



# Evaluation of the James Madison Legacy Project: Cohort I Teachers



**James Madison**  
LEGACY PROJECT



**JMLP**

*Georgetown University Research Team*  
JAMES MADISON LEGACY PROJECT



# **Evaluation of the James Madison Legacy Project: Cohort 1 Teachers**

Preliminary Report

November 2016

## **Authors:**

**Diana Owen, Ph.D.**  
Georgetown University  
Principal Investigator

**Scott Schroeder, M.A.**  
Georgetown University  
Research Associate

**G. Isaac W. Riddle, M.A.**  
Georgetown University  
Research Associate

## **Project Officer:**

**Margarita L. Medéndez, M.A., M.Ed.**  
U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Innovation and Improvement

**PR/Award Number U367D150010**  
**James Madison Legacy Project: Professional Development for Teachers of  
Civics and Government**  
U.S. Department of Education

Access the full report online: <http://jmlpresearch.org/research/>

## **Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest**

The research team for this study is based at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Neither the authors nor the staff have financial interests that could be affected by the findings of this study.

## **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to thank all of the schools, principals, teachers, and students who took part in this study. We are grateful to the staff of the Center for Civic Education for their cheerful cooperation and expertise. We appreciate the support of the personnel associated with the James Madison Legacy Project, particularly the state coordinators and mentor teachers.

We greatly value the knowledge and insights imparted by Dr. Ryoko Yamaguchi, President and Chief Scientist of Plus Alpha Research and Consulting, who is the consultant to our project. We also appreciate the commitment and hard work of our program officer, Dr. Margarita Meléndez, in the Office of Innovation and Improvement at the U.S. Department of Education.

We recognize the important contributions of our research team colleagues. We appreciate the work of Jilanne Doom, our Multimedia Specialist, who designed the report. We are thankful for the data input assistance of Tonya Puffett.

# Contents

DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	viii
INTRODUCTION AND STUDY OVERVIEW.....	1
JMLP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR COHORT 1 .....	3
FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION.....	3
PARTICIPATING SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS .....	4
PARTICIPATING TEACHER PROFILE .....	6
TEACHER OUTCOMES.....	10
RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	10
KEY FINDINGS .....	10
STUDY DESIGN .....	10
CIVIC KNOWLEDGE .....	12
CIVICS INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES .....	13
TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY .....	15
TEACHERS’ EVALUATION OF COHORT 1 JMLP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	17
LIVE CONSTITUTIONAL SCHOLAR LECTURES.....	17
KEY FINDINGS .....	18
EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOLAR LECTURES .....	18
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES .....	19
KEY FINDINGS .....	20
EFFECTIVENESS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.....	20
TIME ALLOCATED FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.....	22
KEY FINDINGS .....	22
USE OF TIME .....	22
TEACHER SUGGESTIONS FOR PD ACTIVITIES.....	24
PREPARATION OF IMPLEMENTING THE <i>WE THE PEOPLE</i> CURRICULUM.....	25
KEY FINDINGS .....	25
EFFECTIVENESS OF PREPARATION FOR IMPLEMENTING WTP .....	25
SIMULATED CONGRESSIONAL HEARING PREPARATION .....	27
KEY FINDINGS .....	28
EFFECTIVENESS OF SIMULATED CONGRESSIONAL HEARING PREPARATION.....	28
PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES .....	29
KEY FINDINGS .....	30
EFFECTIVENESS OF PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES.....	30

CONCLUSION.....33

    FINAL COHORT 1 REPORT .....34

APPENDIX: JAMES MADISON LEGACY PROJECT SITES AND PARTNERSHIPS .....36

## Figures

FIGURE 1: MAP OF JMLP COHORT 1 SCHOOL LOCATIONS .....	5
FIGURE 2: JMLP PD WORKFLOW AND ADMINISTRATION OF SURVEYS .....	11
FIGURE 3: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FEATURES OF SCHOLAR LECTURES .....	19
FIGURE 4: EFFECTIVENESS OF JMLP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.....	21
FIGURE 5: TEACHERS WOULD INCLUDE MORE OF THESE ACTIVITIES .....	24
FIGURE 6: EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIVITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING WTP IN THE CLASSROOM .....	26
FIGURE 7: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SIMULATED CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ACTIVITIES .....	29
FIGURE 8: EFFECTIVENESS OF PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES .....	31

## Tables

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF SITES COVERING <i>WE THE PEOPLE</i> UNITS .....	4
TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS MEETING HIGH NEED CRITERIA .....	6
TABLE 3: TYPE OF SCHOOL .....	6
TABLE 4: JMLP PARTICIPANTS' YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE.....	7
TABLE 5: TEACHERS OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS.....	8
TABLE 6: ESTIMATED IMPACTS OF JMLP TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON CIVIC KNOWLEDGE.....	13
TABLE 7: ESTIMATED IMPACTS OF JMLP TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON CIVICS INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES.....	14
TABLE 8: ESTIMATED IMPACTS OF JMLP TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY.....	15
TABLE 9: COMPARISON OF COHORT 1 PARTICIPANTS AND PD SURVEY RESPONDENTS .....	17
TABLE 10: EFFECTIVENESS OF JMLP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES BY INSTRUCTIONAL GRADE LEVEL .....	22
TABLE 11: TEACHER EVALUATION OF TIME SPENT ON JMLP PD ACTIVITIES.....	23
TABLE 12: ACTIVITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CURRICULUM, COMPARISON BY YEARS TEACHING.....	27



EVALUATION OF THE JMLP: COHORT I

# Executive Summary and Study Overview



**James Madison**  
LEGACY PROJECT



**JMLP**

*Georgetown University Research Team*  
JAMES MADISON LEGACY PROJECT

## Executive Summary

The James Madison Legacy Project (JMLP) is a three-year nationwide initiative of the Center for Civic Education that aims to expand the availability and effectiveness of civics instruction in secondary schools by providing professional development based on the *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* curriculum to teachers of high need students. The JMLP is funded by a Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This report evaluates the first of three cohorts of the JMLP with a focus on the 649 teachers from 538 schools nationwide who completed the JMLP PD.

### JMLP Teacher Outcomes

The teacher evaluation consists of a school-level, randomized quasi-experimental study of the impact of the JMLP professional development program administered during Cohort 1.

- Teachers' civic knowledge increased significantly after completing the JMLP PD program. JMLP teachers averaged seven more questions correct on the civic knowledge posttest than the control group teachers.
- After the PD program, JMLP teachers were significantly more inclined than the control group teachers to ascribe to the goals of educating students about core democratic principles and the basics of American government.
- JMLP teachers became more committed to preparing students to take an active role in public affairs and engage in their communities.
- JMLP teachers gained in self-efficacy after going through the PD program. While the JMLP teachers scored higher than the control teachers on self-efficacy post-PD, the difference was not statistically significant.

### Teachers' Evaluation of Cohort 1 JMLP Professional Development

- The vast majority of teachers found scholar lectures and professional development activities related to civics content, classroom pedagogy, and resource familiarization led by mentor teachers to be very effective.
- 95% of teachers felt that practical exercises for implementing activities and lessons in the classroom were effective.
- 82% of respondents reported that they felt well prepared to implement the *We the People* program in their classrooms.
- Participating teachers valued the experience of their mentor teachers in preparing them to lead simulated congressional hearings with their students.
- 88% of teachers agreed that they will use the JMLP network to access professional development opportunities and to assist them with gaining information about WTP or civic education events.



# James Madison

## LEGACY PROJECT



### Introduction and Study Overview

The James Madison Legacy Project (JMLP) is a three-year nationwide initiative of the Center for Civic Education that aims to expand the availability and effectiveness of civics instruction in elementary and secondary schools by providing professional development (PD) to teachers of high need students. The JMLP seeks to increase the number of highly effective teachers through professional development based on the Center's *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* (WTP) curriculum. The professional development program is designed to improve teachers' civics content knowledge and develop their pedagogic skills in order to enhance students' achievement in attaining state standards in civics and government. Ultimately, the JMLP will provide PD to 2,025 teachers instructing at least 202,500 students in a minimum of 500 participating schools with significant concentrations of high need students. It also will develop and evaluate the efficacy of a scalable version of the PD program that will incorporate digital resources as opposed to relying solely on face-to-face presentations by scholars. The Center is implementing the JMLP through its nationwide network of affiliated organizations that will support the program's expansion and sustainability. The JMLP is funded by a Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant of the U.S. Department of Education.

This report evaluates the first of three cohorts of the JMLP with a focus on teacher outcomes. Teachers participated in the JMLP PD program in the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016. Cohort 1 received the traditional WTP professional development program where live scholars lecture on the content at meetings of teachers. This Cohort provides a baseline to which subsequent cohorts receiving the PD that includes the digital content will be compared. The Cohort 1 teachers were able to fully implement the WTP curriculum in their classrooms during the 2016-17 academic year. This preliminary report does not include student outcomes for Cohort 1 as data collection is in progress.

The report has three major components.

- The first section provides an overview of the JMLP professional development for Cohort 1 and identifies the characteristics of the participating teachers and schools.
- The second section consists of an evaluation of the JMLP focusing on teacher outcomes, in particular civic knowledge gains, civics instructional goals, and teacher self-efficacy.
- The third section reports the results of a survey of JMLP participants who assessed the professional development experience.



