

## Overview

- Kids Voting USA (KVUSA) is a national non-profit, non-partisan program in which PK-12 students, study a special curriculum, and then have the opportunity to go to Kids Voting polls with parents or other adults to cast ballots for many of the same candidates and issues as the adult voter.
- Kids Voting helps educate America's youth about:
  - the importance of becoming an informed citizen
  - the responsibilities of registering & voting to sustain a democracy
  - the value of building good citizenship skills, such as decision making, willingness to compromise, self-discipline, respect for others, etc.
- KVUSA began in Arizona in 1988 when three businessmen went to Costa Rico and saw that voting turnout was over 90%. When they inquired, they discovered that Costa Ricans brought their children with them to the polls, making voting a family activity. When the businessmen returned to Arizona, they started KVUSA. KVUSA became a national program in 1992.
- KVUSA is administered by the Arizona Bar Foundation/Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education, Phoenix, AZ. Dr. Kevin Ruegg is Executive Director & CEO. More information about Kids Voting USA see <http://kidsvotingusa.org/>
- In 1995, Kids Voting Missouri (KVMO) became an affiliate of Kids Voting USA. In 1996, the Ritenour School District became the first St. Louis area school district to participate in the national Kids Voting program.
- KVMO is administered by the University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) through its Citizenship Education Clearing House (CECH) Endowment. The Executive Director of CECH is Dr. Wolfgang Althof, the Teresa M. Fischer Endowed Professor of Citizenship Education at UMSL. Long-time educator, Sandy Diamond is the KVMO Program Coordinator; Sandy joined Kids Voting in 1999.

## Highlights of Kids Voting Missouri



- Since 1996, more than 1,451,533 K-12th grade students have had an opportunity to learn about democracy and voting by participating in KVMO
  - In these 19 (almost 20) years, about 846,757 students have taken advantage of their opportunity to “vote” and have actually cast a KVMO ballot on or near Election Day.
  - KVMO mirrors adult voter turnout as **more** KVMO students vote during a Presidential Year (64%) compared to only 54% during the off-year elections.
- Before casting a ballot, Kids Voting Missouri students learn about the candidates and issues on the ballot and also participate in a simulated voter registration activity.
  - From 1996-2008, students used optical scan ballots to vote. Beginning in 2010, Kids Voting switched to an electronic or E-ballot and participating students voted utilizing Kids Voting USA's on-line voter system called DoubleClick Democracy.

\*\*\*For more information about KVMO & Election 2016\*\*\*

Go to: [www.kidsvotingmissouri.org](http://www.kidsvotingmissouri.org) or email Sandy Diamond at [sdiamond@umsl.edu](mailto:sdiamond@umsl.edu)