

# Engaging America's Students for the 2018 Elections



[www.campuselect.org](http://www.campuselect.org)

## How do we get America's 20 million college students to vote in the critical 2018 elections?

They face obstacles from daunting voting laws to a sense that "my vote doesn't matter."

[Campus Election Engagement Project](#) (CEEP), addresses these barriers in a powerful and cost-effective way. We help colleges and universities **use their own resources and networks** to help their students register to vote, educate themselves on candidates and issues, navigate voting laws, volunteer in campaigns, and show up at the polls. Because individuals who vote when they're young tend to continue, and because we help schools deepen their electoral engagement each cycle, we generate **both highly cost-effective voter mobilization and long-term impact** on students and their schools—a hopeful approach in these challenging times.

In 2016 and 2017, we helped students participate in elections from the 1,000-vote New Hampshire Senate race, to Alabama's special Senate election. We helped Virginia's [youth turnout double in the past eight years](#), a very hopeful sign. We're now working to engage our schools intensively in 2018's major elections.

## 2016 REACH AT A GLANCE



15

Key states



300

colleges and universities



3.5 MILLION

combined enrollment of partner schools

An additional 1,000 schools with a combined enrollment of nine million received our resources either directly from CEEP or from partners and allies like the state Campus Compact affiliates.

## THE CEEP MULTIPLIER EFFECT

NATIONAL STAFF



Pull ideas from across the country

STATE DIRECTORS



Coach and train schools

FACULTY, STAFF & STUDENT LEADERS



Run programs, contribute resources

## Our Core Approach: Engage the Resources of the Schools

Addressing both structural barriers to student voting and student cynicism, we serve as catalysts, resource providers, and trusted guides. We help schools:

- Register student voters at [first-year orientation](#) and when registering for classes.
- Navigate students through [daunting new voter laws](#).
- Send out all-campus emails and social media reminders with key election dates and information.
- Distribute our [nonpartisan candidate guides](#), which students say **give a perfect antidote to a political context where "they're all the same" and "everyone's lying and spinning."** The guides come from the schools, so students trust them, saying they let them "see where candidates actually stand."
- Help [campus newspapers](#) become key election hubs for their schools.
- Build campus engagement coalitions like Ohio State's [OSU Votes](#), which we helped launch, and **which now invests close to \$50,000 of resources and volunteer time** in each major election.
- Have students register voters in underrepresented off-campus communities, like [the voter registration partnership](#) between Virginia Commonwealth University and a nearby public housing project.
- Celebrate voting through events like [DebateWatch parties](#) and [Parades to The Polls](#).
- **Build a culture of electoral engagement cycle-by-cycle**, so schools become increasingly committed.

## Tangible Impacts: CEEP 2016-2017 Accomplishments

Based on the third of our 2016 campuses that were able to track and submit their data, our nonpartisan approach had a major impact. Our schools:

- Registered 78,000 students to vote (38,000 by our student Fellows and teams, and 40,000 through other CEEP and partner initiatives).
- Mobilized 3,200 student volunteers.
- Distributed 140,000 copies of our [nonpartisan candidate guides](#) to the presidential race, plus our Senate, gubernatorial, and [Supreme Court](#) guides, with key guides also distributed in Spanish.
- Reached 800,000 students with all-campus emails and 230,000 through social media channels, with both including further links to our guides. Our [close elections video](#) got 268,000 views.

**We did all this while spending just \$680,000**, which supported 18 State Directors, 162 student Fellows, the creation of our social media resources, and 23 comprehensive candidate guides.

In 2017, we kept momentum building at major schools throughout the country, helping them:

- Integrate voter registration into [first-year orientation events](#) and course registration—like Penn State now registering voters at first-year welcome week.
- Obtain on-campus voting stations and securing IDs for students to meet new state voting rules—like Virginia Commonwealth University’s new voting station.
- Create school-funded centers like [OSU Votes](#)—now replicated by University of Michigan. Create courses that give [academic credit for electoral engagement](#).
- [Engage athletic departments](#), as when Central Michigan’s football players all registered and held up their cards at halftime while the Jumbotron linked to the campus election website.
- Engage students in local issues like the Florida initiative [to restore rights](#) to 1.6 million disenfranchised felons.

We also engaged students intensively in major races in two states. In Virginia, we created and distributed [nonpartisan candidate guides](#) to the major statewide races (including Spanish language versions), distributed [posters](#) and wallet cards on voting rules to all the major schools, sponsored Election Engagement Fellows at key campuses, and hosted Election Day Get Out the Vote parties. We did similar work in Alabama, but without student Fellows.

### Students make the difference in a close race

In spring 2016 we helped Pennsylvania’s West Chester University create a school-funded work-study position for a student Fellow. With her student volunteer team, she did powerful work to get out the vote. The city’s mayor was also running for the PA House of Representatives, but initially lost by 78 votes. After elections officials counted 107 provisional ballots from the on-campus polling location that the school had secured, the mayor ended up winning by 18 votes. West Chester got 2,500 more students to vote than in 2012, when we weren’t working with the school.

**“ CEEP was Miami Dade’s College’s most important partner in our 2016 nonpartisan voter engagement efforts. We love CEEP and want to continue to expand our partnership with them in the coming years.”**

— Josh Young, Civic Engagement Coordinator of Miami Dade’s 165,000-student system

**Do these efforts increase the student vote?** Short answer: Definitely. In 2014, student precinct turnout at campuses we could measure **increased by 16%** from 2010, when we weren’t running the project, despite the national 18-24-year-old vote dropping 17%. Because we were working with many of the same schools in 2012, we couldn’t do a clean 2012 vs. 2016 comparison. But schools say we helped them engage their students even more deeply and intensively, and we’re seeing impressive increases, like 7,200 more Ohio State students voting in 2016 than in 2012.



Fayetteville State (NC) Parade to Polls with CEEP banner

