



Making Civics Salient: Local Political Knowledge for Democratic Participation

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Keywords: Civic education; political issue salience; political knowledge; democratic participation; political socialization; democratic education.

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Rethinking Civic Education

Civic education¹ is often the first formal opportunity for young people to learn about politics and become informed, engaged, and efficacious citizens.² The ideal and effective civics classroom sparks political interest and engagement by helping students expand democratic skills and dispositions alongside the primary goal of civic education: gaining political knowledge. Political knowledge, “the range of factual information about politics that is stored in long-term memory” (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, 10), is central to a functioning democracy and an important indicator of a citizen’s ability to effectively engage with her local and national political systems (Dahl 1998; Luskin 1987; Ondercin and Jones-White 2011; Zaller 1992). Being politically knowledgeable, an indicator of democratic dispositions like self-efficacy and trust in government (e.g., Verba et al. 1995) and a purpose of formal civic education (Fine 2004), is foundational to civic competence and lifelong political engagement. Political scientists view knowledge as a key corollary of and perhaps conduit for a democratically engaged populace, and civic education researchers use knowledge scores as an indication of student democratic preparedness.

There are democratic benefits to investments in a knowledgeable citizenry, a process especially important during adolescence and the key years of political socialization when young people develop lifelong political ideology and habits (Jennings & Niemi 1981). Civic education aspires to serve as the conduit for this democratic imperative but has consistently fallen short for Americans. Indeed, despite the democratic importance of being informed about politics,

¹ For empirical purposes, I define *civic education* as formal K-12 learning about government and politics within the traditional school day. However, I recognize and celebrate the extensive ways civics can be defined, learned, and taught in diverse educative spaces.

² Citizens refers to any resident and does not refer to the legalistic definition of the word.

prevailing tests of political knowledge, which narrowly operationalize ‘knowledge’ as the ability to recall facts about national government, suggest American adults and youth know very little about politics (APPC 2023; NAEP n.d.). On average, an analysis of these civic tests reveals U.S. students are not “proficient” in civics (NCSS 2020), and overall political knowledge and participation among the adult population remains low and has plateaued for decades, a long-observed political puzzle given sizeable increases in overall educational attainment (Brody 1978). Evidence suggests this knowledge problem exists alongside an engagement problem. Even when U.S. Americans enjoy high levels of political knowledge according to survey batteries and civics tests, rarely are these high scores associated with commitments to participation or democratic dispositions (Green et al. 2011; Holbein and Hillgus 2020; Persson and Oscarsson 2010). This scholarship is damning for traditional civic education that primarily aims to produce informed and engaged democratic citizens through the teaching of content about national government and political institutions (Fine 2004).

The disconnect between knowledge scores and democratic outcomes like political interest, efficacy, and trust in government has laid the groundwork for scholars to interrogate what actually works to produce democratic citizens, particularly in formal civic education spaces made accessible to the public. It also contributes to an empirical conundrum where decades-old political knowledge batteries and civics tests examining fact-based knowledge about national politics may be misaligned to the actual democratic knowledge and skills they intend to measure, thus producing inaccurate and potentially harmful analyses of the U.S. population. While it is undeniable that majority of U.S. Americans do not know key facts about constitutional rights and nearly half cannot name all three branches of government (APPC 2024), I argue knowledge scores reflecting fact-based national political information tells us little about whether citizens

have the political information they actually need to navigate political life for themselves or democratic society broadly. Further, teaching this national content, typically far removed from the daily lives of most Americans, as core to civics curriculum may be less likely to spark youth political interest or motivate lifelong engagement than political or policy content relevant to their political experiences as youth with diverse identities.

In this paper, I show how local and salient curricular content can better activate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions than less salient, national content. Civic education that prioritized local, salient political content within the curriculum, rooted in the lived political experience and expertise of youth throughout the nation, could more effectively inform and inspire engaged citizens. Aligned with other critical scholarship examining the political content included and excluded in civics curricula, this paper tests how introducing salient, more geographically proximate policy topics can strengthen the democratizing effects of civic education. These findings suggest reconceptualizing what it means to be politically knowledgeable by prioritizing salient, local political content may be key to activating the democratic potential of young people through K-12 civics education.

The Activating Civic Potential of Issue Salience

Civic education, focused on national political institutions, may fail to activate knowledgeable and engaged democratic citizens because it lacks personal *issue salience*, “the extent to which people cognitively and behaviorally engage with a political issue” as well as find it important (Moniz and Wlezien 2020, 1).³ The salience of policy and political issues influences

³ Moniz and Wlezien (2020) highlight the important distinctions between *issue*, *media* and *political salience*. I focus on issue salience in this paper because I am interested in political participation of

political behavior of citizens of all ages, and it shapes their willingness to think about and act on politics. Empirical evidence links personal issue salience with the extent to which an individual believes an issue is a pressing problem that needs to be addressed (Brody 1991; Hill and Hurley 1999), and this policy proximity informs vote choice even after controlling for demographic information and party identification (Flavin and Law 2022). Issue salience, or attitude importance, increases the likelihood an individual will learn and retain political information in memory (Krosnick 1988).

Personal issue salience shapes how and whether a citizen engages politically and learns about politics (Miller et al. 2017). Citizens are often moved to act and brought into participatory politics when they encounter an issue that directly impacts their daily lives (Barber 2003; Han 2009). These issues are inherently *local* to the citizen. The locally practical and geographic proximity of a citizen's daily lived political experiences informs how and whether they believe a political topic is salient, or worth their time to learn about and act upon (Cohen 2010; Cohen and Luttig 2020; Weaver et al. 2019). Further, salient issues are more likely inspire and mobilize political engagement, two crucial goals of civic education, and these types of issues tend to be local and related to lived political experiences for young people as they first become aware of their political environments. When students learn about political content that reflects lived political experiences aligned with their racial and ethnic identities, they benefit from political empowerment associated with a greater reported interest in voting and feelings of efficacy (Nelsen 2023). Confirming what many students and communities have long known, emergent empirical evidence highlights how centering the lived political experiences of students in civics

individual students. Media and political salience help describe the visibility of issues to media and political actors at a more macro level (Moniz and Wlezien 2020).

curriculum empowers student voice, and this is especially true for historically marginalized young people when they learn about immigration, police accountability, or gun violence, all issues that are particularly proximate and therefore salient to their daily political realities (Cohen et al. 2023; Nelsen 2023).

