



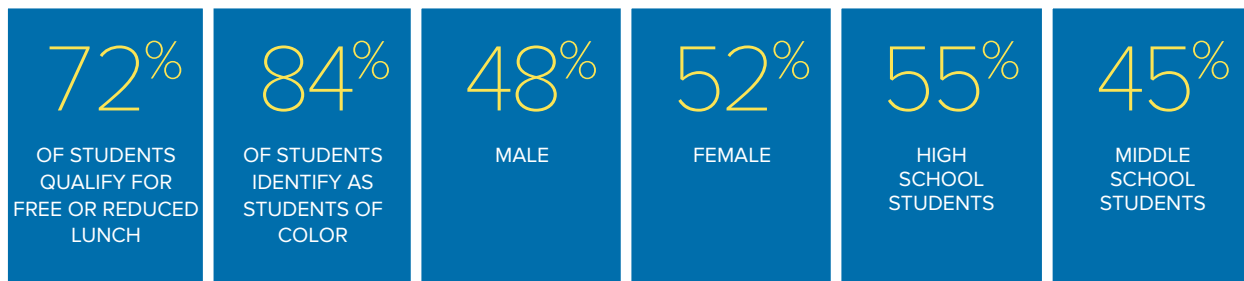
## WHAT IS URBAN DEBATE?

Nationally, 40% of students in large urban areas attend high-poverty schools. These high concentrations of poverty produce big achievement gaps – in high school graduation rates, college enrollment rates, and college graduation rates. A ninth grader at a high-poverty school is 3 times less likely than a ninth grader at a more affluent school to earn a college degree within 10 years.

We believe that students in high-poverty schools are just as smart, just as eager to learn, and just as willing to work hard as students in other schools. They just don't have the same opportunities.

We create opportunity by teaching these students how to find their voices. We target schools in high-poverty neighborhoods, working with students who want to change their communities and the wider world. Guided by trained classroom teachers, they learn how to use reasoning, evidence, and persuasion to make a case for change. Then, they use these skills to succeed, both at debate tournaments and in the classroom. Debate is hard work, much harder than school. But, debaters learn that, with hard work, they can find a path to success.

## OUR DEBATERS



“Competitive urban debate is almost uniquely suited to building what’s been called the “Four C’s” of 21st century skills—critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. And to that list I might add a fifth “–C” —for civic awareness and engagement.”

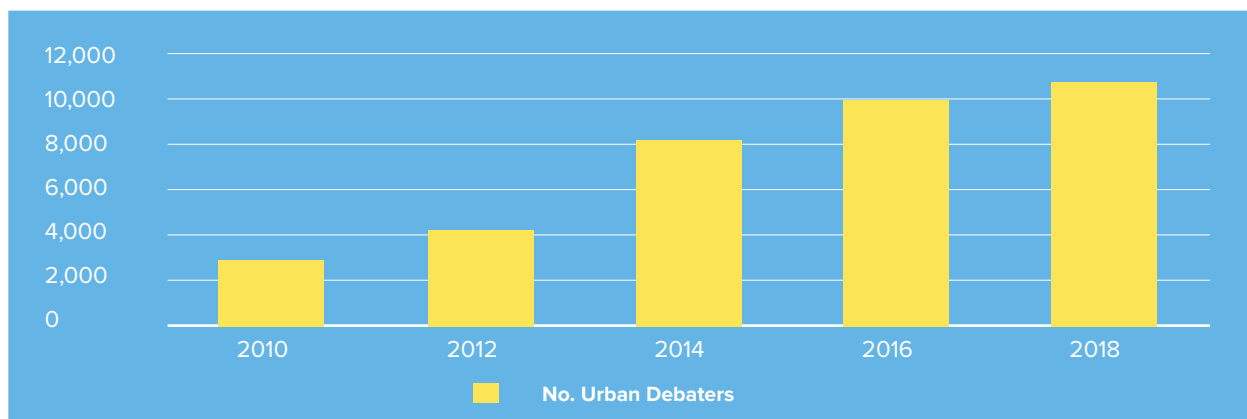
—Former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan



## OUR NETWORK



## OUR GROWTH



**Our Goal: 20,000 debaters by 2023.**



## OUR IMPACT

Independent, published research proves that urban debate drives success.



