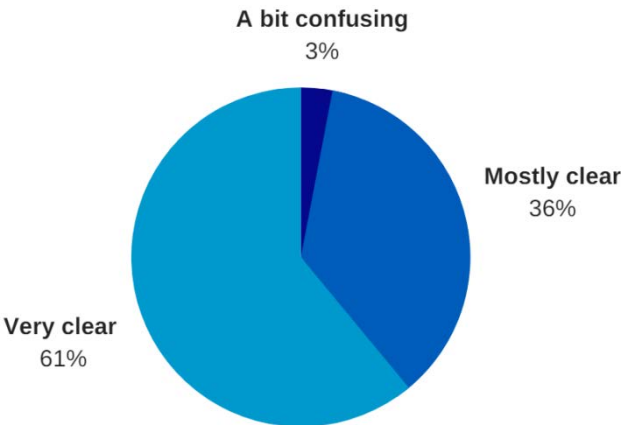
4.66 Stars out of 5

This survey was sent to all 268 students who participated in the 2017 Minneapolis Student Election Judge Program. 175 students responded online between Nov. 16 and Nov. 27, 2017.

Student comments:

- My overall experience was really amazing. I had the opportunity to be a part of something special. I got to meet and talk to many wise and amazing people during the time and I don't think there is one thing I would've changed. I just wish I get the chance to do it again next year.
- Eye-opening.
- It was amazing! I met a lot of great people and I had a lot of fun serving.
- My overall experience was amazing. I learned a lot about the election polls and how to run things.
- It was informative, enjoyable, and made me really feel like a part of the process.
- It was a great experience meeting new people and being able to use my language to help voters who didn't know English.
- This experience really taught me a lot about behind the scenes of what occurs during the election. The other election judges I worked with were friendly, and they helped train me well.
- Very, very long but fun and rewarding.

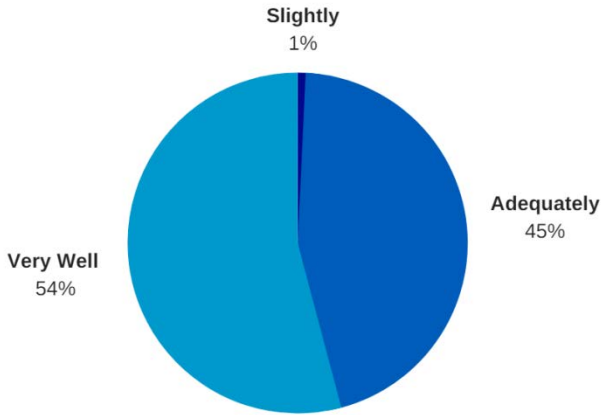
The application process was . . .



Most students found the application process clear and easy to manage. The common trouble points included being unsure on the deadlines, the slightly different processes for returning students and new students, and some difficulties managing the Election Worker Portal.

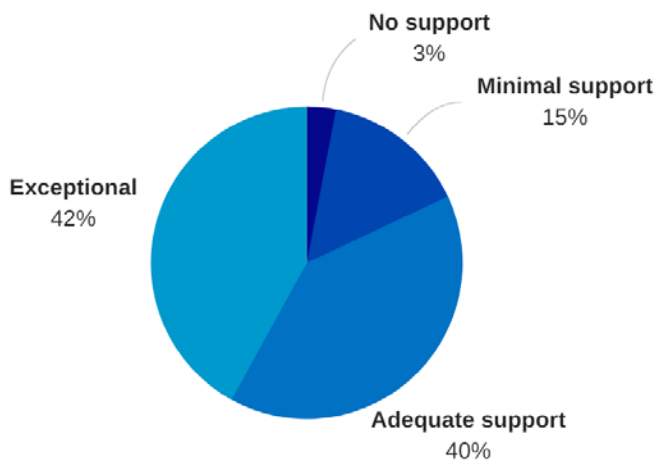
To address some of these issues, we are planning to update the online information about the program to include student checklists and timelines. We will also make changes to the application to be sure students don't miss the parent permission form.

After attending Election Judge Training I was prepared . . .