I conceptualize salience in this paper as something that holds geographically local salience as well as lived issue salience. While an issue ultimately need not be geographically proximate to an individual or community to be salient, I suggest curricular content that is specifically focused on salient *local* politics is uniquely positioned to motivate politically disengaged students, who are meaningfully different than their politically interested and involved peers. In particular, the proximity and salience of political issues may matter for mobilizing unengaged students, whereas engaged young people are more likely to attach feelings of relevance to local, national, and global political content given their more in-depth political knowledge and experience. For example, when young citizens mobilized in support of the Tea Party movement, Black Lives Matter, or recent student-driven university encampments, national and even international issues were salient enough to motivate their participation (Chambers et al. 2021; Zick 2023). Protests and encampments brought these issues to local contexts, which inspired others to join in political support. And many Americans turn to social media to engage in national and global political issues that feel acutely relevant to their lives and political identities (Lee and Abidin 2023; Literat and Kligler-Vilenchik 2023; Little 2016).

Certainly, national and global political issues can motivate diverse forms of political participation. Citizen awareness of and participation in politics at this level is paramount to healthy democratic life, and learning about national political institutions in K-12 classrooms can help give context to these broad issues that span the nation and the globe. However, most

adolescents are not engaged in politics at all, local or otherwise. Indeed, young people who pay attention to national news and participate in protests, elections, and TikTok are already politically engaged; they are not the average American (Jones 2023; Ryan and Krupnikov 2022) who learns about democracy for the first time, at best, in their 8th or 12th grade civic course. Empirical evidence consistently shows that these already-engaged individuals, whom I consider to be the “engaged elite,” are more likely to continue being engaged throughout adulthood (Chan et al. 2014; Levy and Akiva 2019) regardless of their civics courses, but we know civic education can have a compensation effect particularly for students with less access to engagement opportunities or civic education (Campbell & Niemi 2016; Neundorff et al., 2016). Indeed, a challenge of civic education scholarship is that most young people who volunteer and participate in civic research studies are already part of this elite and do not represent the average levels of engagement found amongst their less involved and informed peers. I refer to these folks as an engaged ‘elite’ because they tend to be the most educated, informed, engaged and therefore a minority in the U.S.

As such, it is worth examining whether national or global political content in civics courses is the most strategic way to inspire democratic engagement. Civic education is intended for the masses, most of whom are not part of or socialized by this engaged elite. They are less likely to knowledgeable about political issues, salient or otherwise. U.S. students typically do not enter civics classrooms equipped with knowledge or passion related to political topics and often feel like politics is not for them. Civic education, particularly in public schools, is therefore faced with the Sisyphean task of inspiring the otherwise disengaged masses towards authentic and self-sustained political participation. National political content has had limited effects on supporting this democratic necessity, which is why I posit local, salient political content may be the best

possible conduit for socializing young people into authentically-motivated, lifelong democratic practice.

Political science research on salience, long focused on the political behavior of adults, offers insights into key moments of political learning and socialization that occur during a young person's K-12 education. Civic education might better inform, inspire, and activate engaged citizens if it prioritized salient curricular content, especially related to local politics, for diverse young people in a pluralist United States. In a complex political environment where youth have endless access to information, a salient civics curriculum offers students the opportunity to learn what they “need to know” to navigate their political contexts (Lupia and McCubbins 2012, 47), and would fit nicely into existing curriculum that already includes a requisite overview of national American politics. Contrarily, civics curriculum focused only on national electoral institutions, while important, will fall short of providing youth with interesting and motivating political information related to their lives that can spark democratic engagement. A salient, more localized civics curriculum would support the development of young people who are civically competent, or able and wanting to engage in meaningful political tasks to address relevant policy concerns (Lupia 2016).

Bringing Local Lived Political Experience into Civic Education

While this empirical research focuses on the results of mixed methodological RCTs that most closely reflect postpositivist views on causal strategies for understanding political behavior, it emerges from a broader scholarly agenda informed by Black feminist thought and critical feminist social constructivism. The voices of Black and Latine U.S. Americans, youth, women, and economically marginalized communities are perpetually absent from processes of knowledge

production and the interpretations of political truths associated with the discipline. Knowledge production and validation are inherently political processes (Collins 2000), and both political scientists and civic educators must be explicit and intentional about their epistemic and ontological frames when conceptualizing what it means to be a politically knowledgeable citizen. In my aim to understand and reconceptualize civic education, I began by learning from predominantly race-class subjugated (Soss and Weaver 2017) young people in Philadelphia about their experiences with civic learning and what they believed are the political knowledge(s) and skills they need to engage in their political realities.

A citizen's perception of personal issue salience emerges from locally proximate political experiences and policy preferences. Issue salience shapes how citizens engage in politics, yet political scientists and civic educators continue to focus on the memorization of national institutional facts as a barometer of knowledge and preparedness to be engaged in democratic life. Indeed, the political knowledge taught in K-12 civic education courses may ultimately fail to make participatory citizens because civics curriculum prioritizes national institutional politics (NCSS n.d.; Nelsen 2023), which is not the primary political arena in which most people live and learn about politics. National politics, while omnipresent in media, is ultimately less salient to most students than what they encounter on the local level, in their proximate communities. When political scientists and educators prioritize national political facts to portray and capture the full landscape of American government, they miss the "facts of lived experience" (Cramer and Toff 2017), or the political expertise citizens develop from their quotidian encounters with the government (Cohen and Luttig, 2020; Hayes and Lawless, 2015; Weaver et al. 2019). These facts of lived experience are likely the most salient for young people, yet are absent from

dominant civics curricula, which formally institutionalize the outsized political and educative value placed on national electoral politics historically most accessible to elites (Carnes 2013).

Scholars should consider the political experiences and expertise of young people as a critical, socially constructed standpoint to inform dialogue around what it means to be politically knowledgeable. Diverse students, especially in a pluralist United States, are situated in social, racial, and class locations that make different political experiences salient. The most salient political experiences should be reflected to them in formal political learning opportunities as varied yet all integral examples of political life alongside national electoral institutions. This is both a normative imperative as well as empirically strategic for motivating political engagement towards things that matter to them. Indeed, citing Harding, Haraway demanded “a postmodern insistence on irreducible difference and radical multiplicity of local knowledges” (1988).