### Middle School Success

- 8th grade debaters scored higher in standardized tests in Reading (+6.3 points) and Math (+4.2 points).
- Among African American 8th graders, debaters scored higher on standardized tests in Reading (+7.2 points) and in Math (+8.9 points).
- Middle school debaters are 60% less likely to be chronically absent.



### High School Success

- 85% of debaters enroll in any type of college.
- 90% of debaters graduate on time, compared to 75% of students who don't debate.
- Debaters are more likely to test as college-ready in English, Reading, Math and Science.
- Every semester that a student debates his or her grades improve.



### College Success

- High school urban debaters are 89% more likely to attend a four-year college or university than a non-debater.
- Urban debaters are 80% more likely than non-debaters to earn a degree within six years, which is the average time to earn a Bachelor's Degree.

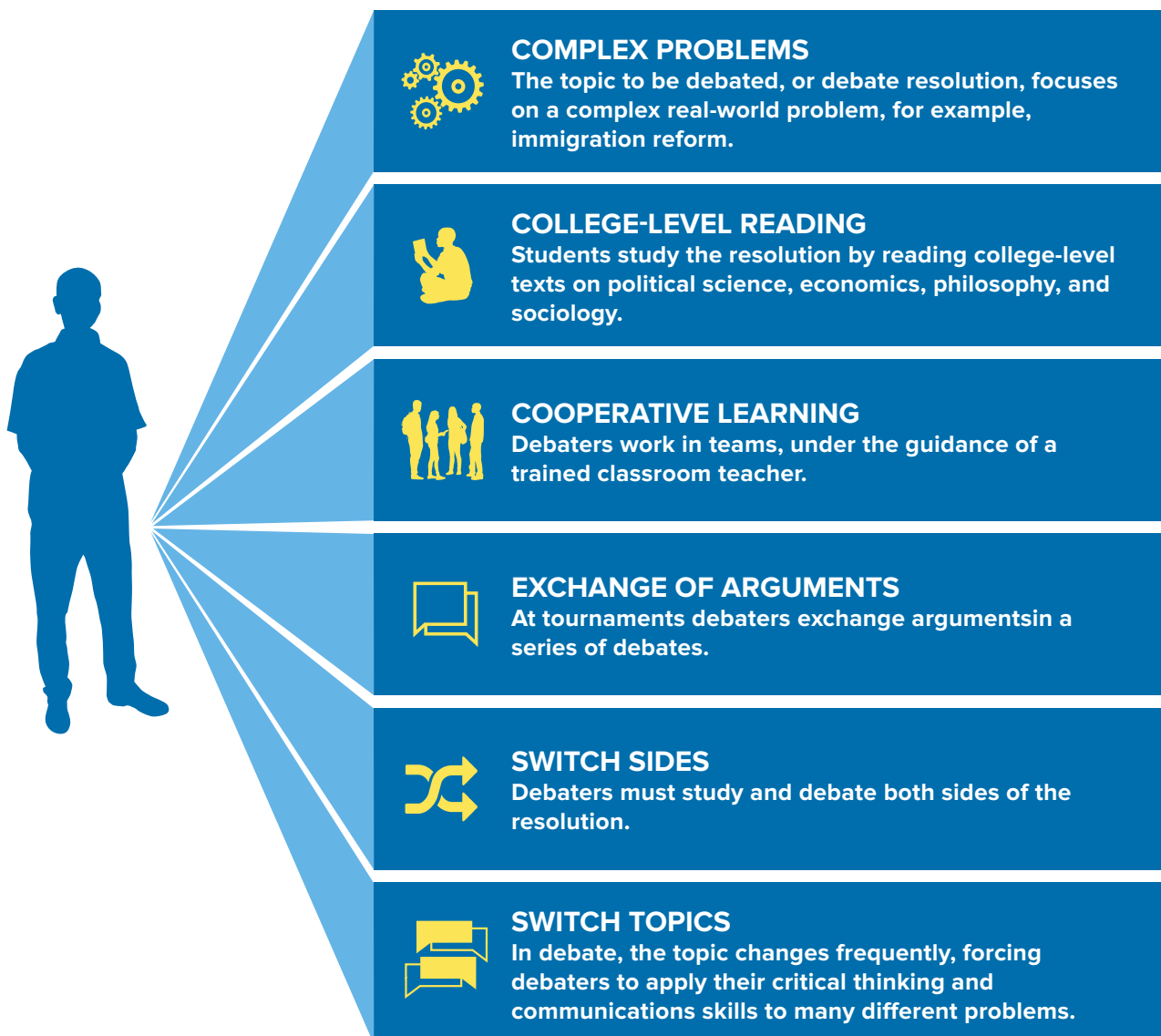
\*Based on a studies from Dr.s Mezuk and Shackelford.