EVALUATION OF THE JMLP: COHORT I

# JMLP Professional Development



**James Madison**  
LEGACY PROJECT



**JMLP**

*Georgetown University Research Team*  
JAMES MADISON LEGACY PROJECT

## **JMLP Professional Development for Cohort 1**

The JMLP PD prepares teachers to instruct their students using the *We the People* curriculum. WTP has involved over 28 million students and 75,000 teachers in all fifty states and the District of Columbia since 1987. The WTP program is grounded in the foundations and institutions of American government. It is distinctive for its emphasis on U.S. Constitutional principles, the Bill of Rights, and Supreme Court cases. The program relates foundational principles to current issues and debates. The curriculum consists of six units:

- Unit 1: What Are the Philosophical and Historical Foundations of the American Political System?
- Unit 2: How Did the Framers Create the Constitution?
- Unit 3: How Has the Constitution Been Changed to Further the Ideals Contained in the Declaration of Independence?
- Unit 4: How Have the Values and Principles Embodied in the Constitution Shaped American Institutions and Practices?
- Unit 5: What Rights Does the Bill of Rights Protect?
- Unit 6: What Challenges Might Face American Constitutional Democracy in the Twenty-first Century?

Students take part in a range of learning activities, such as group projects, debates, and student speeches, culminating in simulated congressional hearings. WTP middle and high school classes have the opportunity to participate in statewide competitions based on the congressional hearings. States send representatives to the National Finals in Washington, D.C., held each spring.

The first cohort of JMLP teachers began the program during the 2015-16 academic year. The Center drew upon its established network of state coordinators in forty-six states and the District of Columbia to recruit teachers and initiate the JMLP program rapidly. The PD was administered at twenty-six sites consisting of fourteen single-state and twelve multi-state sites. (See Appendix A for a list of the sites and partnerships.) A total of 649 of the 675 teachers that were recruited for Cohort 1 (96%) completed the JMLP. There are a variety of reasons for teachers dropping out of the program, including change in teaching or school assignment, health issues, and family obligations.

### **Fidelity of Implementation**

Cohort 1 of the JMLP received the PD that traditionally has been employed by the Center to instruct teachers in the *We the People* curriculum. The traditional PD relies on live presentations by scholar experts at face-to-face meetings with teachers to impart content related to the six units of the WTP curriculum. The PD also includes sessions on classroom pedagogy facilitated by mentor teachers who are members of the Center's network. In addition, the PD provides teachers with the opportunity to prepare for and take part in the simulated congressional hearings that they will be implementing in their classrooms with students.

The SEED grant was awarded in October after the start of the school year. Cohort 1 PD took place over the course of the 2015-16 academic year beginning in November of 2015 and ending in June of 2016. Implementing the Cohort 1 PD program was challenging given the shortened time frame that did not include summer break. Normally, the WTP PD program is anchored by a multi-day summer institute that is supplemented by follow up sessions during the academic year. Cohort 1 PD did not include a summer institute; instead, the sites held PD meetings of two or more days during the academic year with follow-up sessions and activities. On average, the sites provided teachers with 38 hours and 50 minutes of professional development. Twenty-five of the sites provided at least 30 hours of PD, and eight sites offered 40 hours or more of PD. The hours per site ranged from 26 hours and 45 minutes to 68 hours and 25 minutes, with a standard deviation of 11 hours and 15 minutes.

The PD at all but three sites featured live scholar presentations. Teachers at four sites accessed content presentations remotely. Five of the sites hosted online sessions where participants could fulfill some of the program requirements. At twenty-five of the sites, teachers were given an overview of the simulated congressional hearings and were instructed in how to conduct the hearings with their classes. Participants at twenty-three sites engaged in practical exercises related to the hearings. Teachers at thirteen of the sites attended WTP simulated congressional hearings and competitions held in their states. Field trips were part of the PD experience for teachers at nine sites.

Despite the abbreviated time frame for the Cohort 1 PD program, implementation of the curriculum elements was robust. The vast majority of sites covered all six units of the WTP curriculum. As Table 1 indicates, all but one site covered Unit 2 and all but two sites covered content related to Units 1, 3, and 5. Unit 4 was addressed by nineteen sites and Unit 6 by twenty-two sites.

**Table 1**  
**Number of Sites Covering *We the People* Units**

Unit 1: Foundations of American Political System	24
Unit 2: Framers and the Constitution	25
Unit 3: Ideals in the Declaration of Independence	25
Unit 4: Values and Principles of the Constitution	19
Unit 5: Bill of Rights	24
Unit 6: Democracy in the Twenty-first Century	22

### **Participating School Characteristics**

The JMLP focused on recruiting teachers from schools identified as “high need” based on their Title 1 status and/or whether 30% or more of their students were: 1) provided with free or reduced cost lunches, 2) living in poverty, 3) homeless or in foster care, 4) disconnected or migrant youth, 5) incarcerated youth, 6) served by rural local educational agencies, 7) minority students, 8) English Language Learners, 9) far below grade level, and 10) students with disabilities.

A total of 538 schools participated in Cohort 1 of the JMLP. As the map depicted in Figure 1 depicts, the JMLP was instituted in schools across the United States.

**Figure 1**  
**Map of JMLP Cohort 1 School Locations**

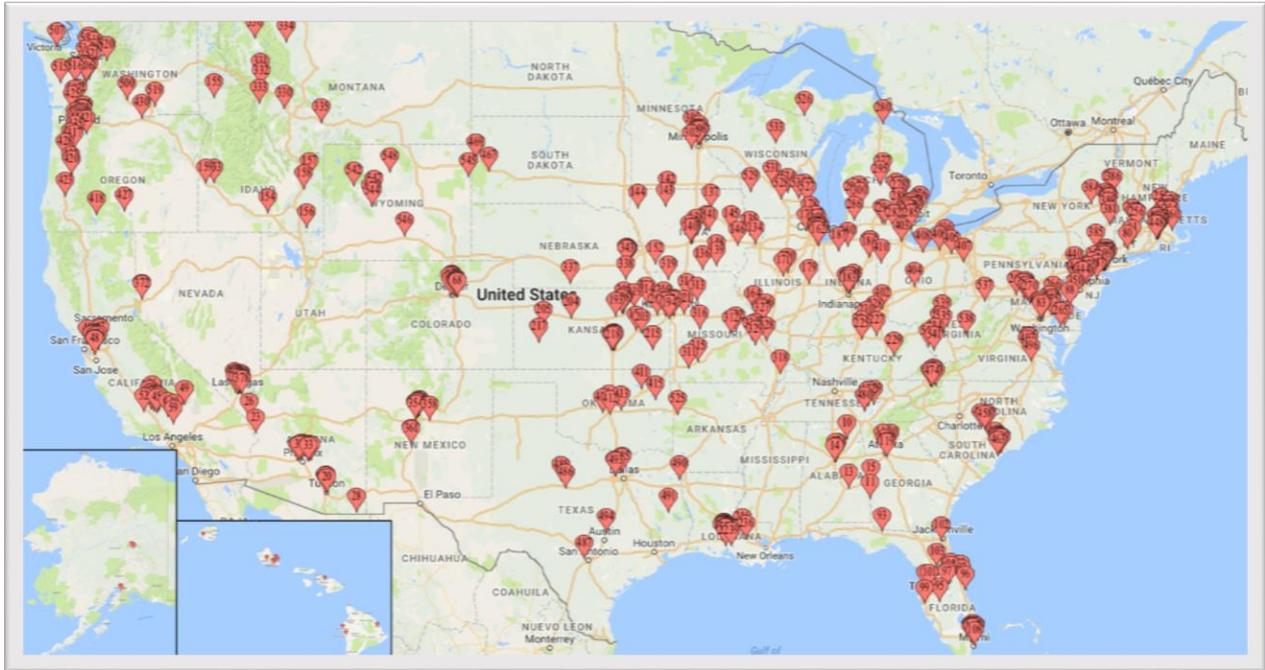


Table 2 presents the percentage of schools meeting the criteria necessary to be designated as high need. A total of 479 schools (88%) qualify as high need based on their Title 1 status and/or their ability to meet the additional criteria. Schools were validated as Title 1 eligible based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics (<https://nces.ed.gov>). 350 of the participating institutions (65%) are designated as Title 1 schools. 469 schools (87%) are located in Title 1 school districts, although being located in a Title 1 district is not sufficient for classifying a school as high need. In addition to the 350 Title 1 schools, 129 schools qualified as high need because 30% or more of their student population meets one or more of the specified high need criteria. 83% of participating schools meet the free or reduced lunch criteria. 61% instruct a high percentage of students living in poverty. 58% serve significant minority populations. More than one third of the schools have large numbers of students below grade level. English Language Learners are substantially represented in nearly 30% of the schools. 26% of the schools serve a high percentage of students with disabilities. 16% of schools have a high percentage of students who are homeless or living in foster care.

**Table 2**  
**Percentage of Schools Meeting High Need Criteria**

<b>Title 1 School</b>	65%
<b>Title 1 School District</b>	87%
<b>Schools where 30% of students or more are:</b>	
Provided with free or reduced cost lunches	83%
Living in poverty	61%
Minority students	58%
Far below grade level	37%
English Language Learners	29%
Students with disabilities	26%
Homeless or in foster care	16%
Served by rural local educational agencies	10%
Disconnected or migrant youth	9%
Incarcerated youth	4%

The schools that participated in Cohort 1 of the JMLP overwhelmingly are public (97%). A small number of alternative, charter, magnet, technical, parochial, and religious schools took part in the program. (See Table 3.) The schools are evenly divided between rural (33%), suburban (32%), and urban (35%) locations.