Informed by this critical scholarship and prior to conducting field experiments to test the impact of curricular salience on political outcomes, I held focus groups with 62 Philadelphia high school students to understand their views on civics curriculum and their political experience in and beyond school. Diverse youth from across the city underscored their desire to learn more “relevant” civics content to, as one student expressed, “bolster [their] interest in politics and teach [them] how to make political change.” I connect their desire for relevance with the literature on salience. When students reflected on the content they currently receive in civics, they had largely negative responses particularly about the ubiquitous national content (e.g., Executive power, the Constitution, the Supreme Court) that felt dissociated from their lives.

Malik, who at 18-years-old identified as a part of the “lower-middle-class” and a “wealthy Black man in training,” captured sentiments shared by many of his peers:

It's not that I don't understand why we learn what we learn... but truly what shot do I have to be a [Supreme Court] Justice? Or to talk to or even be voted into a position as a Representative or something big scale like that? Not happening. I don't really see why we learn most of what we learn – I am also not going to be a [marine] biologist so truly why do I have to study fish and you know don't get me going on calculus ... but it seems like government [class] is different [than biology] in that there is use for it outside of whatever our jobs are, like we need to know about government to be actually part of our democracy, and the way I see it the things we learn now are about politics for maybe a few people, like the wealthy folks or white folks, you know? But we're not learning about the politics I know or my mom knows, trying to raise me and my brothers by herself and not having enough to make it happen and so we're out here living our own politics but that doesn't count in school? That's some bulls*it, right? Sorry, yeah, but knowing about lobbying in D.C. is just not helping me be better, you know, democratically speaking. And then, who is teaching about the things – the politics, right? We said everything is political, right? – that are happening in my community's life? Why isn't that the topic of a unit in [Civics]? Right now, just learning about the people in power in D.C. is going to leave me like completely unprepared to know what I need to know and do what I need to do to be a part of politics. That's not exactly a great feeling, and yeah it isn't exactly helping me want to participate.

Malik's words embody similar messages expressed by students of diverse ethnic, racial, class, and gender identities across the city of Philadelphia that reflect low levels of trust, deeply felt inequities, and how formal school curriculum inadvertently reveals tells students who belongs. He and his peers felt their lived political experiences, the observed and learned ways citizens experience interactions with formal and informal politics (Cramer 2016; Cramer & Toff 2017; Weaver et al. 2019), were left out of civics curricula despite these lived experiences being highly instructive and politically empowering (Nelsen 2023; Rubin & Hayes 2010). In many instances, students linked the absence of – or salient – content to perceptions of being unprepared or uninterested in political life, especially so for race and class marginalized students who consistently encounter less supportive and often harmful arms of the state (Bruch and Soss 2018).

Testing Locally Salient Civics

While students did not use the term ‘salient,’ their commentary about political relevance that took place at the local level – proximate to their lived political experiences – in hand with the literature on political salience and engagement supported the development of my overarching hypothesis driving both field experiments:

H1: Learning salient local political content in civic education curriculum has a stronger impact on political knowledge, self-efficacy, and trust for high school students than does learning traditional national political content.

RQ1: Does exposure to salient local political content increase political knowledge, self-efficacy, and trust in government?

I conducted a ‘Salient Civics Survey’ experiment between March and December 2022 in Philadelphia, PA with $n=586$ high school students. Students randomly received one of four treatments, tested in the survey questionnaire, to test the impact of local, salient policy content on political outcomes.

Measured Democratic Outcomes

While civic education can influence a variety of political skills and dispositions, I focus on knowledge, self-efficacy, and trust in government as key democratic outcomes of interest. Political knowledge is the most common outcome assessed in K-12 civic education and political science batteries. Political scientists associate high levels of knowledge with a citizen’s ability to thoughtfully vote, hold government leaders accountable, and accurately link their interests to political platforms (Dalton 2004; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Galston 2007; Zaller 1992). While scholars and activists have shown epistemic justice concerns related to what information and whose expertise is elevated in a hierarchy of knowledge that reflects societal inequities (Fricker 2007), most civics tests and political knowledge batteries have yet to reflect these

needed critiques. For the time being, political knowledge in K-12 is measured by a student's ability to recall and apply institutional or historical facts about national government, and these knowledge scores are often used to make claims about the democratic preparedness of youth. Facts about the President and his political party are, at the very least, valuable for a young person to carry with them into the voting booth. Any civic education intervention should ensure young people gain some useful political knowledge, even if there are crucial continued critiques of how we can create more epistemically just curricula (Cohen 2010; Nelsen 2023).

Political efficacy, the feeling that an individual or group can bring about political change, is both an input and output linked with political participation (Abramson and Aldrich 1982; Campbell et al. 1960; Campbell et al. 1954; Finkel 1985). External efficacy refers to perceptions of systemic political responsiveness, whereas internal efficacy constitutes an individual's belief in her ability to engage politically (Converse 1972). Given my interest in the learning process for students, within internal efficacy I focus on Bandura's social cognitive theory of self-efficacy, "[an individual's] judgements of [her] capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura 1986, 391). I posit civic education will be more effective at fostering lifelong citizenship if it provides learning experiences that improve student perceptions of political self-efficacy (Galston 2001; Schulz 2005), or their ability to successfully act politically and make the change they hope to see.

External efficacy is often correlated with trust in government and political institutions (Niemi et al. 1991; Schulz 2005). Most scholars agree in the democratic importance of political trust (Hetherington 1998), which I conceptualize as a student's belief that the government will "do what is right" when making decisions. A lack of trust in government reduces the willingness of citizens to contribute resources to the political process and can promote a cyclical

deterioration of government performance and public satisfaction (Nye 1997). Notably, U.S. trust in government today is egregiously low (Pew 2023) and varies along lines of race and class (Wilkes 2015). Student interactions with political institutions like schools have the potential to foster or hinder the development of trust, and civic education content and experiences should consider trust as a key outcome to promote in the development of young citizens.

Together, the growth of political knowledge, efficacy, and trust in government through civic education can help socialize young people into capable, trusting, and engaged democratic participants. The civics classroom has the potential to be a policy lever for these crucial political skills and dispositions, but to fulfil this potential, scholars and educators need to rethink civic education. I test these as three outcome variables for both field experiments.