## OUR UNIQUE PROGRAM MODEL

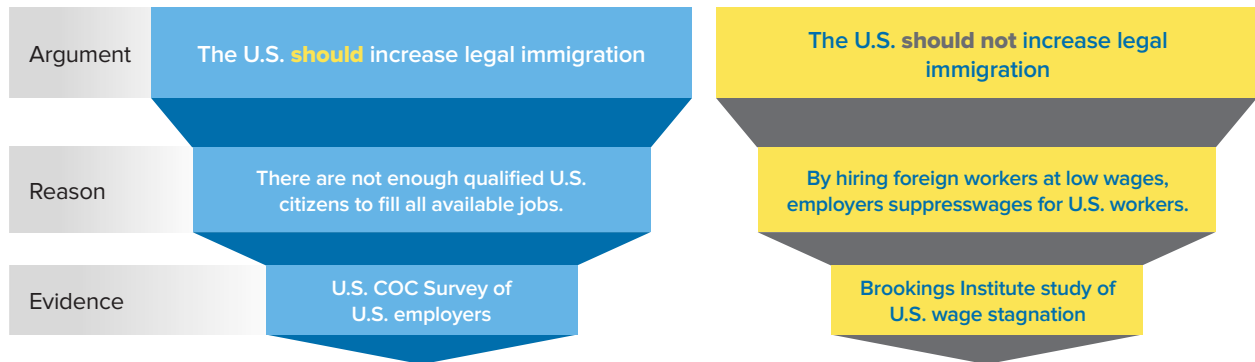
Urban debate is an after-school program which is unlike any other after-school program or classroom activity. Urban debate teaches 21st century skills using this unique program model:





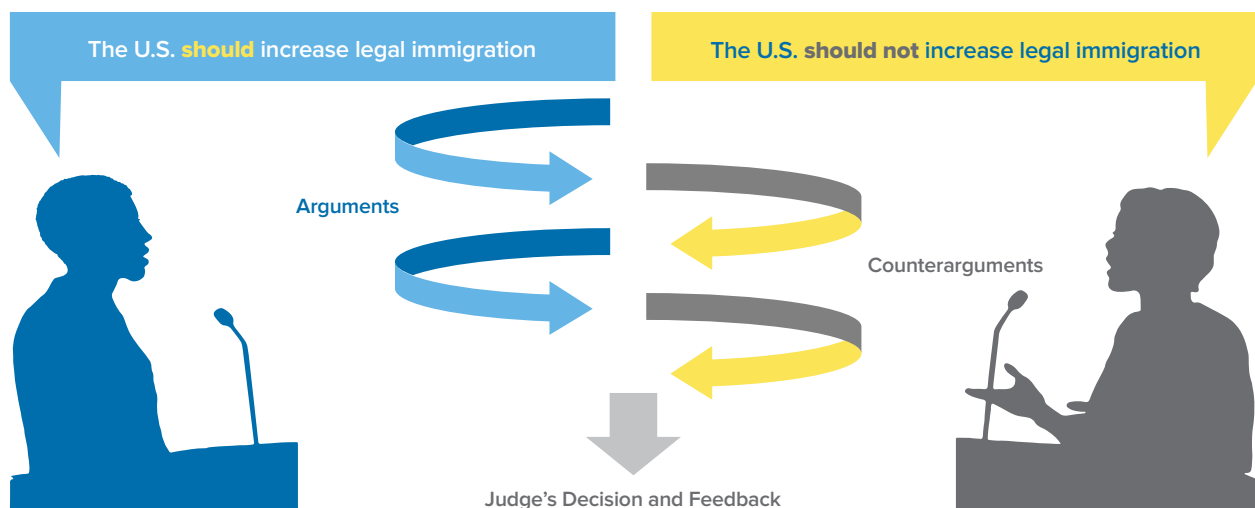
## WHAT IS AN ARGUMENT?

