

Students choose PCs in mock election

By Sarah Sobanski

North Hastings High School students would've placed Hastings-Lennox and Addington under blue leadership too ? if they were allowed to vote.

The high school's Grade 10 civics class hosted a mandatory student vote on June 5 mirroring the provincial election that would happen two days later. Results show local students agreed with the now Ontario Progressive Conservative majority; 143 students voted blue out of 271.

NHHS students also mirrored legal voters in that they chose the New Democratic Party as the runner-up this election. Forty-seven students voted NDP, 17 per cent of the vote. That's where the similarities between the two elections end.

The NDP were followed in the student vote by the Green Party of Ontario, with 28 votes or 10 per cent of electors. This differs from the legal election which saw the Ontario Liberals finish third.

The Ontario Liberals were only supported by five per cent of students, or 14 electors. That's lower than the nearly eight per cent of students who declined, rejected or left blank their votes.

Four per cent of students supported the Trillium Party of Ontario and three per cent supported the Libertarian Party of Ontario.

Kendra Kilpatrick, civics teacher at NHHS, said students set up polling stations, handed out ballots and recorded votes similarly to how the June 7 election took place for legal voters. Her class put up party platform posters to help students get informed before the vote and encouraged teachers to talk about the election with their students.

?I'm hoping it will make them feel more comfortable when they [are of age to] go vote,? said Kilpatrick.

Bancroft This Week headed out to the NHHS civics classroom after the votes were tallied to find out how students felt about the election, casting their votes and the election process.

The majority of students thought that allowing students to vote in the provincial election would have changed its outcome. One student, however, thought allowing students to vote in the election might increase the number of uninformed voters casting ballots.

More than 280,000 elementary and high school students across the province participated in the student election, **according to Canada Newswire**. While this number of votes wouldn't have been enough to change who was elected, it could have evened the odds or narrowed the majority. The tally for the provincewide student vote saw NDP take a narrow majority with 66 seats. The provincial PCs followed with 45, then the provincial Liberals with 11 and finally the provincial Greens with two.

Asking the class as a whole if they expected the NHHS to cast a blue majority, many students said yes ? though not for the reason you might expect.

Students listed possible reasons for the Conservative majority as students voting the way their parents did, having heard then-MP Daryl Kramp's name from previous elections, randomly voting and ?wanting \$1 beer? referring back to soon-to-be premier Doug Ford's promise his party would reduce the minimum cost of selling beer.

Many of the students saw the importance of voting and said civics should be taught in school to help students navigate politics later in life. A few, however, wondered what difference voting made. The majority said there was a need for the electoral system to change and others said they didn't care either way.

The student election was hosted through the CIVIX program [Student Vote](#). ?Coinciding with government elections, [Student Vote helps] students learn about government and the electoral process, research the parties and platforms, discuss relevant issues and cast

ballots for the official election candidates,? according to the Student Vote website. CIVIX is ?a national civic education charity focused on developing the habits of active and engaged citizenship among young people,? according to the Canada Newswire.