Field Experiment: Implementing the Salient Civics Survey

The Salient Civics Survey (SCS) is a novel, randomized civic survey testing whether learning local and salient political curricular content improves political knowledge, efficacy, and trust in government. Each survey began with a newspaper article, an artifact students often receive in civics courses. By randomizing⁴ two features of salience - geographic proximity (local or national) and policy content proximity to student lives (school or labor/business) - and controlling every other component of the article language and topic (Covid-19), I tested the extent to which geographic and issue salience improved student political outcomes.

⁴ I used randomization to test whether changes in content shape these political outcomes and mitigate selection bias. In the case of civic education, a biased sample might include already highly engaged students volunteer for the study, which would likely produce misleading results. A randomized trial overcomes problems related to bias through the random allocation of participants into tested groups (Angrist and Pischke 2018) and helps isolate the impact of content changes on student outcomes.

Table 1. 2 x 2 Content Intervention

	Local Content	National Content
Relevant Policy	Local (Philadelphia) Relevant (Schools) Political ID: Philadelphia School District Superintendent Dr. William H. Hite ¹⁰	National (U.S.) Relevant (Schools) Political ID: United States Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona
Less Relevant Policy	Local (Philadelphia) Less Relevant (Businesses) Political ID: Philadelphia Deputy Mayor of Labor Richard Lazer	National (U.S.) Less Relevant (Businesses) Political ID: United States Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh

Following the news article,⁵ all students received an identical 16-question multiple choice political knowledge battery that mirrors what they would see on a civics exam (e.g., NAEP) and used language from traditional political knowledge batteries (e.g., ANES) to test the impact of content on knowledge outcomes. Following the knowledge questions, students received a 30-question demographic survey that collected opinions about their civic education experience and political indicators such as efficacy and trust in government applied to local, national, and school contexts. The wording of these questions is identical to or closely mirrors that of ANES questions to strengthen the validity of the test items.

The randomized intervention followed a 2-by-2 design. Each student who took the survey received one of four content treatments where they were asked to identify a political figure

⁵ Students took an online or paper survey, the latter of which I administered in person, that were otherwise identical in nature. In the online version, administered by their classroom teachers, once students read their randomly assigned article and clicked the ‘next’ arrow, they were unable to return to the article. In the in-person version, students were required to sign a consent form (page one, front side of the survey) and then read the article (page one, back side of the survey) and remove the first page to hand to me before moving on to the rest of the survey. This approach ensured I would be measuring the impact of content on student political knowledge outcomes rather than their ability to review the article to check their answers.

mentioned in each of the four treatment articles, again only one of which students received.

Students began the survey by reading one of four randomly administered treatments paragraphs, which was a short (~215 words, 8th grade reading level) newspaper article that varied only by the salience of the policy topic (schools or businesses) and the regional scope (local (Philadelphia) or national (United States)). The article (see Appendix B for an example) discussed COVID-19 safety policies in either schools or businesses, which dominated the news cycle in 2021 and 2022 and therefore required little if any outside knowledge to understand. Given that each student only contributed data to one of the four experimental conditions, this is a between-subjects design.

Sampling Procedure

I recruited students by contacting high school teachers from diverse schools that varied by their neighborhood location and designation, such as public district or charter schools within unique ‘networks’ that focus on academic themes. I also contacted youth serving organizations and voter registration initiatives to diversify the sample from students throughout the city. Participation was incentivized with a lottery opportunity to win one of ten pairs of AirPods.

Table 2. Salient Civic Survey Sample Descriptive Table

Demographic Category		Total Student Count
Gender		
	Female	353
	Male	227
	Other	6
Race		
	African American or Black	211
	American Indian or Native American	0
	Asian or Asian-American	70
	Biracial	67
	Hispanic or Latinx	17
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0
	White or Caucasian	220
	NA	1

Age	
18+	210
16-17	220
14-15	156
TOTAL STUDENTS	586

I administered this survey during March through December of 2022, including in the summer months to students who were no longer in a school setting but were 18 and recently graduated from high school. All students signed a consent form at the beginning of the survey and those under the age of 18 in schools also needed principal and parental consent.

Findings

Outcome One: Political Knowledge

H1 (*Political Knowledge*): Students will be better able to recall political facts when they receive a curricular intervention about local or relevant political information rather than national or less relevant political information.

I first ran four individual models to identify the impact of **local** (Philadelphia) versus **national** (United States) political context when interacted with **salient** (schooling) or **less salient** (business) policy content on student political outcomes. In line with this 2 x 2 design, I tested the interaction between these items to identify the impact of [local x salient], [local x less salient], [national x salient], and [national x less salient] on three dependent variables of political knowledge, self-efficacy, and trust. This two-by-two treatment design allowed me to investigate whether there was an interaction between curricular scope (local versus national) and content topic (salient versus less salient) that might inform a more democratically efficacious civics curriculum. The constant in each model represents the percentage of students in the sample who correctly answer the question without receiving the associated treatment.

Table 3. 2x2 Treatment Design Analysis

	Local Content (Philadelphia)	National Content (United States)
Salient Policy (School)	(Treatment One - HITE) <i>LocalxSalient Correct Response_i</i> $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Local} \times \text{Salient Treatment} + u_i$	(Treatment Three - CARDONA) <i>NationalxSalient Correct Response_i</i> $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{National} \times \text{Salient Treatment} + u_i$
Less Salient Policy (Business)	(Treatment Two - LAZER) <i>LocalxLess Salient Correct Response_i</i> $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Local} \times \text{Less Salient Treatment} + u_i$	(Treatment Four - WALSH) <i>NationalxLess Salient Correct Response_i</i> $= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{National} \times \text{Less Salient Treatment} + u_i$

I ran each regression with and without the covariates of race and gender, both unaffected by the treatment. Research on political knowledge has shown knowledge ‘gaps’ along the lines of race and gender (Barabas et al. 2014; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Ferrin et al. 2018; Weaver et al. 2019). Further, including covariates in regression models can provide a more precise estimate of impact and reduce unexplained variance, which increases estimation precision (Angrist and Pischke 2018; Glennerster and Takavarasha 2013, 330). However, I find near zero increase in precision with these controls or magnitude change in coefficients, and as such I report the findings without including covariates.