In debate, we teach students to find their voices and use them, not to express opinions, but to make arguments. Our daily lives are filled with opinions -- in the news, on social media, and in conversations with family and friends. An opinion is nothing more than someone's statement -- sometimes expressed loudly and with anger -- about what they feel or believe. This is not an argument. In debate a student makes an argument when he or she takes a position on an issue and supports it with reasons and evidence. Here is an example:



## EXCHANGE OF ARGUMENTS

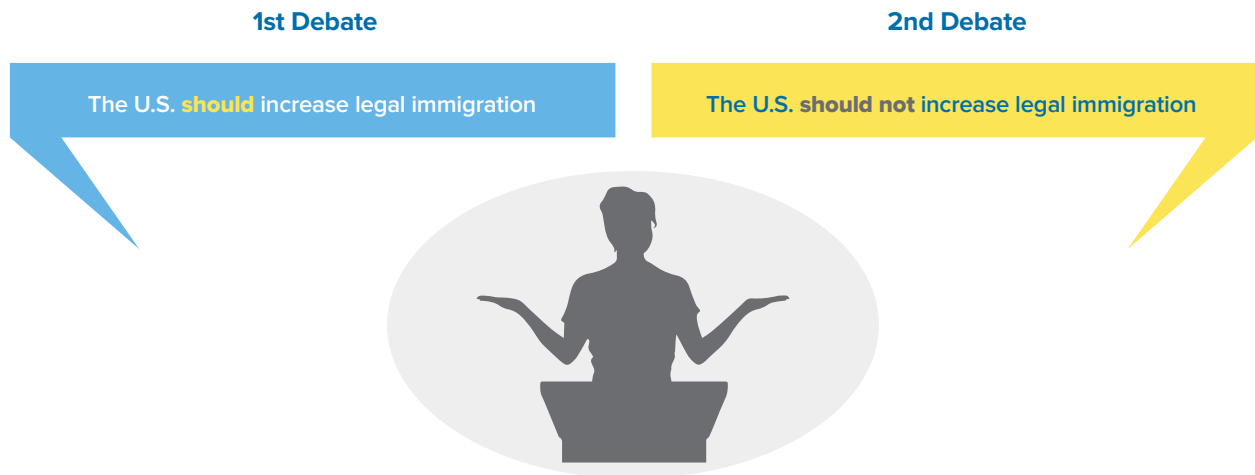
A debate is an exchange of arguments. Students take opposing positions on the debate resolution. Each student makes arguments in support of his or her position and explains the weaknesses in the opponent's arguments. A judge decides the winner and gives feedback.



This ability to make arguments - and to evaluate the arguments of others -- is critical thinking, a 21st Century skill that all student must master to succeed in college and career. Yet, this skill is rarely taught in middle school and high school classrooms, and, businesses routinely complain that college graduates have not mastered it. Critical thinking is at the core of urban debate.

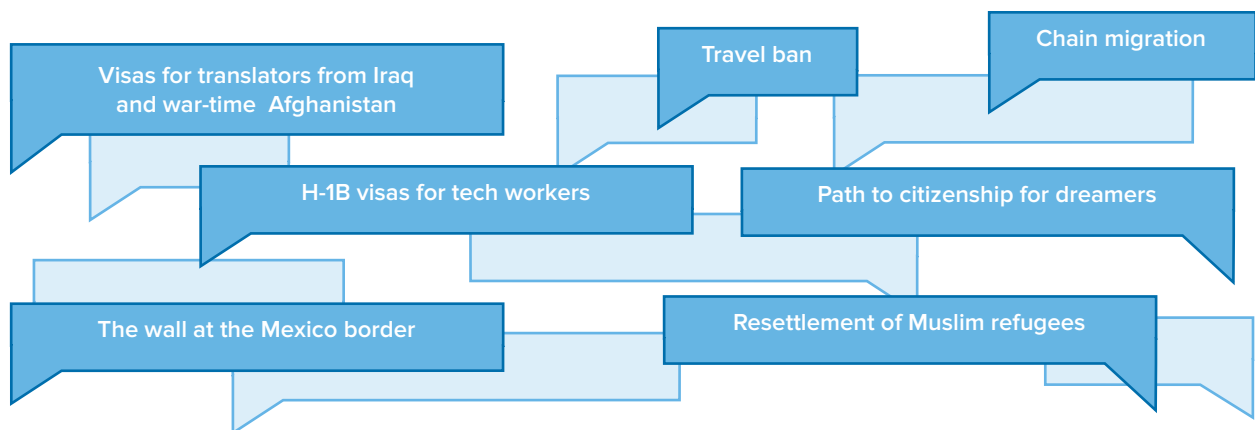
## SWITCH SIDES

Debaters train to switch sides and argue against their position at monthly tournaments, they participate in a series of debates, arguing for the resolution in one debate and against it in the next. By alternating sides, debaters learn to analyze a complex problem from multiple perspectives.