**Table 3**  
**Type of School**

<b>School Type</b>	<b>Percentage of Schools</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>
Public	97%	522
Private	3%	16
Alternative	4%	22
Charter	4%	21
Magnet	6%	32
Technical	1%	5
Parochial	1%	7
Religious	2%	10

### **Participating Teacher Profile**

The profile of the Cohort 1 JMLP participating teachers reflects the diverse backgrounds and experience levels of educators of high need students. All participants teach civic education classes where they can implement the WTP curriculum, such as social studies, U.S. government, and American history. Many also are teachers in a wide range of disciplines, including English, math, reading, science, world history, comparative politics, economics, personal finance, business, geography, psychology, sociology, drama, and law.

The JMLP is aimed primarily at middle and high school teachers, although WTP textbooks and the curriculum are available for all three levels. 66% of the participants are high school teachers, 49% teach middle school, and 18% are elementary school teachers. 15% of teachers instruct both elementary and middle school students. 18% of the teachers teach both middle and high school students. The average number of civics students assigned to middle school teachers is 49 per semester; the number of students per instructor ranges from eight to 190. High school teachers taught an average of 43 civics students per semester, with a range of twelve to 240 students<sup>1</sup>.

In terms of education, 38% of the teachers hold a bachelor’s degree, 59% have a master’s degree, 1% earned a law degree, and 2% have a doctorate. Four pre-service teachers took part in the Cohort 1 JMLP PD. The experience of the participants ranges from first year teachers to those who have been in the classroom for over 40 years. On average, they have been teaching for twelve years with a standard deviation of eight years; the median is ten years of teaching. There are 42 first year teachers in Cohort 1 who comprise 8% of the participants. 33% of the participants have been teaching for six years or less, and 50% have been teaching for ten years or less. They average ten years (median eight years) specifically teaching social studies, U.S. government, or civics. 81 of the participants are first year civics teachers. On average, the JMLP teachers have been at their present schools for seven years (median five years). (See Table 4.)

**Table 4**  
**JMLP Participants’ Years of Teaching Experience**

	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Years Teaching	10 years	12 years	8 years
Years Teaching Civics	8 years	10 years	8 years
Years Teaching Present School	5 years	7 years	7 years

Over one-quarter of the teachers in the study educate special populations.<sup>2</sup> As Table 5 illustrates, 9% of the JMLP participants are special education teachers, 6% instruct English Language Learners, and 6% teach Native American students. A smaller percentage teach adult learners, vocational school students, and incarcerated students.

---

<sup>1</sup> We define elementary school as grades 1-6, middle school as grades 7-8, and high school as grades 9-12.

<sup>2</sup> Special populations as defined by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act consist of individuals with disabilities, individuals from economically disadvantaged families, students in programs that are designated as preparing them for occupations or fields of work in which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25% of the total number of individuals employed in that occupation or field of work, single parents, displaced homemakers, and English Language Learners. (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/sectech/leg/perkins/index.html>)

**Table 5**  
**Teachers of Special Populations**

Special Education	9%
English Language Learners	6%
Native American Students	6%
Adult Learners	3%
Vocational School	2%
Incarcerated Students	1%



EVALUATION OF THE JMLP: COHORT I

# Teacher Outcomes



**James Madison**  
LEGACY PROJECT



**JMLP**

*Georgetown University Research Team*  
JAMES MADISON LEGACY PROJECT

## **Teacher Outcomes**

This study evaluates teacher outcomes for Cohort 1 of the JMLP. The outcomes evaluated include teacher civic knowledge, learning objectives, and self-efficacy. Student outcomes are being assessed during the 2016 fall semester after the participating teachers have completed their professional development program and have the opportunity to implement fully the WTP curriculum in their classes.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the evaluation of teacher outcomes:

- To what extent do teachers gain content knowledge from the JMLP PD program?
- To what extent does the JMLP PD influence teachers' commitment to goal of educating students about core democratic principles and the basics of American government?
- To what extent does the JMLP PD influence teachers' commitment to the goal of preparing students to take an active role in public affairs and engage in their communities?
- To what extent does the JMLP PD foster teacher self-efficacy?

### **Key Findings**

- Teachers who completed the JMLP PD scored on average seven points higher on the civics knowledge test than those who did not go through the JMLP program. The difference in the knowledge scores is statistically significant.
- After completing the PD program, JMLP teachers were significantly more inclined than the control group to ascribe to the goals of educating students about core democratic principles and the basics of American government.
- JMLP teachers became significantly more committed than the control group to preparing students to take an active role in public affairs and engage in their communities.
- JMLP teachers gained in self-efficacy after going through the PD program. However, the difference in self-efficacy between the JMLP teachers and control teachers was not statistically significant.

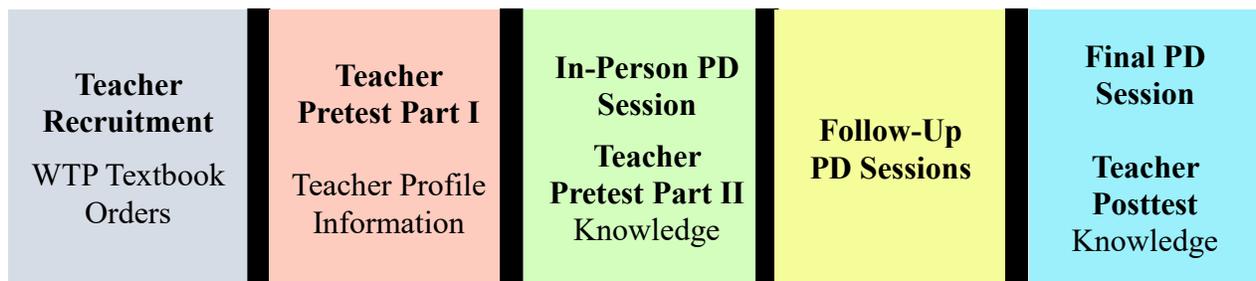
### **Study Design**

The teacher evaluation consists of a school-level, randomized quasi-experimental study of the impact of the JMLP PD. Forty of the teachers participating in the PD and forty control teachers were randomly assigned to the study. The eighty teachers in the study are associated with twenty-five schools. Cooperation with the research study among the teachers in the sample was excellent. Complete data were collected on the forty teachers in the intervention group, all of whom successfully finished the JMLP PD program. The forty control teachers remained for

the entire study. However, a small number of control teachers did not complete all sections of posttest. One control teacher failed to finish the entire knowledge posttest, another did not complete the learning objections section of the survey, and two other control teachers did not answer all of the self-efficacy items. The list-wise deletion method for missing values was applied to these cases for the relevant outcomes.<sup>3</sup> Steps were taken to maintain the participation of the control group teachers in the study. They were offered the opportunity to receive the JMLP PD as a member of Cohort 2 or Cohort 3. Several of the Cohort 1 control teachers enrolled in the Cohort 2 PD program. Additionally, control teachers received a stipend for their participation in the research. They also were contacted repeatedly by the JMLP state coordinators, the implementation team, and Georgetown University research team, and encouraged to complete the study requirements.

Surveys were administered online to teachers before the start of the professional development program and after its completion. The pretests went into the field in November of 2015 and the posttests were administered in May/June of 2016 coinciding with the timing of the PD in each site. The pretest survey was administered in two parts on different days to minimize fatigue. The first pretest survey included items pertaining to the teachers’ professional background and their schools as well as questions about their teaching objectives, classroom pedagogy, and self-efficacy. The second part of the pretest contained the knowledge questions. The posttest was administered in a single session, and contained civic knowledge, civics teaching objectives, and self-efficacy items. The posttest also included some questions related to the teachers’ experience with the professional development program. The surveys were proctored to preclude teachers from looking up the answers to the knowledge questions. (See Figure 2 for JMLP PD workflow and administration of surveys chart.)

**Figure 2**  
**JMLP PD Workflow and Administration of Surveys**



<sup>3</sup> Where responses were missing, the analysis was replicated using mean substitution and sensitivity analysis was conducted. The substitution of the average scores for the missing control teacher made no difference in the findings.

Hierarchical linear models were estimated using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to determine the effectiveness of the JMLP teacher professional development on teachers' knowledge of core civics material, teaching objectives, and self-efficacy. The teacher posttest score for each concept is the dependent variable. The pretest score is entered as a covariate. A variable representing the random assignment to the professional development or the control group is a fixed factor in the model. A random factor is entered for the schools in the sample. The unadjusted posttest mean knowledge scores and standard deviations, the estimated mean outcomes and the standard errors, and the difference in the adjusted mean scores are reported for the PD and control groups. Hedge's *g* is used to compute the effect size.

## Civic Knowledge

Teachers' civic knowledge is based on sixty questions included on the pretest, which established the baseline, and posttest surveys. The knowledge items cover topics that are central to the civics and social studies curriculum in general. They measure knowledge of the founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, democratic principles, government institutions, Supreme Court cases, political parties, elections, and the media's role in politics. The questions were developed after consulting prior research, civics inventories, civics tests, and state civic education rubrics. The research team intentionally avoided using any materials related to *We the People* when creating the knowledge pretests and posttests. Forty-eight of the items were used in a study conducted by the evaluator of teachers using the *We the People* curriculum in Indiana during the 2014-15 academic year.<sup>4</sup> The tests include both original questions and items that have been previously tested and have known reliability. With the exception of three open-ended items, the tests consist of multiple choice questions. Each item is coded 1 for a correct answer and 0 for an incorrect answer. The "don't know" responses are considered incorrect.<sup>5</sup> The sixty items were combined into additive indexes for the pretest and posttest. The reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for the pretest index is .961 and for the posttest index is .969. (Question wording and answers to the knowledge items appear in Appendix B.)