Every student received an identical civic knowledge test and was asked to answer multiple choice questions related to all four of these political IDs after receiving one treatment that addressed one of the four political IDs. In all cases, there is a statistically significant increase in political knowledge associated with the treatment. For example, if a student received the [national x less salient] treatment, she is substantively and significantly more likely than students who did not receive this information to correctly identify the affiliated labor secretary. There are no spillovers of information between the treatments.

Table 4. Treatment on Political Knowledge

	Hite Correct (Local / Salient)	Lazer Correct (Local / Less Salient)	Cardona Correct (National / Salient)	Walsh Correct (National / Less Salient)
Treatment Effect	0.31*** (0.04)	0.46*** (0.04)	0.22*** (0.04)	0.27*** (0.04)
Constant	0.33*** (0.02)	0.24*** (0.02)	0.30*** (0.02)	0.14** (0.02)

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The “Treatment Effect” captures a regression of each correct outcome (Hite, Lazer, Cardona, and Walsh) on its related dimension of ‘local’ or ‘national.’

The data has strong face validity: on average, students who receive information about local politics are more likely to retain that information and correctly respond to questions related to it. This is true across treatment groups and matches findings from the first field experiment. While all students increased short-term knowledge from reading an article, regardless of the political ID, the treatment had the largest impact on recall for students in the local groups at for both schools [salient] and labor/business [less salient].

Overall, student knowledge results are substantive and statistically significant, but this outcome is not entirely surprising and demands further inquiry. I wrote the treatment articles for an 8th grade reading level and students who took the survey were predominantly 15 or older, and on average 17 or 18. These questions therefore in part test reading comprehension as well as the hypothesis. Yet, the positive findings speaks to potential benefits of local content as geographic salience and hints at possibility that business feels particularly salient for high school students who may be in or soon entering the workforce. If a primary goal of civic education continues to be to promote political knowledge, this data suggests incorporating more local and salient content may improve knowledge outcomes for diverse students.

Outcome Two: Political Self-Efficacy

H2 (*Political Self-Efficacy*): Students are more likely to report higher levels of local, national, or school political efficacy when they receive a curricular intervention related to local politics, national politics, or schools, respectively.

I measure political self-efficacy through student responses to three questions: “How much can a student like you affect what local government / national government / your school does?” Students can select one of the five following options as a potential response: Always (5), Just about always (4), Most of the time (3), Only some of the time (2), Never (1). Again, this language reflects that commonly used in national political opinion surveys like ANES. Self-efficacy is tied to an individual’s belief in their ability to act on the political world. I measured the impact of local treatments (both salient and less salient) on perceptions of self-efficacy towards local government, national treatments (both salient and less salient) on self-efficacy towards national government, and school treatments (both local and national) on self-efficacy towards school policies. The coefficients for this model reflect this five-point scale, and the “Treatment Effect” captures a regression of local efficacy on the two local treatment articles, a regression of national efficacy on the two national treatment articles, and a regression of school efficacy on a treatment of school (salient) content.

$$Y_{LocalEfficacy_i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LocalTreatment + u_i$$

$$Y_{NationalEfficacy_i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 NationalTreatment + u_i$$

$$Y_{SchoolEfficacy_i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SchoolTreatment + u_i$$

As Table 4 shows, when students received [local x salient] or [local x less salient] treatment, their *local* self-efficacy increased to an average response of “(3) Most of the time” in reference to how often they feel they are able to impact local politics. While this result (3.36, $p < 0.001$) is still below the Constant for school efficacy (3.43), it suggests that local content can help students feel more self-efficacious regarding their local political contexts. This finding highlights the

value of local curriculum and underscores the challenges with traditional content that is almost entirely focused on national political information yet seeks to inspire civic engagement.

Table 5. Treatment on Political Self-Efficacy: Local, National, and School			
	Local Efficacy	National Efficacy	School Efficacy
Treatment Effect	0.57*** (0.09)	-0.12 (0.19)	0.12 (0.09)
Constant	2.79*** (0.07)	2.41*** (0.07)	3.43*** (0.07)
Standard errors in parentheses		* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$	

To understand the specific impact of geographically and issue-salient content and add nuance to the results in Table 4, I ran the following models for local, national, and school efficacy for students who received the local x salient treatment:

$$Y_{LocalEfficacy_i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Local * Salient + u_i$$

$$Y_{NationalEfficacy_i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Local * Salient + u_i$$

$$Y_{SchoolEfficacy_i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Local * Salient + u_i$$

The dependent variable Y_i is local, national, or school political efficacy. β_0 represents the average value for students getting the National / Business treatment, and $\beta_1 Local * Schools$ captures the interactive effect of receiving a treatment about local politics and school policy.

Table 6. Treatment on Political Self-Efficacy: Interactions			
	Local Efficacy	National Efficacy	School Efficacy
Treatment 1: Local / Salient	0.08 (0.19)	0.05 (0.19)	0.16* (0.13)
Treatment 2: Local / Less Salient	0.52*** (0.14)	0.09 (0.14)	-0.20 (0.13)
Treatment 3: National / Salient	-0.03 (0.14)	0.30* (0.13)	-0.13 (0.13)
Constant (Treatment 4: National / Less Salient)	2.80*** (0.10)	2.13*** (0.10)	3.53*** (0.10)
Standard errors in parentheses		* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$	

Through a test of the interactive effects of [local x salient], I find evidence that students report higher levels of local political efficacy when they receive a local content treatment, albeit only a [local x business] (less salient) treatment and not the [local x school] (salient) treatment. This suggests the local efficacy outcome in Table 4 may be explained by the [local x business] treatment. It also underscores the potential issue salience of business for high school students. The model constant is 2.80 ($p < 0.001$), meaning on average students who receive Treatment 4: National / Business (ID: Walsh) report a local political efficacy between 2 (Only some of the time) and 3 (Most of the time). When students receive Treatment 2: Local / Business (ID: Lazer), there is an additive impact from this 2.80 on reported political self-efficacy of 0.52, ($p < 0.001$). In other words, students who received the treatment article about local politics and business express higher levels of local political efficacy and feel efficacious at the local government level between (3) Most of the time and (4) Just about always, and students who receive an intervention that discusses *local* political content feel more confident in their ability to participate in *local* political life.

