

Teach us how to vote

In this issue's editorial, the staff implores administration to include voting literacy in their curriculum more to accommodate the already politically involved Gen Z.

Throughout protests across history, a particular solution arises: voting for change. Guaranteed by the 15th, 19th and 26th Amendments, U.S. citizens 18 and older, regardless of race or gender, may vote. Yet in a world where fake news spreads quickly and easily, knowing how to discern what each candidate stands for and how the voting system works are a necessary part of making an educated vote.

Voters' education entails providing non-partisan, unbiased information. Focusing more on the schematics of voting, schools should teach students more about their political system. In this curriculum, teachers can explain how to register to vote, how to read and submit a ballot and where to find information.

As citizens, one of our greatest responsibilities is to vote for our leaders. However, the manner in which to do this isn't always straightforward. With different voting methods and rules varying by state, it's important for students to have a clear understanding of the voting rules in their state. Per Politico, Florida voting officials rejected more than 35,000 mail-in ballots this primary due to missed deadlines or technical flaws.

Although citizens can't vote until they turn 18, many people begin developing their political views at a younger age. While schools should not directly influence

a person's politics in any way, they should teach students both how to register to vote (something Heritage does in the spring, according to Upper School principal Mrs. Elise Blum) and what their vote means.

National Honor Society hosted a voter registration drive Oct. 5, winning third place in a national contest to sign up voters. "It would be really beneficial if schools could include more about voting education

**2020 youth vote
increased by
8 percentage
points since 2016**

Source: Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University

and a citizen's civic duty in the education," NHS president senior Naila Charania said. "No matter what capacity it's done in, whether it's a schoolwide assembly or incorporated into social studies classes, it's important that people know the potential they have to influence their government."

In eighth grade Civics, students learn about the voting system, and seniors expand upon this in American Government. While this is a solid foundation, schools should establish a curriculum that especially focuses on politics in Florida.

In a study conducted by CIRCLE, Tufts researchers found that "students who learned about voting procedures in high school are more prepared for voting today: they were more likely than their peers to know if their states had online registration, and at least 10 percentage points more likely to respond that they had seen information on how to vote by mail, and to state that they would know where to go find information on voting if their state's election was shifted to all mail-in ballots."

Today, discerning fact from fiction is increasingly more difficult thanks to the spread of information via social media (for more on this, check out the Netflix documentary "The Social Dilemma"). According to Media Literacy Now, media literacy entails decoding media messages and assessing the influence of said messages on feelings, behaviors and thoughts. Especially with political content, part of the voter education curriculum should emphasize how to extract the truth from a sea of misinformation.

While many organizations online provide free information on how to vote, schools should develop their own detailed curriculum for voter education. As voter turnout, especially within the younger population, steadily increases, it's important to ensure all eligible voters know how to make their voices heard.

Already Engaged

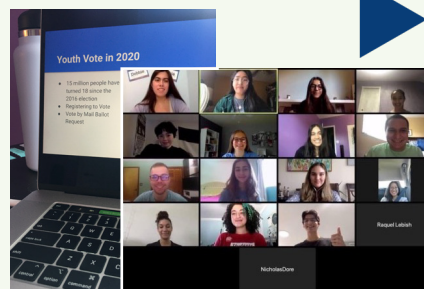


(Photos submitted by Niko Kluver)



SIGN, SEALED, DELIVERED:

Senior Niko Kluver volunteered with Democrat Jen Perelman for her congressional campaign. Volunteering included putting up signs to help get out the vote.



(Photos submitted by Naila Charania)

RING RING: Senior Naila Charania helped with the phone bank for Democrat Debbie Mucarsel-Powell's campaign. Although Mucarsel-Powell ultimately lost, Charania made connections with other politically involved students like alumna Sofia Godoy.

