STUDENTS FROM BLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL IN MEDFIELD SHINE AT CIVICS PROJECT SHOWCASE

CLIENT: MEDFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS JEFFREY J. MARSDEN, SUPERINTENDENT 459 MAIN ST., UNIT 3 MEDFIELD, MA 02052

STATE

- [ ] Colorado (1)
- [ ] Connecticut (23)
- [ ] Maine (10)
- [ ] Massachusetts (671)
- [ ]

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Eighth-grade students from Thomas Blake Middle School in Medfield displayed their work during the Civics Project Showcase held at the DCU Center in Worcester. From left to right, Leah Whitcher, Ava Tosches, Brielle Dhaiti, Vai Sahukar, and Finn Harvey. (Courtesy Medfield Public Schools)

MEDFIELD — Superintendent Jeffrey J. Marsden and Principal Nat Vaughn are proud to share that nine eighth-grade students from two different groups at Thomas Blake Middle School gave presentations during the Civics Project Showcase held on June 2 at the DCU Center in Worcester.

In addition to the two groups that presented at the Showcase, all eighth-grade students at Thomas Blake Middle School had the opportunity to develop a civics project under the guidance of social studies teachers John Sullivan, Greg Keohan, and Travis Taliaferro. The process spanned the entire school year and covered a wide range of topics, including the bird flu, advocating for more affordable housing, and historic preservation, among many others.

Thomas Blake Middle School's civics projects align with a Massachusetts state law that requires civics to be taught in public schools serving eighth-grade students, including the opportunity for every student to complete a student-led, nonpartisan civics project.

At Thomas Blake Middle School, each student is assigned one of the 160 Massachusetts House of Representatives districts and asked to propose a positive civic change for that district. These changes may involve civic action, such as activism, fundraising, or media campaigns, or regulation, typically in the form of a suggested new local or state law. To support their proposals, students are expected to research the geography, demographics, politics, needs, and local media of their assigned district.

Students then had the opportunity to email their completed projects to the state representative from their assigned district, with several lawmakers and their staff replying to the middle school students, offering thoughtful responses.

Based on the limited availability for state-level showcases, as determined by school size, Thomas Blake Middle School recommended two projects for the Civics Project Showcase held at

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the DCU Center, accomplished by the following students under the following titles:

“Civic Engagement”

- Vai Sahukar
- Finn Harvey
- Brielle Dhaiti
- Leah Whitcher
- Ava Tosches

“The Rise of Antisemitism in Colleges”

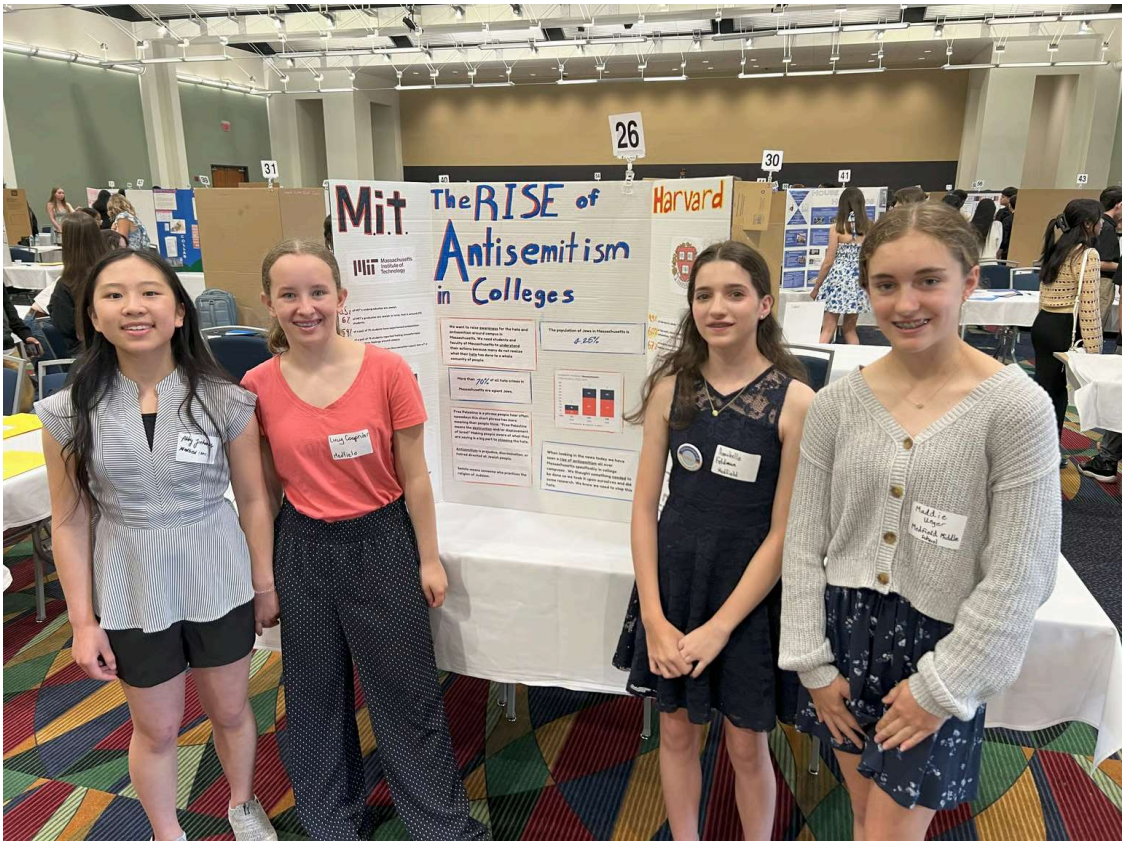
- Anna Feldman
- Maddie Unger
- Lucy Cooprider
- Abby Joehanes

The students who presented at the DCU Center received additional guidance from civics project student leader Birdie Sullivan, a former Showcase presenter and current 10th-grade student at Medfield High School.

“We are so thrilled that the civics project is part of our curriculum,” said Principal Vaughn. “I’d like to thank Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Keohan, and Mr. Taliaferro for all the incredible work they do to help our students bring these projects to fruition, providing them all with the insight they need into the workings of our government and how change is accomplished in our society through civic action. This is an amazing learning experience for all of our students. Congratulations to all of our students, including our two groups who made the trip to the DCU Center to present such intriguing, thought-provoking work during the Civics Project Showcase.”

“Kudos to all of our eighth-grade students who completed a civics project this year,” said Superintendent Marsden. “This is an engaging experience that allows our students to develop a better understanding of the workings of our democracy and the way that civic change takes place in our country. Thank you to all of our teachers who helped facilitate our civics projects and offered such important guidance to our students along the way.”

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A group of Thomas Blake Middle School eighth graders did their civics project on the topic of "The Rise of Antisemitism in Colleges." From left to right, Abby Joehanes, Lucy Cooprider, Anna Feldman, and Maddie Unger. (Medfield Public Schools)



The Civics Project Showcase held at the DCU Center in Worcester. (Courtesy Medfield Public Schools)



From left to right, Vai Sahukar, Finn Harvey, Ava Tosches, Brielle Dhaiti, Leah Whitcher, Abby Joehanes, Anna Feldman, Lucy Cooprider, Maddie Unger and, the group's civics project student leader from Medfield High School, Bridie Sullivan. (Medfield Public Schools)



From left to right, Ava Tosches, Leah Whitcher, Brielle Dhaiti, Finn Harvey, Vai Sahukar, Abby Joehanes, Anna Feldman, Maddie Unger and Lucy Cooprider. (Medfield Public Schools)

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