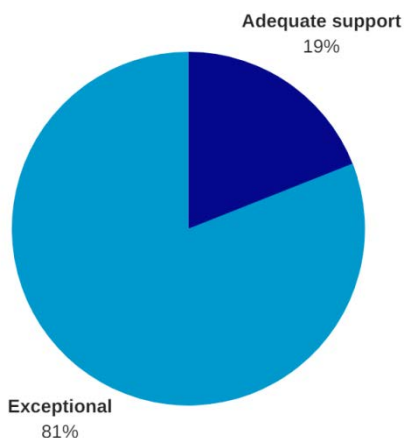
Nearly all students reported that their training left them prepared to serve on Election Day. Many reported that the training seemed long but worth it. Students as well as Head Election Judges reported that the students really understood how to use our new Poll Pads, with one returning student judge saying, "I felt more prepared for this election with the Poll Pads than the 2016 General Election, with the paper books, particularly when it came to registering voters."

Did you receive the support you needed from your school?



Students felt well supported by their schools, with 82% reporting adequate or exceptional support for the program. We work with 14 school partners but also draw individual students from schools outside of Minneapolis that do not formally support the program. Student comments on a lack of school support also tended to indicate that they did not require any support from the school. One problem a few students mentioned was that they were initially marked absent in some classes despite it being an excused absence. Other students remarked on how their teachers were proud of them for serving and how a teacher helped them navigate the application process.

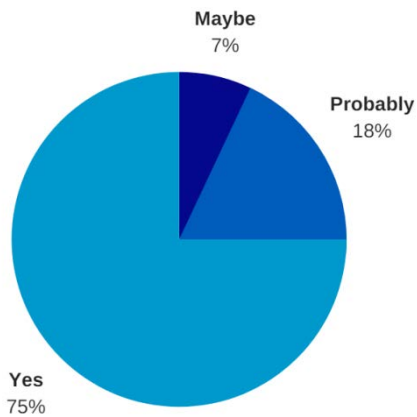
Did you receive the support you needed from the Student Election Judge Program?



All students who responded reported feeling well supported by Minneapolis Elections. They reported that questions were responded to quickly and that staff were friendly and helpful.

This does not, however, include the perceptions of students who did not complete the application process. Out of 469 students who applied or reapplied to serve this year, 268 served on Election Day. Of the 201 who applied but did not serve, most of those applications came in well past the deadline or the students did not complete the application process by submitting their parent permission form. We hope that changes in our website will help more students complete the process in 2018.

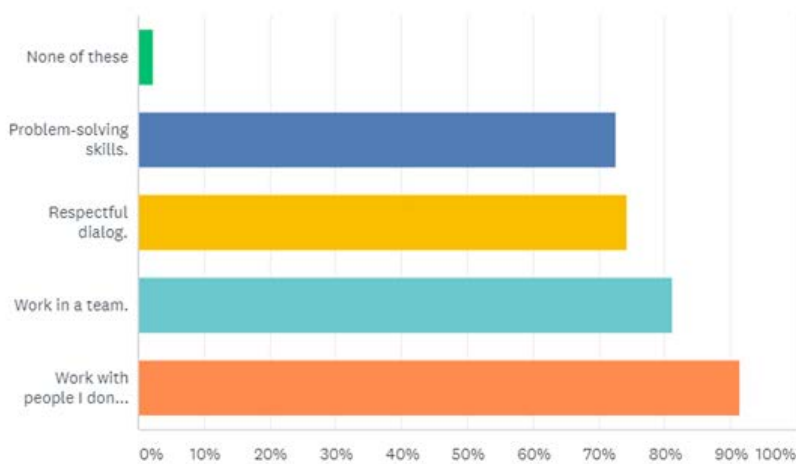
Would you like to be an election judge again?



Students overwhelmingly say that they would like to return as an election judge again, and they would similarly recommend the experience to a friend or family member.

That said, of the 212 students who participated in 2016 as sophomores or juniors, 43% signed up to return as election judges in 2017, and 32% (68 students) served again. Conversations with several students who ultimately did not return indicated that conflicts with other activities as seniors precluded their ability to participate again. We intend to explore strategies to help increase the number of returning student judges, including offering additional leadership opportunities to returning student judges.