I also ran a model to see if the treatments have differential impacts on national political efficacy. The model specification follows the same structure. I find a positive (0.30) and significant ($p < 0.05$) effect of receiving Treatment 3: National / Schools (ID: Cardona) on student national efficacy, suggesting that students feel more efficacious about national government when they learn about national politics. If the goal of civic education is in part to mobilize young people, and we know local political engagement is often the most accessible form of engagement, focusing on local content is particularly compelling.

Finally, I observe a small increase in student self-efficacy regarding their ability to make change in their school contexts when they receive the local and salient treatment. The constant of 3.53 reveals a much higher baseline level of student self-efficacy vis-à-vis their school environment compared with local or national politics, which may explain the comparatively small (0.16 ($p < 0.05$)) increase. Overall, different curricular content may significantly impact student self-efficacy, and the nature of that content alters the direction and strength of student feelings of political efficacy. This is most clear for local content interventions, and these findings are somewhat surprising as they are not constant across treatment outcomes. Given the importance of self-efficacy for student engagement, more research is needed to understand what role curriculum can play in these efforts.

Outcome Three: Political Trust

H3 (*Political Trust*): Students are more likely to report higher levels of trust in local or national government when they receive a curricular intervention about local or national political information, respectively.

I operationalized trust through an aggregate score based on a series of two questions that ask: “How much can a student like you trust the local government / national government to do what is right?” with one of the five following options as a potential response: Always (5), Just about always (4), Most of the time (3), Only some of the time (2), Never (1). Again, I first ran two models to test the impact of the two local curricular interventions on local trust, and the two national curricular interventions on national trust.

$$Y_{LocalTrust_i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LocalTreatment + u_i$$

$$Y_{NationalTrust_i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 NationalTreatment + u_i$$

Table 7. Treatment Impact on Trust in Government: Local & National		
	Local Trust	National Trust
Treatment Effect	0.38*** (0.09)	0.15 (0.09)
Constant	2.80*** (0.07)	2.35*** (0.06)
Standard errors in parentheses		$p < 0.10$ * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Students who received either of the local curricular interventions increase their local trust by 0.38 ($p < 0.001$), whereas students who receive either of the two national interventions increase their national trust by substantively and significantly smaller 0.15 ($p < 0.10$). Trust is an important element of civic engagement and affiliated with the intentions of civic education, so these findings are compelling. I also ran models to test the effect of the [local x salient] interaction, captured by the following models that show a regression of either Local Trust or National Trust on a constant and the treatment interaction:

$$Y_{LocalTrust_i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Local * Salient + u_i$$

$$Y_{NationalTrust_i} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Local * Salient + u_i$$

Table 8. Treatment Impact on Trust in Government: Interactions		
	Local Trust	National Trust
Treatment 1: Local / Salient	-0.07* (0.31)	-0.68*** (0.18)
Treatment 2: Local / Less Salient	0.41** (0.22)	0.19 (0.13)
Treatment 3: National / Salient	-0.12 (0.13)	-0.37** (0.13)
Constant (Treatment 4: National / Less Salient)	2.73*** (0.10)	2.31*** (0.16)
Standard errors in parentheses		* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The results from an analysis of trust are fascinating. Treatments related to local schools reduces local and national trust by -0.07 ($p < 0.05$) and -0.68 ($p < 0.001$), respectively. Similarly, treatments related to national schools reduces local and national trust by -0.12 (not statistically

significant) and -0.37 ($p < 0.01$), respectively. Content related to national business (less salient) increases local trust by a sizeable 0.41 ($p < 0.01$).

Examining the interaction effects helps add nuance to this story of trust as it did for self-efficacy. A [local x salient] treatment has a significant, though small, negative impact on local trust, and once again the [local x less salient] treatment explains more of the increase in local trust, as it did for local efficacy. Similarly, it has an even greater substantive and statistically significant negative impact on national trust. This suggests that learning about schools – the element of the government students interact with the most and that is therefore the most salient – may *reduce* student trust in government.

A potential explanation for the different direction of results between the local treatment conditions is the age of my sample: at 17 and 18, students are more proximate to adulthood and professional life after many years of mandatory schooling and may have more positive associations with their future world of work. Another explanation may be that students are inclined to trust an entity (businesses and the workforce) with which they are less familiar, compared to an institution (schools) that they know intimately and that over nearly two decades has created both positive and negative experiences. This latter explanation for low trust in schools contradicts my findings that students feel quite efficacious in their schooling environments. However, research shows that people can feel more efficacious and be more participatory when they *do not* trust government (Hooghe & Quintelier, 2013). Students may feel higher levels of efficacy in schools given their extensive lived experience, which has revealed realities about educational institutions that make students less likely to trust them. As we reconsider civics to ensure it is a mobilizing force for young people, introducing local and salient content may decrease trust, but that does not mean it will demobilize students.

Discussion: Implications for a Salient Civics

Rethinking civic education curriculum is imperative. Traditional civics focused on national politics is insufficiently positioned to motivate and prepare citizens for engagement a pluralist and multiracial democracy. Pulling from issue salience and political socialization literature, these two novel field experiments focused on testing local and salient curricular content, even though recent civics research has shifted away from studying content towards skills, pedagogy, and classroom climate (e.g., Holbein & Hillygus 2020, but see Nelsen 2023).

Local political events and relevant topics varies greatly for students depending on their context. Gun violence or urban education policy appealed to Philadelphia students, while students in rural America might be more interested in agricultural policy. These salient political topics should be part of civics curriculum to foster democratic skills and interest. Curricular changes based on student lived political experience may be paramount to strengthening political outcomes such as knowledge, efficacy, and trust.

In a highly politicized and often underfunded education policy environment that has deprioritized civics (Shapiro & Brown 2018), there are immediate benefits to understanding whether slight shifts in the content being taught, as opposed to sizeable shifts in number of courses required or offered, pedagogy (e.g., active learning), and experiential offerings (e.g., extracurriculars), can strengthen civic engagement. Educators can adjust teaching materials in their own classrooms without needing new training or waiting for new policies, and localizing some content in social studies is an accessible curricular shift. While a curricular change of this size is unlikely to have a long-term impact on knowledge, efficacy, and trust, this intervention offers a test of how small shifts in content can alone influence political effects, which offers the potential for small-scale and actionable policy changes in civics classrooms.

Further, I take seriously Campbell’s assertion that “leveraging randomized variation in both content and methods of instruction...is the next frontier in the study of civics” (2019, 38), and focusing on content allows for the use of a randomized control trial (RCT) that mimics a civics test students would commonly see. These straightforward but methodologically sound curricular intervention is ethically tenable and practically feasible, and it helps to clarify the curricular mechanisms that promote civic development.