The civic knowledge of the teachers who received the JMLP professional development increased from the pretest to the posttest, while the control teachers' knowledge dropped slightly. The mean pretest score is 39.28 for the PD group (*s*=13.50) and 43.22 for the control group (*s*=12.44). The difference between the pretest mean scores for the PD and control groups is not statistically significant. As Table 6 depicts, the adjusted posttest score for the PD group is 48.27 compare to 40.90 for the control group, indicating that the PD group scored over seven points higher on the posttest than the control group. The mean difference is statistically significant

---

<sup>4</sup> Owen, Diana. 2015. *High School Students' Acquisition of Civic Knowledge: The Impact of We the People*. Research report for the Center for Civic Education. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, May.

<sup>5</sup> Luskin, Robert C., and John G. Bullock. 2011. "'Don't Know' Means 'Don't Know': DK Responses and the Public's Level of Political Knowledge." *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 73, no. 2: 547-557.

( $p \leq .00$ ). The effects size (Hedge's  $g$ ) for the difference in means for the PD and control group on civic knowledge is .76, indicating a large effect<sup>6</sup>.

**Table 6**  
**Estimated Impacts of JMLP Teacher Professional Development on Civic Knowledge**

	n	Unadjusted		Adjusted		$\bar{x}$ Difference	p	Effect Size
		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SE			
<b>PD</b>	40	47.45	5.40	48.27	1.04			
<b>Control</b>	39	41.73	12.44	40.90	1.00	7.37	.00	.76

### Civics Instructional Objectives

Teachers were asked about the objectives they sought to achieve in their civics classrooms before and after the JMLP PD. The study takes into account four types of goals: 1) educating students about core democratic principles and the basics of American government; 2) preparing students to take an active role in public affairs and their communities; 3) educating students about cultural diversity, social conditions, and the United States' relationship to other nations; and 4) preparing students for future employment and economic self-sufficiency.

The survey items asked how much the teachers emphasized specific objectives in their classrooms. The items were grouped into four categories: 1) civics basics, 2) civic engagement, 3) culture and society, and 4) economics. Each of the objectives is measured on a four point scale ranging from 1 "not at all" to 4 "a great deal." Civics basics is measured by four items: 1) educating students about core democratic principles as set forth in the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution; 2) teaching students about how early American history influenced the development of the U.S. government; 3) educating students about government and how it works; and 4) teaching students about the electoral process (index reliability: pretest  $\alpha = .978$ , posttest  $\alpha = .977$ ). Civic engagement is tapped by four items: 1) preparing students to take an active role in community affairs; 2) preparing students to follow government and politics through media; 3) preparing students to exercise their right to vote; and 4) preparing students to use 21st century technology and media to engage with politics (index reliability: pretest  $\alpha = .863$ , posttest  $\alpha = .980$ ). Three items measure objectives related to culture and society: 1) developing an understanding of cultural diversity; 2) encouraging students to be aware of social conditions; and 3) educating students about the relationship of the United States to other nations and world affairs (index reliability: pretest  $\alpha = .807$ , posttest  $\alpha = .972$ ). Finally, the economics measure is based on three items: 1) teaching students about the economic system; 2) providing students with marketable skills for future employment; and 3) preparing people to become economically self-sufficient (index reliability: pretest  $\alpha = .794$ , posttest  $\alpha = .947$ ).

---

<sup>6</sup>Cohen, Jacob. 1988. *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

The JMLP teachers became more committed to the goal of educating students about core democratic principles and the basics of American government after going through the PD program. (See Table 7.) Their pretest mean score on the civics basics index was 10.82 which improved to an adjusted posttest score of 11.37. There is almost no change from the pretest (10.71) to the posttest (10.74) for the control group. The adjusted mean difference on the posttest between the PD and control groups is .65. There is a medium effect size for this relationship.

Both the PD and the control group teachers registered a greater commitment to teaching about civic engagement to their classes between the pretest and the posttest. They had similar mean scores on the pretest (12.70 for the PD group and 12.66 for the control group). The PD group’s adjusted posttest mean of 14.53 is greater than the adjusted posttest mean for the control group of 13.53 ( $\bar{x}$  difference = 1.00). This relationship is statistically significant, and the effect size is medium.

While the adjusted posttest mean score the PD group is larger than that of the control group for the goal of educating students about social conditions and diversity, the relationship is not statistically significant. The same holds true for goals related to educating students for future employment and economic self-sufficiency. The adjusted mean score for the PD group exceeds that of the control group, but the relationship is not statistically significant once the Benjamini and Hochberg correction is applied.

**Table 7**  
**Estimated Impacts of JMLP Teacher Professional Development**  
**on Civics Instructional Objectives**

	n	Unadjusted $\bar{x}$	SD	Adjusted $\bar{x}$	S.E.	$\bar{x}$ Difference	p	Effect Size
<b>Civics Basics</b>								
PD	40	11.49	.94	11.37	.189			
Control	39	10.74	1.18	10.71	.183	.65	.02	.61
<b>Engagement</b>								
PD	40	14.82	1.54	14.53	.691			
Control	39	13.19	2.64	13.53	.700	1.00	.02	.46
<b>Culture/Society</b>								
PD	40	11.07	1.32	10.94	.256			
Control	39	10.29	1.87	10.32	.244	.62	.09	.33
<b>Economics</b>								
PD	40	11.10	1.35	10.95	.318			
Control	39	9.95	2.17	10.06	.305	.89	.05	.48

Benjamini and Hochberg corrected significance level  $q=.025$

## Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy is measured by seven items adapted from Bandura's<sup>7</sup> self-efficacy scale asking how much each respondent can do: 1) to get through to the most difficult students; 2) to keep students on task on difficult assignments; 3) to increase students' memory of what they have been taught in previous lessons; 4) to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork; 5) to overcome the influence of adverse community conditions on students; 6) to help students think critically; and 7) to help other teachers with their teaching skills. Each item is measured on a five-point scale ranging from 1 "nothing" to 5 "a great deal." The seven items were combined to form a self-efficacy index (index reliability: pretest  $\alpha=.855$ , posttest  $\alpha=.981$ ).

The mean pretest scores on the self-efficacy index are very similar for the PD group ( $\bar{x}=26.75$ ,  $s=4.44$ ) and the control group ( $\bar{x}=26.85$ ,  $s=3.23$ ). The difference in the mean pretest scores for the PD and the control group is not statistically significant. The mean self-efficacy score for the PD group increased to 28.05 after the teachers had completed the program. The difference in means based on the results of a paired samples t-test approaches statistical significance at  $p\leq.09$ . The results of the ANCOVA indicate that the adjusted mean self-efficacy score for the PD group increased and is higher than that of the control group. However, the mean difference is not statistically significant ( $p\leq.13$ ) and the effect size is small. (See Table 8.)

**Table 8**  
**Estimated Impacts of JMLP Teacher Professional Development on Teacher Self-Efficacy**

	n	Unadjusted $\bar{x}$	SD	Adjusted $\bar{x}$	S.E.	$\bar{x}$ Difference	p	Effect Size
<b>Self Efficacy</b>								
PD	40	28.05	3.88	27.23	.760			
Control	38	25.61	4.44	25.74	.983	1.49	.13	.35

<sup>7</sup> Bandura, Albert. 2006. "Guide for Constructing Self-Efficacy Scales," in Frank Pajares and Tim Urdan, eds., *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents*. Scottsdale, AZ: Information Age Publishing, pp. 307-337.



EVALUATION OF THE JMLP: COHORT I

# Professional Development Evaluation



**James Madison**  
LEGACY PROJECT



**JMLP**

*Georgetown University Research Team*  
JAMES MADISON LEGACY PROJECT

## Teachers' Evaluation of Cohort 1 JMLP Professional Development

In August 2016, the Georgetown University research team sent an online survey to all Cohort 1 teachers asking them to assess their JMLP PD experience. The survey was voluntary; 346 of the 671 participating teachers (52%) responded. All of the 26 JMLP sites were represented in the survey, which included all 47 of the states/territories that participated in Cohort 1.

The teaching experience of the respondents to the PD survey closely represented the experience of the population of teachers participating in Cohort 1. The average years teaching for all Cohort 1 participants was 11.73 years and the mean for the PD survey sample was 11.95 years. Of the Cohort 1 population, 34% taught middle school and 66% taught high school.<sup>8</sup> The PD survey sample was split between 36% middle school teachers and 64% high school teachers. (See Table 9.)

**Table 9**  
**Comparison of Cohort 1 Participants and PD Survey Respondents**

	Measurement	Cohort 1 Actual	Survey Respondents
<b>Years Teaching</b>	Mean	11.73 years	11.95 years
	Standard Deviation	8.36 years	8.14 years
	Mode	10 years	10 years
	4 years or less	23%	21%
	5-9 years	24%	26%
	10-16 years	27%	27%
	17 years or more	27%	27%
<b>Grade Level</b>	Middle School	37%	36%
	High School	63%	64%

The responses from the sample of PD survey participants assess the effectiveness of the activities conducted during the Cohort 1 PD programs. The survey questions focus primarily on the core elements of the PD program: 1) the use of live constitutional scholar lectures; 2) the effectiveness of the most common activities employed during the PD sessions; 3) the preparation for implementing the WTP curriculum; 4) simulated congressional hearing preparation; and 5) professional networking resources.