## SWITCH TOPICS

In public school classrooms, students spend most of their time listening to and memorizing content, and little, if any, time developing critical thinking skills. Debate flips this script. We build critical thinking skills, and one way we do this is by frequently switching up the content. Students debate on broad, complex resolution for an entire year, but, within that broad resolution, each debater chooses the sub-topic to be debated. For example, this year's resolution focuses on immigration reform:



With so many topics to choose from, every debate is different, and debaters constantly face new and unexpected arguments. This forces them to rely, not on memorization, but on their critical thinking skills. Along the way, debaters do learn a lot about economics, politics, government, philosophy, and sociology. But, the goal is build skills, not to memorize content.



## STORIES OF SUCCESS



**Reuben Aguirre** debated in the Denver Urban Debate League. He earned his J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law. Today, is an associate at O'Melvney & Myers LLP, an international law firm.

**“Debate leveled the playing field for me.”**



**Wynter Haley-Scott** debated in the Memphis Urban Debate League. She earned her B.A. from Colorado College and today she is a law student at Vanderbilt Law School.

**“Debate has shown me that I can do anything.”**



**Michael Barlow** debated in the Atlanta Urban Debate League. He earned his B.A. from the United States Military Academy at West Point. Today, he is an officer in the United States Army.

**“Debate enabled me to be competitive for college, and it has enabled me to succeed in college.”**

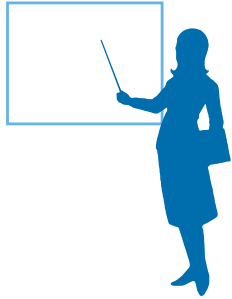


**Tyler Anderson** debated in the New York City Urban Debate League. He earned his B.A. degree from Dartmouth College. Today, he works as a Human Resource Analyst for a large financial institution.

**“Debate taught me how to defend my own ideas and scholarship.”**

## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

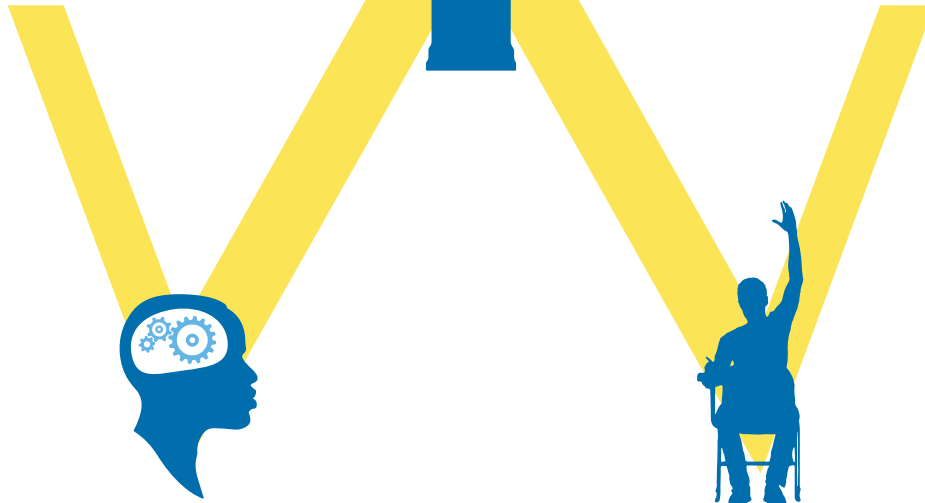
By teaching  
student debaters



and by providing them with a  
supportive environment in which  
to practice and improve,



and empower them to  
succeed in high school,  
college, and career.



critical thinking,  
communication and  
collaboration skills



we ignite their  
passion for learning



To learn more about NAUDL's mission, programming, resources, and ways to get involved, visit [urbandebate.org](http://urbandebate.org) or contact Linda Listrom: [lindalistrom@urbandebate.org](mailto:lindalistrom@urbandebate.org)

200 S. MICHIGAN AVENUE, SUITE 1040, CHICAGO, IL 60604 | PHONE: (312) 427-0175 | [URBANDEBATE.ORG](http://URBANDEBATE.ORG)