Students reported improving civic and work skills

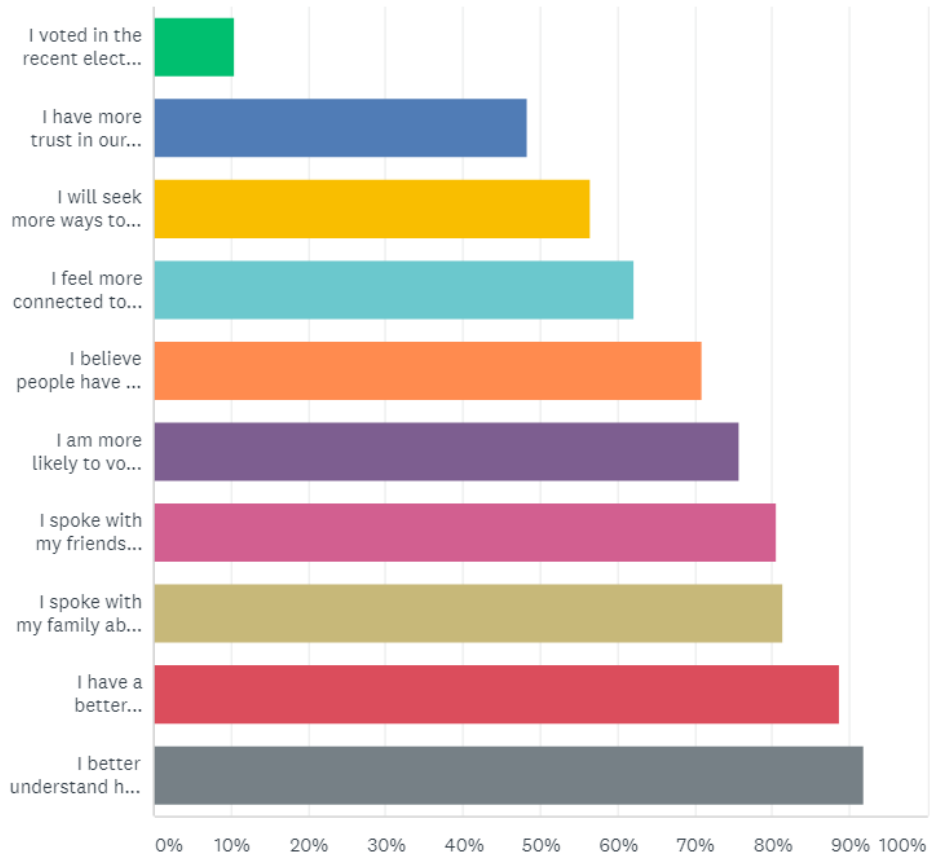


Students reported improving and growing some important skills through their experience with the program, with 91% saying that they became more comfortable working with people that they did not know and 81% reporting that they improved their ability to work as part of a team. About 72% reported developing their problem-solving skills, and 74% said that the experience helped them improve their ability to hold a respectful dialogue. Only 2% of respondents (3 students) reported that none of these statements applied.

Students reported developing civic knowledge and dispositions

As a result of the Student Election Judge Program . . .

