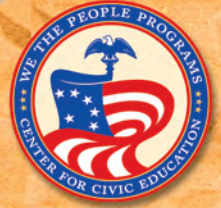


STUDENTS TAKE ACTION



Improving Safety at School

A Project Citizen class in Brownsville, Texas, had a simple idea to improve the area where their school buses loaded and unloaded. The area was so muddy that students often had to walk in the street. In the end, students' efforts made the area safer for everyone, especially students who were mobility impaired.

Community Connection The students in Martin Leal's class realized that many safety problems needed solving. For example, the school bus area had narrow, slippery sidewalks and no ramps. Students found that this was a violation of a federal law called the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Additionally, a city law said that sidewalks should be slip-resistant.

Students with disabilities were not the only ones affected. The bus area was on a busy street where cars often drove too fast, endangering pedestrians. The project soon took the name "Watch Out for that Car!"

Taking Action Students interviewed classmates about problems with the bus area and created posters illustrating those problems. With help from the police, they also tracked the speed of cars in the area. In 30 minutes, they found 12 cars speeding. Students presented their concerns to the mayor, the city public works director, and the city commission of Brownsville.

City leaders quickly responded to the team's findings. Speed bumps now keep traffic slow, wide sidewalks and curbs follow ADA rules, and the bus area is located away from traffic. "Kids can help their community and make it safe," said Rogelio Garduza, one of the students involved in the project.



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Project Citizen

KEYWORD: S27 CH4

SERVICE LEARNING

1. Why was it important for students to involve the police and local government in this project?
2. Are there any areas in or around your school or neighborhood that are safety concerns? What could be done about them?