These findings also offer some hope in terms of scaling civics. Research shows factors beyond the formal curriculum, such as school ethos, noncognitive skill development (Holbein and Hillygus 2020), service learning, and open classroom climate can facilitate positive civic outcomes for young people, such as increases in their knowledge, self-efficacy, and trust in government (Campbell 2019). Such factors can and must change to follow empirical evidence and community feedback, but it takes far longer to rethink and change – or often overhaul – an entire school culture, for example, than to make slight adjustments to civics curricular content. In the fight for democratizing student minds, scholars and educators must play the long and the short game. In the near term, these findings provide evidence for what might be possible next semester or school year through simple adjustments to the geographic proximity and salience of content students learn.

Limitations

This paper interrogates the impact of formal K-12 civic education on student political outcomes but does not consider the relationship of civic learning and knowledge, efficacy, and trust in different educative contexts. There is robust literature on how extracurricular activities, including service learning and other out-of-school civic endeavors have a positive impact on youth engagement, and this has been crucial for the field. Research that has expanded the once

too severe focus on curricular content and political knowledge as the primary variable aligned with democratic engagement has been crucial for chipping away at our understanding of what works in civic education. This work shows innovative approaches to civics curricula that can provide students with opportunities to create self-run policy projects, manage their youth-centered classrooms using democratic norms, and connect with political leaders in Congress to see democracy in action. However, for these bountiful possibilities to flourish equitably in schools across the nation, a variety of institutional shifts would need to occur in a cumbersome education policy landscape. Teachers would need to receive training in democratic norms and problem-based learning, state standards would shift to allow for more creative summative assessments, and communities need to accommodate the complexities of engaged learning that inevitably arise with the open classroom climates and active learning endeavors that research has shown to have the greatest impact on student political outcomes.

To strengthen confidence in student findings, it would have been ideal to administer the survey to students at least twice to analyze a pre- and post- intervention outcome. This RCT design would have helped to solidify the impact of the content intervention on an individual student over time as well as illuminate the potential impact of the intervention on student knowledge retention and reported self-efficacy and trust in government. The methodological approach would therefore leverage longitudinal analysis of covariance or an analysis with the treatment variable interacted with time (Twisk et al. 2018). However, the ethical and resource complexities of working with high school students during the school day made this impossible, and I was only able to address the latter analysis with a single survey administration. Future research requires testing both the minicourse and survey with larger and more diverse samples throughout the nation.

Conclusion

Civic education can better serve its mission of building politically knowledgeable, efficacious, and trusting young citizens if researchers and educators incorporate more local and salient content into the curriculum. The randomized survey presented here provides evidence that student political outcomes can be strengthened when students encounter information related to their lived experience, specifically information that is geographically local and conceptually relevant. By no means a call to replace national content with only local, this paper shows that small adjustments in content with an eye towards incorporating local, salient politics is a small but potentially effective curricular policy that can strengthen youth democratic development through civic education.

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Appendix

Student Survey

Please read the following news article about Philadelphia schools.
You will be asked a few survey questions about the article.

Vaccines now mandatory for 20,000 Philly school district staff

August 2021

PHILADELPHIA, PA – The school board unanimously approved the mandate on Tuesday night. Superintendent William R. Hite Jr. said negotiations with the district’s five unions will begin Wednesday.

The Philadelphia school board on Tuesday mandated COVID-19 vaccines for all staffers, a move that will affect more than 20,000 workers. The school board unanimously approved a resolution directing Superintendent William R. Hite Jr. to develop and implement an inoculation plan for staff, contracted personnel, and service providers. Dr. Hite said the mandate was necessary to protect public health, especially given the roughly 80,000 city students too young to be vaccinated and the fact that most district schools will not be able to socially distance children.

The vaccination deadline was not set Tuesday night. Hite said negotiations with the district’s five unions will begin Wednesday, with progressive discipline for those who refuse to comply, resulting in “job action,” the superintendent said. With rising coronavirus case counts, the spread of the delta variant, and the looming start of the school year, more schools throughout the nation are taking such actions.

Philadelphia had already said it will test its staff for the virus weekly, and Hite declared the mask mandate for all staff and students earlier this summer. Any mandate won’t be in place by the start of the school

year; Philadelphia's 120,000 students are set to return to school Tuesday, many of them seeing the inside of a classroom for the first time in almost 18 months.

Dr. Hite said families will not be able to get information about whether their child's teachers have been vaccinated; such information is confidential.

Political Knowledge Survey

Please answer each of the questions included below. For questions that provide choices, bubble in or circle your response. For the questions that have empty spaces, please fill in the blank.

1. What political office is now held by Marty Walsh?
 - ☐ Vice President of the United States
 - ☐ U.S. Secretary of Education
 - ☐ Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
 - ☐ U.S. Secretary of Labor

2. What political office is now held by Dr. Miguel Cardona?
 - ☐ Vice President of the United States
 - ☐ U.S. Secretary of Education
 - ☐ Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
 - ☐ U.S. Secretary of Labor

3. Do you happen to know which political party currently has the most members in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.?
 - ☐ I am confident it is the Democrats
 - ☐ I think it is the Democrats, but I am not confident
 - ☐ I don't know
 - ☐ I think it is the Republicans, but I am not confident
 - ☐ I am confident it is the Republicans

4. How many Senators represent Pennsylvania in the United States Senate?
 - ☐ 2
 - ☐ 3

- 4
5. Based on the article, some political leaders argue a vaccine mandate is necessary to:
 - Provide data to medical researchers
 - Protect public health
 - Fully stop pandemics
 6. Based on the article, many schools and businesses are doing which of the following to help protect people from COVID-19?
 - Testing students and staff for the virus weekly
 - Sharing vaccine information to parents and co-workers
 - Sending emails to remind people to stay socially distant
 7. What political office is now held by Richard Lazer?
 - Deputy Mayor of Labor
 - Mayor of Philadelphia
 - President of Philadelphia City Council
 - Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia
 8. What political office is now held by Dr. William Hite?
 - Deputy Mayor of Labor
 - Mayor of Philadelphia
 - President of Philadelphia City Council
 - Superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia
 9. Do you happen to know which political party currently has the most members in City Council in Philadelphia?
 - I am confident it is the Democrats
 - I think it is the Democrats, but I am not confident
 - I don't know
 - I think it is the Republicans, but I am not confident
 - I am confident it is the Republicans
 10. How many Senators represent Philadelphia in the Pennsylvania State Senate?
 - 3
 - 5
 - 7
 11. Who is the mayor of Philadelphia?
 - Darrell Clarke
 - Jim Kenney
 - Chuck Schumer
 12. Who is the Vice President of the U.S.?
 - Nancy Pelosi
 - Helen Gym
 - Kamala Harris
 13. How many times (terms) can a president be elected?
 - 1
 - 2