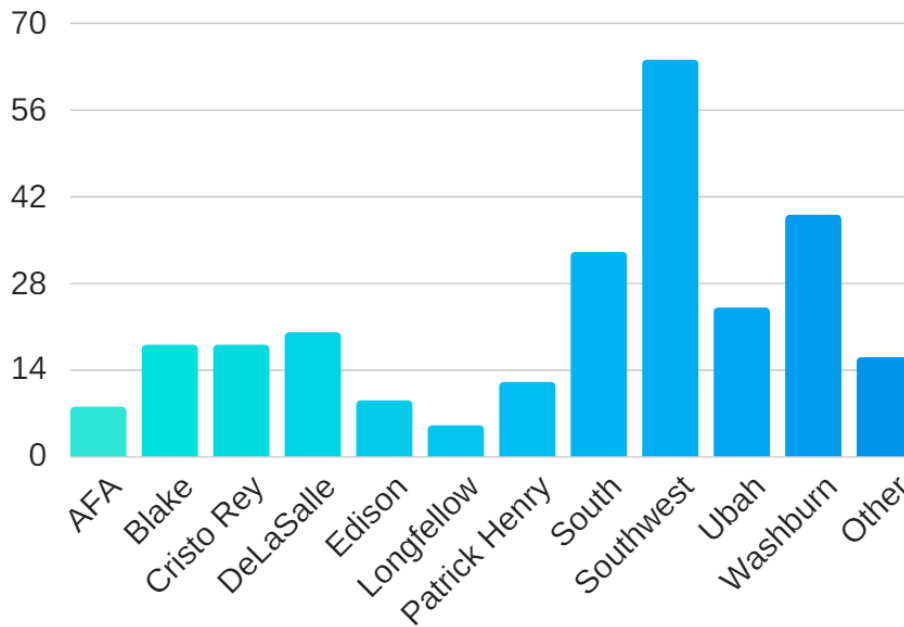
Answered: 124 Skipped: 48



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ I voted in the recent election (I'm already 18).	10.48% 13
▼ I have more trust in our election system.	48.39% 60
▼ I will seek more ways to be involved in my community.	56.45% 70
▼ I feel more connected to my community.	62.10% 77
▼ I believe people have a responsibility to participate in elections.	70.97% 88
▼ I am more likely to vote when I am 18.	75.81% 94
▼ I spoke with my friends about my experiences as an election judge.	80.65% 100
▼ I spoke with my family about my experiences as an election judge.	81.45% 101
▼ I have a better understanding of election procedures.	88.71% 110
▼ I better understand how to vote.	91.94% 114
Total Respondents: 124	

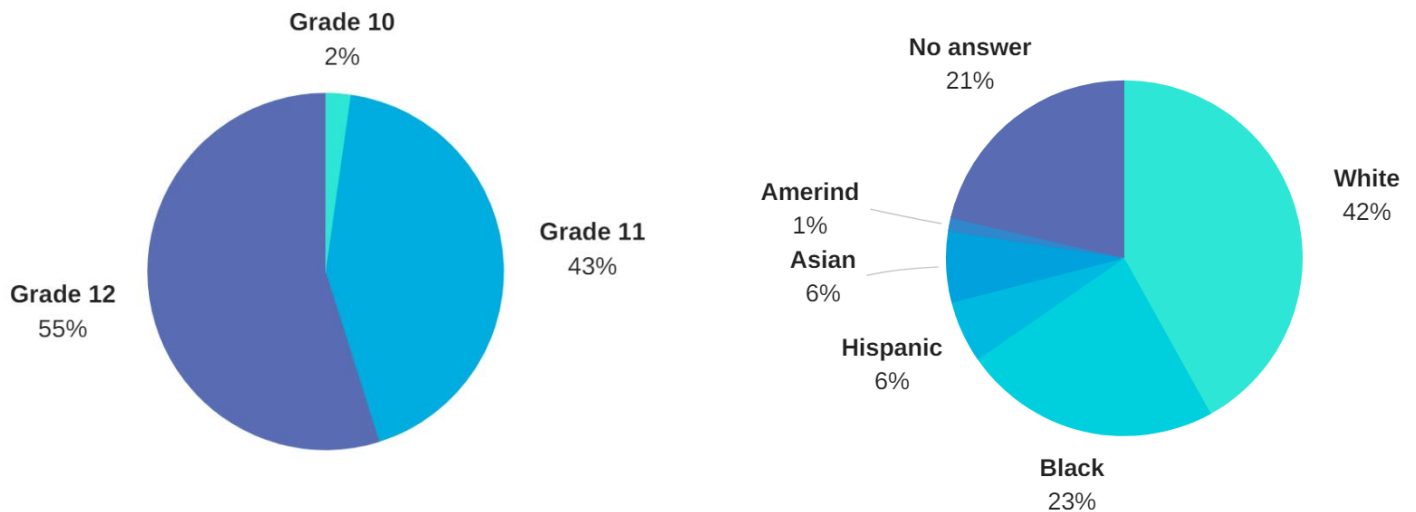
Program demographics

Student Participation



Students who participated in 2017 came from 25 schools across the metropolitan area, including public, charter, and private schools. While 80% of participants live in Minneapolis, the program also drew participants from St. Paul and adjoining suburban areas in Anoka, Dakota, and Hennepin counties. The largest number of participants live in the south and southwest areas of the city.

Student Age and Ethnicity



Language Support

Student Election Judges in 2017 were twice as likely as their adult counterparts to report being bilingual, with 35% of students speaking another language compared to 17% of adult election judges. We had 96 students who reported being fluent in a language other than English; 66 of these students assisted voters with those language skills in the polling place on Election Day.

