

EMPOWERING GIRLS' VOICES STUDENT & EDUCATOR SUMMIT

Recent election cycles have created unprecedented interest, personal investment, and civic engagement among young people. What issues have inspired youth to get involved? And how can we keep our girls active and engaged year in and year out?

From **February 3-6, 2026**, Close Up and the International Coalition of Girls' Schools (ICGS) will partner for parallel nationwide summits for high school students and educators in Washington, D.C., harnessing the energy in the lead-up to the midterm elections. The **Empowering Girls' Voices Student Summit** will help girls of all backgrounds share their own policy priorities, develop empathy for the perspectives of others, and build the skills and confidence to be strong civic leaders.

STUDENT SUMMIT

The student summit is open to high school girls in grades 9-12 who have an interest in civic engagement and action, with a cohort of 6-10 students per school recommended. Major components include:

- **Building an Inclusive Community:** Close Up will facilitate dialogue to build a cohesive learning community and help students examine the federal agenda in the lead-up to the midterm elections.
- **Identifying a National Issue that Matters to You:** Students will form action committees and deliberate issues and challenges within priority areas. Sample issue areas include education, energy and the environment, economic issues, health care, and immigration.
- **Developing Policy Proposals:** After exploring a range of ideas and values through deliberation, students will craft statements that identify new policies to advance their agendas.
- **Hearing from Experts:** Students will hear from female experts who are making a difference in their selected policy area to help shape and strengthen their committee goals.
- **Advocating for Your Policy:** After hearing from experts, students will focus on effective advocacy strategies as they refine their proposals.
- **Summit Convention:** Students will present their proposals, debate, and vote on which proposals to include in their National Agenda for Change.

The student summit will culminate in the **Empowering Girls' Voices Civic Action Symposium**, with girls sharing selected policy proposals with a panel of female leaders and policymakers.





EDUCATOR SUMMIT

Educators are invited to take part in a concurrent professional development summit built on Close Up's 50+ years of experience and focused on giving girls the skills to engage with different perspectives and lead from a place of consensus. Educators will observe parts of the student summit that best display the power of deliberative dialogue, as well as participate in the following Close Up-led workshops:

- **Current Issues in the Classroom:** Educators will learn to connect current issues to longstanding political and social controversies through nonpartisan facilitation, well-crafted questions, guided inquiry, and critical analysis and evaluation.
- **Facilitating Deliberation:** Educators will practice the techniques to sustain unbiased classroom deliberation, take part in a model deliberation, observe students in a national deliberation, and consider the challenges and possibilities of infusing more deliberation into their curriculum.
- **Civil Discourse in Action:** Educators will travel to a local girls school to see first hand how schools are incorporating civil discourse and its objectives into the student experience. Educators will hear directly from faculty and students about the value of this work in a school setting.
- **Panel Presentation:** Educators will hear from influential women leaders in Washington about the challenges and opportunities that arise when leaning into challenging conversations and civil discourse in a school community.

**Please note the Educator Summit will run February 4-5, 2026 followed by the ICGS Symposium at Stone Ridge School for the Sacred Heart on February 6, 2026*

ABOUT CLOSE UP

[Close Up](#) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, civic education organization that informs, inspires, and empowers young people to become active citizens. Since 1971, we have served more than one million students and educators through our experiential programs, PD, and curriculum, helping young people articulate their own views and engage with people of different backgrounds with tolerance and understanding.

ABOUT ICGS

[The International Coalition of Girls' Schools](#) is united in elevating women's leadership worldwide by educating and empowering our students to be ethical, globally minded changemakers. Our Coalition is the leading advocate for girls' schools, connecting and collaborating globally with individuals, schools, and mission-aligned entities dedicated to educating and empowering girls.