



# Why Action Civics

Action Civics provides students with engaging, rigorous, project-based learning about the democratic process. This instructional process invites real world issues into the classroom and students learn how to analyze, research, dialogue, collaborate, and take informed action on community problems they want to see addressed. Action Civics is 21st century learning at its best, and it creates positive impacts for students academically, socially, and civically.

## The need for engaging civic education

We live in an increasingly politically polarized nation where incivility and distrust in government is at an all-time high and young people report record high levels of cynicism about their government. Yet most students lack access to engaging civic education. Low income students and students of color are least likely to have access to high quality civic instruction to help them develop the skills, knowledge and dispositions to be informed and engaged citizens.

Mikva Challenge's Action Civics programs reverse these negative trends by providing powerful learning opportunities and authentic democratic experiences that engage students not only in civics, but in their own learning. Mikva Challenge provides educators, counselors and youth workers with the curriculum, professional development and support needed to engage young people in high quality, student-centered, project-based Action Civics instruction.

## Beyond civic education, action civics

- Develops academic and social and emotional skills including critical thinking, communication, and collaboration
- Improves school culture and community through youth leadership and youth problem solving
- Enhances teacher effectiveness through inquiry driven, project-based learning
- Creates authentic opportunities for interdisciplinary learning
- Connects classrooms to the larger community and allows students the opportunity to showcase their knowledge and skills

## Mikva Challenge students

**Speak out about issues** affecting them, their schools and their communities

**Advocate for positive change** in their schools and communities

**Collaborate with their peers** to solve a problem

**Research an issue deeply** through primary inquiry and investigation

**Develop goals and an action plan** to effect change

**Showcase their learning and network** with key stakeholders at capstone events

**“The opportunity to participate in experiential and service learning is one of the best ways for students to build essential civic skills and gain important civic knowledge. Research has shown that students who have the opportunity of participating in programs like the Mikva Challenge develop a commitment for life-long, informed civic engagement. The Mikva Challenge and the Mikva Action Civics Network are among the very best civic learning programs in the nation. Every student should have an opportunity to participate in the Mikva Challenge programs.”** — Ted McConnell, Civic Mission of Schools

