



WE THE PEOPLE: THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION INITIATIVE FOR HIGH-NEEDS STUDENTS



The We the People Initiative for High-Needs Students is a comprehensive outreach effort designed to address the specific needs of those schools that serve high percentages of socioeconomically disadvantaged students and those experiencing attendance or truancy problems. The initiative provides free curricular materials, professional development services, and technical assistance to teachers at the upper elementary, middle, and high school levels. The materials provided include free sets of the highly acclaimed *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution* textbook, characterized by the Educational Testing Service as “a great instructional success.”

Each year the Center for Civic Education’s network of state coordinators identify high-needs schools in every state and the District of Columbia. The principals at the selected schools identify teams of two to three teachers to be involved in the initiative. Fifty teachers attend a week-long professional development summer institute at James Madison University. During the institute, teachers immerse themselves in the *We the People* curriculum, acquire content knowledge, learn interactive methods, and participate in a simulated congressional hearing. Participants are partnered with mentor teachers who possess significant expertise in the program. In addition, the institute provides an opportunity for teachers to collectively discuss and address similar challenges and shared difficulties in their school environments. During the fall and spring, the teachers implement the We the People program in their classes, culminating with students participating in a simulated congressional hearing.

REMARKS FROM INITIATIVE PARTICIPANTS

- *“It is refreshing that most teachers really came from ‘high-needs’ areas. It’s great to go somewhere and see special educators and adults who struggle in the class every day and share thoughts and ideas.”*
- *“I think the opportunity to sit and talk with educators who are ‘in my shoes’ in terms of type of school was great.”*
- *“The enthusiasm and passion of our mentors and in the institute is contagious.”*
- *“I am absolutely sold on this curriculum and the amazing value of it as a highly effective teaching and learning tool!”*