



## **Impact of Debate**

Through debate, students develop their academic abilities, 21st century skills like critical thinking, and community engagement, which are pivotal to success in college and their future careers. The Boston Debate League's After-School Debate League (ASDL) creates space for young people to conduct in-depth independent research, dive into complex materials, express their opinions using evidence, use their voices, and be heard and respected by adults in the community. It is an unparalleled academic experience, requiring communication and analytical skills beyond what students typically experience in the classroom, in a way that readily applies to future academic and career pursuits.

A wealth of peer-reviewed research and internal evaluation shows that debate helps students:

### **Improve Academic Skills:**

- 100% of ASDL debate coaches agreed that debaters on their teams improved their literacy and communication skills (2016-2017 survey).
- The median GPA of debaters who attended at least three tournaments in one year is 4.5% higher in English and 10.4% higher in math than those who attended only one tournament (BPS, 2014-2015).

### **Graduate High School On Time:**

- 95% of high school seniors who attended 7 or more ASDL tournaments in two years, participating over multiple debate seasons, graduated in four years, compared to the BPS average of 71% (BPS, 2013-2015).
- 100% of BDL coaches reported that students on their debate teams were on track to graduate (2016-2017 survey).
- Debaters in metropolitan school districts are 3.1 times more likely to graduate high school in 4 years than non-debaters; 90% of debaters graduate on time, compared to only 75% percent of students who do not debate (Anderson and Mezuk, 2012).

### **Prepare for College:**

- BDL participants show significantly higher performance on standard academic indicators of college readiness than a matched comparison group of non-debaters, including higher growth on standardized test performance (SGP), higher academic GPAs, and higher rates of attempting and passing Advanced Placement tests (Winkler & Fortner, 2014).
- Debaters are 89% more likely than non-debaters to attend a four-year college or university and 80% more likely to graduate (Anderson and Mezuk, 2012).