



National Student/Parent MOCK ELECTION

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World's largest national mock election accepting enrollees for 2014 midterms

The National Student/Parent Mock Election, founded in 1980, takes place Oct. 30 and is expected to involve more than 1 million children, teens and adults nationwide.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Schools and teachers nationwide are encouraged to enroll now for the National Student/Parent Mock Election (NSPME), which has helped introduce more than 50 million children, teens and adults to democracy since 1980.

Coordinators who can help recruit and guide participating schools in their designated state or region are also needed, according to NSPME organizers.

“The NSPME is fortunate to have the decades-long support of tens of thousands of volunteers who are devoted, as we are, to ‘passing the torch’ of democracy,” says Gloria Kirshner, co-founder of the NSPME. “We need even more of these civic-minded volunteers to help us preserve and expand this great tradition of the world’s largest national mock election.”

Every two years, 59 educational, civic, business and religious organizations join with the NSPME to support the mock election. Participation is free to students and teachers from kindergarten through college and technical schools, all of whom can enroll through the NSPME website, www.nationalmockelection.org.

All participating classes receive free downloadable teachers’ guides, sample student materials, and a mechanism to record votes, either online or by other means.

Teachers decide how to lead their classes in the national mock election beyond voting. Projects have historically included art displays, debates, contests, plays, songs, essay writing, visits from public officials, candidate forums, pep rallies and other forms of school-wide celebrations.

Participants vote on governors, senators, congressional representatives, and current issues. After the mock election, five national professional organizations join to provide awards for outstanding projects by state, school, district and more.

Results of the mock election are posted online no more than 24 hours after ballots are tallied. Sample ballots are available for practice several weeks before the mock election.

Experts have recognized the NSPME and other voter education projects as essential to young people’s healthy development. The University of Colorado, for example, found in its research that the NSPME provided five broad benefits to students:

- increased political decision-making ability
- the belief that voting is important
- informed involvement on current issues
- the belief that social studies classes are relevant
- the discussion of political and election topics with parents, and
- a reduction in an overall sense of powerlessness.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals has also noted a possible connection between participation in the NSPME and increased civic engagement among young voters.

Pew Charitable Trust raises the possibility that voter education projects like the NSPME may be one reason why the Millennial Generation is more politically active than the previous Generation X.

And CIRCLE, a nonprofit group that researches information on civic education, proclaims mock election projects like the NSPME to be “habit-forming.”

“When young people learn the voting process and vote, they are more likely to do so when they are older, ‘ CIRCLE says on its website. “So getting young people to vote early could be key in raising a new generation of voters.”

Schools that have lost social studies or civics classes because of budget or curriculum cuts may find the NSPME a promising means to help fill the remaining void of civics education, Kirshner points out.

NSPME’s outreach to national and state education organizations comes just as the group embarks on several improvements intended to modernize and expand its ability to inspire young voters. New plans include a modernized balloting system, a physical presence in Washington, D.C., a new website, increased social media outreach, and greater numbers participating than ever before.

Also in the works is a collaboration with VoterBuzz LLC, a start-up social network and voter education website that aims to help the nonprofit become self-funded in time for the 2016 election season.

Donations to the NSPME of any level or amount, from individuals or corporations and including in-kind, are welcome. The NSPME also offers an attractive sponsor package to those who share the group’s mission of promoting voting as the strongest means to “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.”

For more information on becoming a coordinator, send an email to the National Student/Parent Mock Election at nspme@aol.com. To enroll your class or school, go to www.nationalmockelection.org.

To inquire about media coverage, partnerships or sponsorships, contact Christine Hawes at 941-780-3046 or chris@voterbuzz.com. Learn more about the NSPME at www.nationalmockelection.org or its Facebook page.

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