### Live Constitutional Scholar Lectures

25 of the Cohort 1 sites incorporated live constitutional scholars into their PD programs. The constitutional scholars are subject area experts, often university professors and practicing attorneys, with extensive backgrounds in practicing constitutional law or teaching subjects with

<sup>8</sup>Teachers' instructional grade level is simplified here, and represents the highest grade level that the teacher is instructing. Some teachers instruct both middle and high school students, as is indicated earlier in the report.

constitutional application. The scholars gave lectures covering one or more of the six units of instruction from the WTP curriculum.

### **Key Findings**

- A strong majority of teachers found the scholar lectures to be very effective.
- All of the features associated with the scholar lectures were rated highly by the participants.

### **Effectiveness of Scholar Lectures**

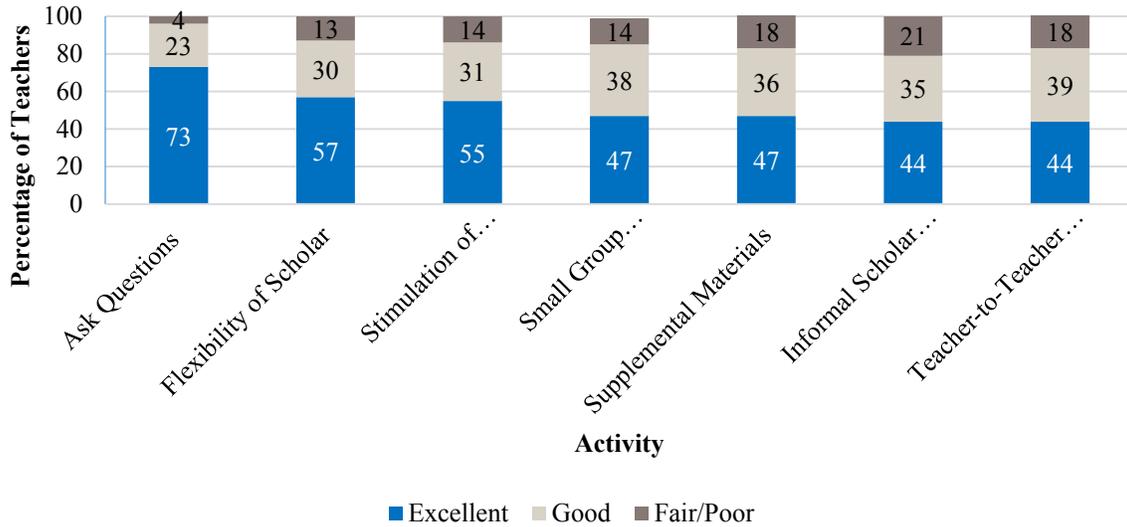
Respondents were asked to provide an overall rating of the effectiveness of the constitutional scholar lectures using a 10 point scale, ranging from 0 “not at all effective” to 10 “extremely effective.” The teachers found the scholar lectures to be very effective. The mean score on the scale was 8.3 (median = 9, mode = 10).

Respondents were asked to rate the features of the lectures on a four point scale ranging from excellent to poor. The following features were assessed:

- Opportunity to ask questions of the scholars during lecture
- Small group discussions on scholar queried topics (table discussions)
- Flexibility of scholars to delve into participant areas of interest
- Time with scholars outside of lecture periods
- Supplemental materials provided by the scholar
- Teacher-to-teacher interaction moderated by the scholar
- Stimulation of the live presentation

There was strong consensus among the teachers that the inclusion of live congressional scholars contributed greatly to the success of the professional development programs. As Figure 1 demonstrates, all of the features associated with the scholar lectures were rated excellent to good by 70% or more of the JMLP teachers. 96% of respondents rated the ability to ask questions of scholars during lectures as excellent (73%) to good. Teachers gave high marks to the flexibility of scholars to delve into their areas of interest (87% good to excellent, 57% excellent). Respondents felt strongly that the live scholar presentations were stimulating. The small group discussions moderated by the lecturer also were regarded highly. Contingency tables and chi square tests were generated to compare responses between middle school and high schools teachers as well as years of teaching experience. None of these results are statistically significant.

**Figure 3**  
**Effectiveness of the Features of Scholar Lectures**



The teachers were overwhelmingly complimentary of the scholars and their experiences during the lecture periods in open-ended responses. They were impressed by the broad extent of the scholars' subject-area knowledge, and with their ability to associate constitutional principles with current events and real-world applications. The teachers were pleased with the presentation of resources, materials, and teaching aids that could be utilized in their classrooms. Several of the teachers expressed gratitude for the scholars' willingness to volunteer their time to assist them in the future. The most common criticism expressed by the teachers was the need for more time with the scholars. Some of the teachers felt the lectures appeared rushed due to time constraints.

### **Professional Development Activities**

Professional development activities, often led by mentor teachers, are one of the key elements of the JMLP. These activities fall into three broad categories: 1) additional content discussion, 2) practical exercises, and 3) resource familiarization. Content discussion typically takes the form of a small group session facilitated by mentor teachers during which the participants ask questions, review the scholar lecture, and discuss other topics. Many of the PD programs incorporated practical exercises where the mentor teacher acted as the class leader and the teachers performed the role of the students. These activities are intended to offer hands-on, stimulating application of the content as well as to give the teachers additional tools for their classrooms. All of the PD programs spent time familiarizing the teachers with WTP textbooks and online resources. The research team surveyed teachers' opinions of the effectiveness of these activities to get a sense of best practices and areas for improvement.

## **Key Findings**

- Teachers found the professional development activities to be very effective.
- 97% of teachers found practical exercises for implementing activities/lessons in the classroom to be very to somewhat effective.
- Teachers gave the lowest rating to familiarization with JMLP online resources, with 38% rating it very effective.
- Middle school teachers were more likely than high school teachers to find the professional development activities to be effective.

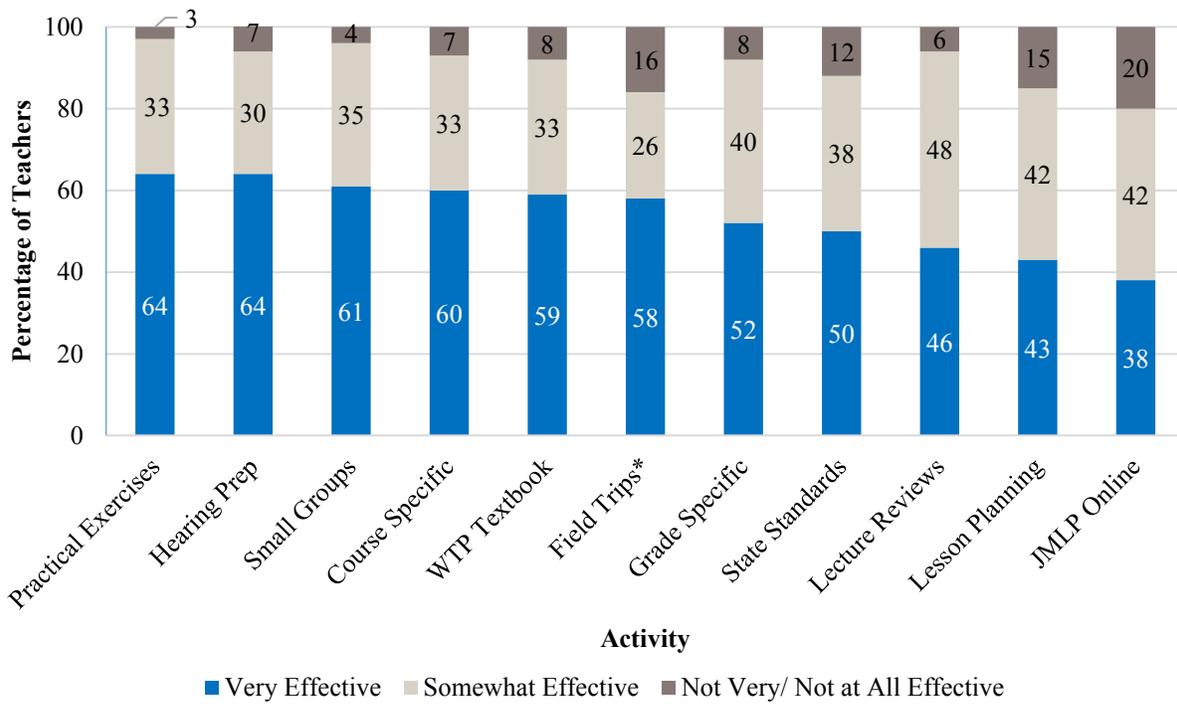
## **Effectiveness of Professional Development Activities**

The JMLP teachers provided their opinions about the effective of the following activities using a four point rating scale ranging from very effective to not at all effective:

- Practical exercises for implementing activities/lessons in the classroom
- Scholar lecture review sessions
- Mentor-led small group discussions
- Simulated congressional hearing preparation
- Grade level-specific curriculum implementation strategies
- Course-specific (e.g. history/economics/government, etc.) curriculum implementation strategies
- Strategies for incorporating state standards into the WTP curriculum
- General lesson planning
- Field trips to historic sites
- Familiarization with JMLP online resources
- Familiarization with WTP textbooks

The vast majority of teachers found the activities they participated in to be highly effective. Over 80% of participants rated each of the PD activities to be at least somewhat effective. (See Figure 2.) Teachers viewed the practical exercises for implementing activities and lessons in the classroom to be the most effective with 97% rating them as very (64%) or somewhat effective. Teachers rated as very to somewhat effective the mentor-led small group discussions (96%), simulated congressional hearing preparation (94%), course-specific curriculum implementation strategies (93%), and WTP textbook familiarization (92%). While satisfaction is still high, a smaller percentage of teachers found grade-specific curriculum implementation strategies, strategies for incorporating state standards into the curriculum, scholar lecture reviews, and general lesson planning to be very effective. Familiarization with JMLP online resources had the lowest score, with 38% rating it very effective. While only nine sites offered field trips, the participating teachers found them to be worthwhile activities. Across the board, a greater percentage of the middle school teachers than high school teachers reported the activities to be very effective.

