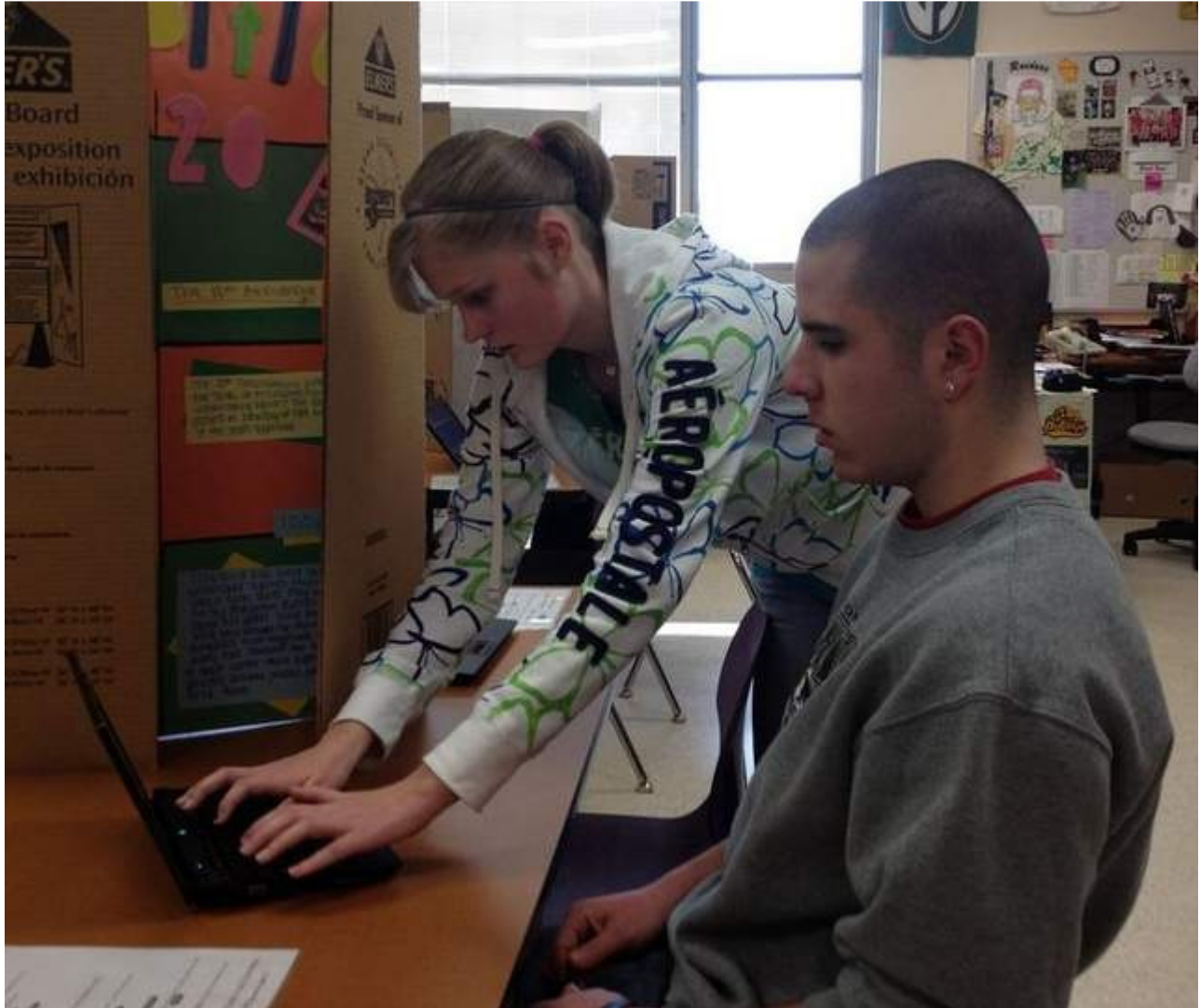


Young electorate

TRHS students get hands-on experience with voting process

1:38 AM, Mar. 6, 2012



Felicia Bunnell, a sophomore in the American Government class at Two Rivers High School, assists junior Riley Schwarzenbart as he votes in the Super Student Day Mock Election on Monday, the day before Super Tuesday, which is the day on which the most presidential primary elections are held. / Cindy Hodgson/HTR

Written by

Cindy Hodgson

Herald Times Reporter

<http://www.htrnews.com/article/20120306/MAN0101/203060526/Two-Rivers-High-School-students-get-hands-experience-voting-process?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|MAN-News>

TWO RIVERS — Some people don't vote because they think it's too difficult, according to Two Rivers High School social studies teacher Larry Feest. So when he learned

about an online mock election being offered by the Youth Leadership Initiative a day before Super Tuesday, he decided to have the students in his American Government classes participate.

"The whole point of this was to give them a sense of how easy it is to vote," Feest said. "I hope it just opens their eyes up to the voting process."

The Super Student Day Mock Election was conducted using "a state-of-the-art online voting system," according to Feest. The Youth Leadership Initiative is a national civic education program based at the University of Virginia Center for Politics.

At the suggestion of his students, Feest opened up the voting opportunity to the entire school. Any teachers who wanted their students to participate could have them go to Feest's classroom to vote. He said 22 teachers signed up to bring their classes, representing an array of subjects from science to English to math.

Voters had to stop at the registration tables outside the classroom where student workers from the American Government classes asked for their identification and gave them their numbered slip to turn in when they voted. If they didn't have an ID they were allowed to vote in the mock election anyway.

"And then we just remind them that when they vote in the future that they will be asked to have an ID," said junior Lexie Kobel, who was working at one of the registration tables.

In the classroom, students from the American Government classes were on hand to help voters through the online process. Feest was able to add races pertinent to his students, so the ballot included the Republican presidential primary, the Gov. Scott Walker recall election, and the election of TRHS students to various county positions. The students elected will participate in the American Legion County Youth Government Day at the Manitowoc County Courthouse in April.

Feest said his American Government classes have been talking about the elections and about being responsible citizens, so the mock election "fits right in ... with what we're doing."

Reaction from students ranged from enthusiastic to not so much.

"I like it. I'm big into politics," said sophomore Felicia Bunnell, who is taking the junior-level American Government class. "I'm always watching the news. I think it's fun."

Bunnell said she often argues politics with her dad, mom and stepfather. She likes to look at all sides but, "they only want to see what they believe," she said.

Bunnell was asked who she thought would win the mock Republican primary at TRHS.

"I think Mitt Romney has it in the bag," she said.

"I think it's a waste of time, honestly, 'cause it (doesn't) count for anything," junior Riley Schwarzenbart said as he voted. But that's not to say he has no interest in politics.

"I definitely will (vote) when I'm 18," he said.

Mackenzie Walesh, a sophomore, said she plans to vote when she's old enough, if she starts to pay attention so she's informed. For the mock election, she didn't recognize any names, except in the student races, so she just picked them randomly. Still, she said holding a mock election is a good idea, "so when I do vote I know what it's about."

Feest said he expects to learn the results of the mock elections today.