- ☐ 3
- 14. What are the first ten amendments called?
 - ☐ The Bill of Rights
 - ☐ The Constitution
 - ☐ The Declaration of Independence
- 15. What majority is required to override a presidential veto?
 - ☐ 1/2
 - ☐ 2/3
 - ☐ 3/4
- 16. What age are you allowed to vote if you are a U.S. citizen?
 - ☐ 16
 - ☐ 18
 - ☐ 21

Personal Survey

Please answer each of the questions included below.

1. How old are you? _____
2. What zip code do you live in? _____
3. What high school do you currently attend? _____
4. What is your gender?
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Non-binary / third gender
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
5. What race / ethnicity do you consider yourself to be? Check all that apply.
 - ☐ African American or Black
 - ☐ American Indian or Native American
 - ☐ Asian or Asian-American
 - ☐ Biracial
 - ☐ Hispanic or Latinx
 - ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - ☐ White or Caucasian
6. In terms of your grades right now in high school, do you get mostly:
 - ☐ As
 - ☐ Bs
 - ☐ Cs
 - ☐ Ds

- Fs
7. Think of the closest adult in your life. What is the highest level of education they completed?
 - Some high school
 - High school / their GED
 - Some college
 - College
 - Graduate / professional school
 - Not sure
 8. Do you think it is more important to know what is happening in politics in the United States or in Philadelphia?
 - United States
 - Philadelphia
 9. During the school year, how often do you do each of the following activities **outside of school**?
 - 9a. During the school year outside of school, I read about current political events in the media:
 - Never
 - About once or twice a year
 - About once or twice a month
 - About once or twice a week
 - Every day or almost every day
 - 9b. During the school year outside of school, I watch movies, videos, and/or TV programs about current political events:
 - Never
 - About once or twice a year
 - About once or twice a month
 - About once or twice a week
 - Every day or almost every day
 - 9c. During the school year outside of school, I participate in volunteer activities within a community:
 - Never
 - About once or twice a year
 - About once or twice a month
 - About once or twice a week
 - Every day or almost every day
 - 9d. During the school year outside of school, I discuss political events or issues with others (for example, people in my home or friends):
 - Never
 - About once or twice a year
 - About once or twice a month

- About once or twice a week
- Every day or almost every day

9e. During the school year outside of school, I think about, talk about, or participate in **local** politics:

- Never
- About once or twice a year
- About once or twice a month
- About once or twice a week
- Every day or almost every day

9f. During the school year outside of school, I think about, talk about, or participate in **national** politics:

- Never
- About once or twice a year
- About once or twice a month
- About once or twice a week
- Every day or almost every day

10. From what source do you most often get your news?

- Television
- TikTok
- Instagram
- Facebook
- Other: _____

11. When it comes to politics, would you describe yourself as:

- liberal
- moderate
- conservative
- Something else: _____

12. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else?

- Democrat
- Republican
- Independent
- Something else: _____

13. How much of the time do you think you can trust the **local** government in Philadelphia, PA to do what is right?

- Always
- Just about always
- Most of the time
- Only some of the time
- Never

14. How much of the time do you think you can trust the **national** government in Washington, D.C. to do what is right?

- Always
- Just about always
- Most of the time
- Only some of the time
- Never

15. How much can a student like you affect what **local** government does?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all

16. How much can a student like you affect what **national** government does?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all

17. How much can a student like you affect what your **school** does?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all

18. Put an **X** next to the **top three policy** issues that matter most to you:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ____ Climate change | ____ Foreign policy |
| ____ Gun violence | ____ Health care |
| ____ School safety and equity | ____ Economy |
| ____ Reproductive rights | ____ Race and ethnic inequality |
| ____ College affordability | ____ Immigration |

19. Have you taken a civics course in school before?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

20. Who was or will be your civics teacher? If you don't know, write down your current social studies teacher.

21. What do you believe is most important to learn in civics class? Why?

22. What do you wish you could learn in civics class? Why?

23. If you are eligible to vote in the United States, do you plan to vote at the age of 18?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ I am not eligible to vote because: _____

24. When I learn information about politics, I try to figure out if the source is just telling one side of the story:

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Just about always
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Only some of the time
- ☐ Never

25. Respond to the following questions about your **current civics or social studies teacher**:

25a. My current civics or social studies teacher makes me feel that she/he really cares about me.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Just about always
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Only some of the time
- ☐ Never

25b. My current civics or social studies teacher gives students time to explain our ideas.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Just about always
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Only some of the time
- ☐ Never

25c. My current civics or social studies teacher knows when the class understands, and when we do not.

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Just about always
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Only some of the time
- ☐ Never

25d. My current civics or social studies teacher takes time to summarize what we learn each day.

- ☐ Always

- Just about always
- Most of the time
- Only some of the time
- Never

25e. My current civics or social studies teacher makes us explain our answers – why we think what we think

- Always
- Just about always
- Most of the time
- Only some of the time
- Never

26. I like the things that we learn about in my civics and social studies classes:

- Always
- Just about always
- Most of the time
- Only some of the time
- Never

27. Students in our civics or social studies class treat the teacher with respect:

- Always
- Just about always
- Most of the time
- Only some of the time
- Never

28. I think civics and/or United States government schoolwork helps me understand what is happening in the world around me.

- True
- False

29. I think that learning about civics and/or United States government topics will be important for my future.

- True
- False

30. I think it is important to be informed about politics.

- True
- False

END SURVEY

Thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

If you would like to be entered into the raffle to win a pair of AirPods, please write your **name** and **email** below so we can contact you if you are the winner.

Name

Email Address

Newspaper Article Treatments

**Please read the following news article about Philadelphia schools.
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August 2021

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