**Figure 4**  
**Effectiveness of JMLP Professional Development Activities**



\* Only 40% of the teachers surveyed participated in field trips as part of their professional development program. These values are calculated for the 144 teachers who reported on their field trip experiences.

There is no difference in views about professional development activities based on teachers’ years of experience. However, there are some statistically significant differences based on teachers’ instructional level. As Table 10 indicates, middle school teachers are more likely than high school teachers to find simulated congressional hearing preparation, strategies for implementing state standards into the WTP curriculum, familiarization with JMLP online resources, and general lesson planning to be very effective activities.

**Table 10**  
**Effectiveness of JMLP Professional Development Activities**  
**by Instructional Grade Level**  
 (% Very Effective)

	<b>Middle School Teachers</b>	<b>High School Teachers</b>	<b>Chi-Square Significance</b>
Simulated Congressional Hearing Preparation	70%	57%	.04
Strategies for Implementing State Standards into the WTP Curriculum	60%	41%	.01
Familiarization with JMLP Online Resources	47%	28%	.01
General Lesson Planning	46%	38%	.04

### **Time Allocated for Professional Development Activities**

Time is a limited resource, especially in the course of a single or multi-day professional development event. In order to assess the effectiveness of time allocation on various activities, teachers in the survey were asked to indicate whether or not they believed the right amount of time, too much time, or not enough time was spent on the activities described in the previous section.

#### **Key Findings**

- The majority of teachers felt that the right amount of time was spent on each of the professional development activities.
- Teachers wanted to spend more time on general lesson planning (38%), grade level curriculum implementation strategies (36%), and familiarization with JMLP online resources (31%).
- 42% of teachers would like more practical exercises as part of their PD program.

#### **Use of Time**

The majority of teachers believed the right amount of time was spent on each of the activities. (See Table 11.) 78% of teachers agreed that the right amount of time was spent on familiarization with WTP textbooks. The activities which garnered the next highest consensus for the proper amount of time allocated during the PD sessions were mentor-led small group discussions (69%), scholar lecture review sessions (68%), congressional hearing preparation (67%), practical exercises (66%), and course-specific curriculum implementation strategies (64%).

Only a small percentage of teachers felt that too much time was spent on the professional development activities with one exception. 18% of respondents believed that too much time was spent going over the material the constitutional scholars presented in their formal lectures.

Although teachers generally felt that the right amount of time was spent on most activities, they indicated that more time should have been dedicated to several of the activities. Teachers wanted to spend more time discussing general lesson planning (42%), followed by grade level-specific curriculum implementation strategies (38%) and familiarization with JMLP online resources (34%). Respondents also wished more time was devoted to strategies for incorporating state standards into the WTP curriculum (32%), field trips to historic sites (32%), course-specific curriculum implementation strategies (31%), and practical exercises (28%).

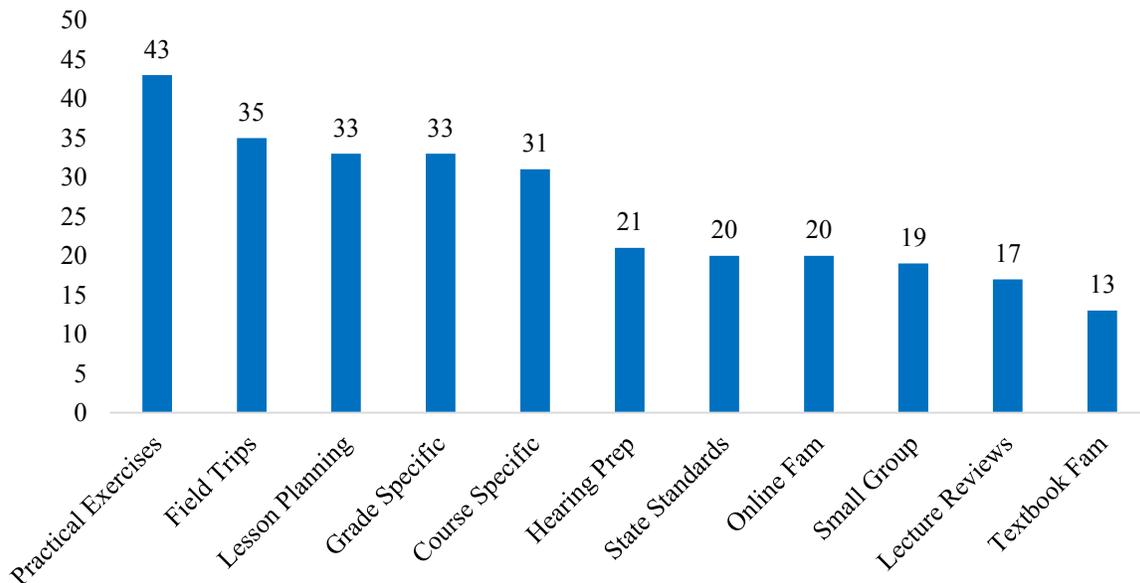
**Table 11**  
**Teacher Evaluation of Time Spent on JMLP PD Activities**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Right Amount of Time</b>	<b>Too Much Time</b>	<b>Not Enough Time</b>
WTP Textbook	78%	4%	18%
Small Groups	69%	7%	25%
Lecture Reviews	68%	18%	14%
Hearing Prep	67%	7%	26%
Practical Exercises	66%	6%	28%
Course-Specific	64%	5%	31%
State Standards	63%	4%	32%
Field Trips*	61%	7%	32%
Grade-Specific	59%	3%	38%
JMLP Online	58%	8%	34%
Lesson Planning	54%	4%	42%

\* Only 40% of the teachers surveyed participated in field trips as part of their professional development program. These values are calculated for the 144 teachers who reported on their field trip experiences.

Teachers were probed further about whether they felt sufficient resources were allocated to each of the activities. They were asked to respond to the question: “Are there activities you would have preferred to see more of?” Respondents could check off as many activities as applied from the list of JMLP PD activities in the study. (See Figure 5.) 42% of teachers wanted more practical exercises. 35% of teachers would have preferred more opportunities to take field trips to historic sites. About one-third of the teachers indicated that their PD programs should include more activities related to general lesson planning, course-specific curriculum implementation strategies, and grade level-specific curriculum implementation strategies. There were no differences in opinion based on years of teaching experience and instructional grade level regarding the effective use of time during the professional development program.

**Figure 5**  
**Teachers Would Include More of These Activities**



### Teacher Suggestions for PD Activities

An open-ended item provided teachers with the opportunity to suggest activities that might be included in the JMLP PD. The majority of survey respondents were pleased with how the JMLP PD was organized and conducted, and had no suggestions. The following are suggestions offered by the teachers:

- Provide instruction specifically to help teachers of students with special needs or those at lower reading levels implement the WTP program.
- Offer more practical professional development elements, such as hands-on learning opportunities for middle schoolers.
- Show a video of the WTP National Finals competition as a means of demonstrating the end result of the WTP program among high achieving classes.
- Present a generic schedule for executing and implementing the various elements of the simulated congressional hearings, such as when to identify teams and when to begin working on essays.
- Have a dedicated time for teachers new to the WTP curriculum to ask questions.
- Provide informal time for the JMLP participants to meet and share strategies during the PD session.
- Make the *We the People* textbook teacher's manuals available during the professional development sessions to facilitate lesson planning exercises.

## Preparation for Implementing the *We The People* Curriculum

The PD programs provided many opportunities for participating teachers to expand their knowledge of subject matter material, discover new methods and techniques for classroom instruction, and learn about the resources available to them to improve their effectiveness as civic educators. After completing the WTP instruction with their students, teachers were asked to provide feedback on how well individual activities conducted during their PD programs contributed to their success in the classroom.

### Key Findings

- Teachers generally found the PD activities aimed at implementing the WTP curriculum in the classroom to be effective.
- Respondents reported that the WTP hearing preparation (86%), practical exercises for implementing activities and lessons in the classroom (84%), and familiarization with the WTP textbook (84%) were the most effective activities.
- The teachers with the most teaching experience (17 years or more) generally reported the features of the PD programs best prepared them to implement the WTP curriculum in the classroom.

### Effectiveness of Preparation for Implementing WTP

Teachers were asked to evaluate how well eleven of the core PD activities prepared them to implement the WTP program in their classrooms. They rated each activity on a four-point scale ranging from “extremely well” to “not well at all.” The following core PD activities were evaluated:

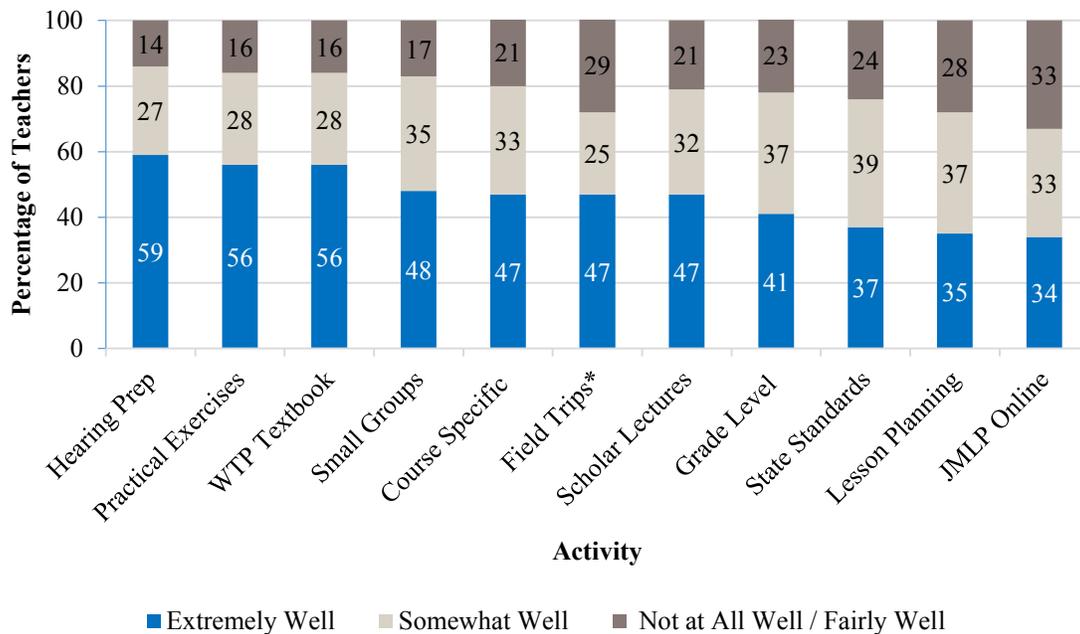
- Live constitutional scholar lectures
- Practical exercises for implementing activities/lessons in the classroom
- Mentor-led small group discussions
- Grade level-specific curriculum implementation strategies
- Course-specific curriculum implementation strategies
- Strategies for incorporating state standards into WTP curriculum
- General lesson planning
- Field trips to historic sites
- Familiarization with JMLP online resources
- Familiarization with WTP textbook
- Simulated congressional hearings

Teachers generally found the PD activities aimed at establishing the *We the People* curriculum in the classroom to be valuable. (See Figure 6.) They reported that the WTP hearing preparation (86%), practical exercises for implementing activities and lessons in the classroom (84%), and familiarization with the WTP textbook (84%) were the most effective of these activities. Over 55% of participants felt that these activities prepared them “extremely well” to use the WTP curriculum in their classes. Respondents also rated highly mentor-led small group discussions, course-specific implementation strategies, and constitutional scholar lectures. Teachers were somewhat less satisfied with activities related to grade-level specific curriculum

implementation strategies, strategies for incorporating state standards into WTP curriculum, and lesson planning. Field trips, while less directly pertinent to classroom implementation of the curriculum, were considered to be useful by a majority of respondents. Familiarization with JMLP online resources was rated the least effective of the activities.

Because many of the teachers responded that the concept of leading simulated hearings in their classrooms was new to them, they greatly valued instruction, particularly from the mentor teachers, on the techniques and mechanics of overseeing their own simulated hearings. In addition to the live constitutional scholar lectures, the teachers also highly rated the strategies for implementing the programs at their specific grade levels and course subjects.

**Figure 6**  
**Effectiveness of Activities for Implementing WTP in the Classroom**



\* Only 40% of the teachers surveyed participated in field trips as part of their professional development institute. These values are calculated for the 144 teachers who reported on their field trip experiences.

An open-ended item provided respondents with the opportunity to write-in what best prepared them for implementing the WTP program in their classrooms. Almost all of the responses were covered by the survey items. However, a few respondents cited attending WTP competitions as important for their preparation.

As Table 12 indicates, there are statistically significant differences based on years of teaching experience for three of the activities. Teachers with the most years of experience—seventeen years or more—were somewhat more likely than those with less experience to find scholar lectures and strategies for incorporating state standards into the curriculum to be

valuable. Those with ten to sixteen years of experience found the practical exercises to be less useful than teachers in the other experience categories.

**Table 12**  
**Activities for Implementing the Curriculum, Comparison by Years Teaching**  
 (% Extremely Well)

	Years of Teaching Experience				Chi-Square Significance
	≤ 4 Years	5-9 Years	10-16 Years	≥ 17 years	
Scholar Lectures	42%	46%	45%	51%	.02
Practical Exercises	53%	62%	43%	58%	.05
Strategies for Incorporating State Standards	32%	32%	28%	44%	.00

### **Simulated Congressional Hearing Preparation**

The *We the People* curriculum culminates with simulated congressional hearings. Simulated congressional hearings are practical exercises in which students role-play citizens testifying before congressional panels. The students present arguments on constitutional matters and defend their positions, often before guest judges invited by the teachers from their own or surrounding communities. This practice is a unique and fundamental feature of the WTP program. It allows the students to showcase their learning experiences to audiences outside of their classrooms, instilling the students with confidence and a sense of civic accomplishment.

Twenty-five of the participating sites in Cohort 1 conducted some sort of simulated congressional hearing overview or instruction. Mock hearings were held at sixteen of the PD sites. Teachers took on the role of students on the panel and prepared answers to questions posed by judges about content covered in the WTP curriculum. Teachers from fifteen sites attended *We the People* district or state competitions.

Because the concept of running simulated hearings was new to the vast majority of participating teachers, and because the hearings are regarded as high profile events, teachers were eager to absorb as much information as possible during the PD program. As a Cohort 1 teacher observed about preparing for and participating in a simulated hearing during the JMLP PD: “This was great - absolutely scary, which helps us empathize and prepare our students.”

## **Key Findings**

- Twenty-five of the participating sites provided instruction related to the simulated congressional hearings.
- Participating teachers valued most the experience of their mentor teachers to prepare them to lead simulated hearings in their own classrooms.

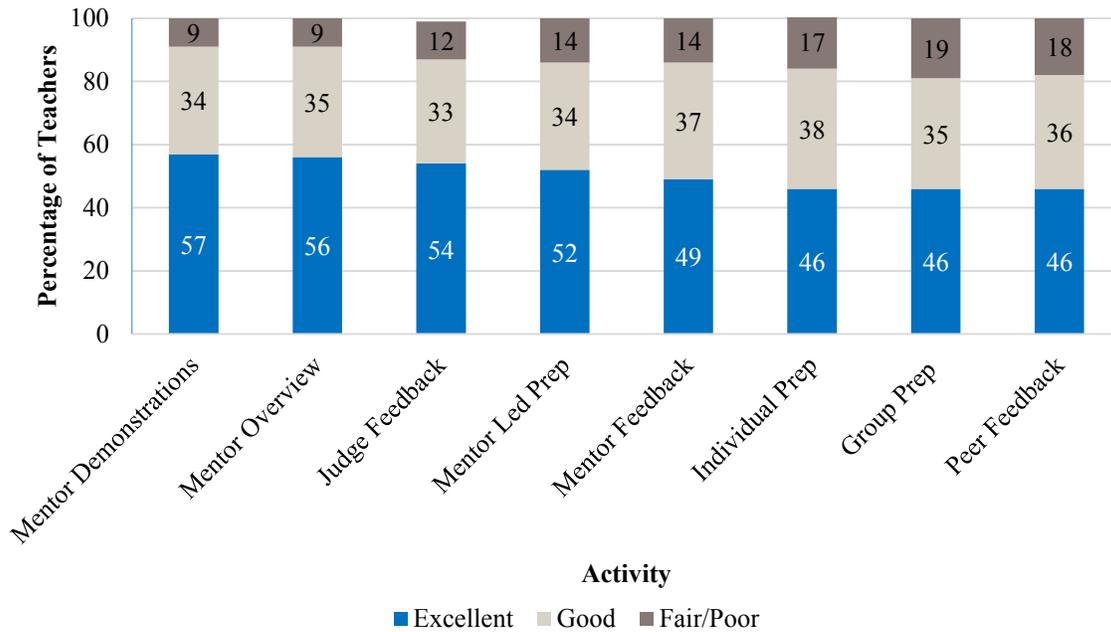
## **Effectiveness of Simulated Congressional Hearing Preparation**

Preparation for hearings at the PD programs varied widely in terms of the time allotted and methods of instruction. The Cohort 1 respondents were asked to rate eight of the most common simulated congressional hearing activities on a four point scale ranging from “excellent” to “poor.” The simulated congressional hearing activities are:

- Coordinator/mentor overview briefing
- Mentor demonstration of the hearing process
- Mentor-led preparation time
- Individual preparation time
- Group preparation time
- Peer feedback
- Mentor-teacher feedback
- Feedback from judges

The instructional elements associated with the simulated congressional hearings collectively are the most highly rated of the PD activities. (See Figure 7.) Participating teachers leaned heavily on the experience of their mentor teachers during preparation for the simulated hearings that took place during their PD sessions. 91% of teachers reported that the mentor teachers’ demonstration of the hearing process was “excellent” (57%) or “good.” Similarly, 91% of respondents felt that the mentor overview briefing of the simulated hearing process was “excellent” (56%) or “good.” Teachers also gave high marks to mentors for their assistance with preparation for the hearings and their post-hearing feedback. Respondents valued the feedback from judges who took part in the simulated hearings by posing questions to the teacher-panelists. A majority of teachers rated the judge’s feedback as “excellent.” Individual preparation, group preparation, and peer feedback were considered to be slightly less effective than the other activities.

**Figure 7**  
**Effectiveness of the Simulated Congressional Hearings Activities**



In open-ended responses, teachers commented that the opportunity to put into practice the mechanics of preparing simulated hearings at the programs provided them with much greater confidence to implement hearings in their own classrooms.

### Professional Networking Opportunities

The JMLP PD program provides participating teachers with the opportunity to develop personal contacts with fellow teachers, administrators, and scholars. The PD program also introduces the teachers to online resources that foster communication and collaboration among the civic education community. These personal contacts and online resources support a professional network where civic educators can continue their professional development after they complete the JMLP program.

Many of the JMLP site coordinators emphasized the importance of building a community of civic education professionals. In response, the Center for Civic Education established a social media page in conjunction with their Partner Access Website (PAW) where civics teachers can interact online. The Georgetown University research team set up a JMLP Facebook group to facilitate information sharing and collaboration among teachers. The Facebook group had 235 members as of November 2016. The research team’s website ([www.JMLPResearch.org](http://www.JMLPResearch.org)) is a repository for civic education studies, videos, and other materials that can be readily accessed by JMLP participants and the general public. These resources and materials shared by civic teachers will be beneficial for satisfying an existing demand of acquiring best practices for the civic classroom.

## **Key Findings**

- 89% of teachers agreed that the JMLP professional networking opportunities would assist them with gaining information on WTP or civic education events.
- 88% agreed that they will use JMLP networking opportunities to access professional development opportunities.

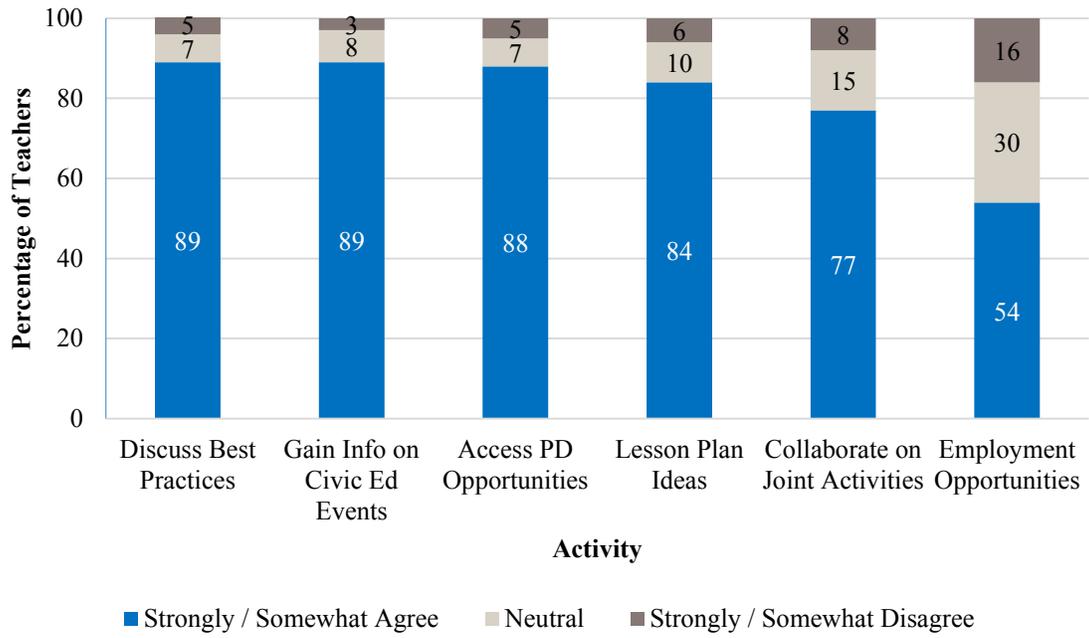
## **Effectiveness of Professional Networking Opportunities**

Cohort 1 teachers were queried about whether they would utilize the personal contacts and resources made available to them through the JMLP program to accomplish these goals. They registered their responses on a five point scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Teachers agreed or disagreed that they would use JMLP resources to achieve the following goals:

- Reach out to the civic education community for lesson plan ideas
- Discuss best practices for the civics classroom
- Collaborate on joint activities
- Gain information about WTP or civic education events
- Access professional development opportunities
- Find out about potential employment opportunities

Teachers strongly agreed that they developed professional relationships through their participation in the JMLP that they can draw upon to further their objectives as educators. (See Figure 8.) 89% of respondents agreed that they could use the JMLP network and online resources to discuss best practices for the civics classroom and to gain information about WTP or civic education events. 88% of teachers felt that they could access professional development activities using JMLP resources, and 84% agreed that they could share lesson plan ideas. Slightly fewer—still over 75%--believed that they could share lesson plan ideas. Teachers were less convinced that the network would be helpful for finding out about potential employment opportunities; however, this is not a goal of the JMLP.

**Figure 8**  
**Effectiveness of Professional Networking Opportunities**





EVALUATION OF THE JMLP: COHORT I

# Conclusion



**James Madison**  
LEGACY PROJECT



**JMLP**

*Georgetown University Research Team*  
JAMES MADISON LEGACY PROJECT

## Conclusion

The first cohort of the James Madison Legacy Project received professional development in civics and government during the academic year 2015-16. The Center for Civic Education drew upon its well-established network of state coordinators and mentor teachers to successfully recruit the requisite 675 teachers to participate in the PD program. A total of 649 of the teachers they recruited—or 96%—completed the JMLP. 88% of teachers instruct high needs students. The teachers will be implementing the *We the People* program in their classrooms in 538 schools.

The Center faced a number of challenges when implementing the Cohort 1 professional development program. The grant was awarded in October 2015, after the academic year had commenced, which required the implementation of the program to be accelerated. *We the People* PD typically begins with a multiday summer institute that is followed by additional PD activities throughout the academic year. It was not possible to hold summer institutes for Cohort 1. The twenty-six JMLP PD sites planned alternatives, most often multiday meetings during the school year. It can be difficult to get teachers to participate in professional development programs that take place during the academic year when their schedules are full. The scheduling of the multiday meetings varied by site, although most were completed by December 2015. Follow-up PD consisting of shorter in-person meetings and, in a few cases, online activities took place primarily over the course of the spring semester. The short time frame also posed some challenges for the research team which had to design and field the study under these conditions.

Despite these challenges, the Center was able to recruit the requisite number of teacher participants rapidly. Some state coordinators reported that they had wait-lists of teachers for subsequent JMLP cohorts, as PD for civics, social studies, and American government has been unavailable for years. Fidelity of implementation of the PD program was strong, as the twenty-six sites provided an average of 39 hours of PD, with most sites offering more time. The sites providing the PD remained faithful to the Center's traditional model of professional development, and effectively covered the content of the six units of the *We the People* curriculum.

Cohort 1 teachers received considerable benefits from the JMLP PD program. The teachers made significant gains in knowledge of civics and American government. Their commitment to being effective teachers of core democratic principles and the basics of American government was enhanced. They became substantially more dedicated to preparing students to be engaged members of their communities. Their levels of teacher self-efficacy improved as a result of the program, although the results are not statistically significant when compared with the control group.

The teachers gave high marks to the JMLP PD. They felt that they gained content knowledge and acquired pedagogical skills. Teachers found the scholar lectures and the professional development activities to be effective. They considered the exercises designed to assist them in implementing the WTP program in their classrooms to be worthwhile, especially the activities related to preparation for the simulated congressional hearings. They considered the

scholars and mentor teachers who led PD sessions to be knowledgeable and accessible. Teachers welcomed the opportunity to interact and learn from their colleagues. Many of the Cohort 1 teachers have remained connected through the JMLP network that has been established online.

### **Final Cohort 1 Report**

The teachers completed the JMLP PD at the conclusion of the 2015-16 academic year, and will be implementing the *We the People* program in their classrooms during the 2016-17 academic year. Cohort 1 student outcome data are being collected during the fall semester of 2016. A follow-up to this report will be issued following the analysis of the student data.

## APPENDIX

### James Madison Legacy Project Sites and Partnerships

State coordinators were contacted during the preparation of the proposal and given the option of being single or multiple-state sites. The following reflects states that agreed to participate in the program and the site arrangements agreed upon, including changes made at the start of the program. In the case of multiple-state sites the first site listed will serve as the lead manager for the partnership. The number of teachers to participate in each site is indicated below.

Alabama—Georgia	25
Arizona—New Mexico	30
California	35
Colorado	25
Florida	30
Hawaii—Alaska	25
Illinois	25
Indiana—Kentucky, Ohio	25
Kansas	25
Louisiana—Arkansas	25
Michigan	25
Minnesota—Wisconsin	25
Missouri	25
Nebraska—Iowa	25
Nevada	25
New Jersey—Pennsylvania, Delaware	25
New York City	25
New York State	25
South Carolina	25
Oregon	25
Rhode Island—Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine	30
Tennessee	25
Texas—Oklahoma	20
Virginia—District of Columbia, West Virginia, Maryland	30
Washington	25
Wyoming—South Dakota, Montana, Idaho	25
Total	675