



2017 Youth Governance Program Evaluation Report

Youth Governance Program (YGP)

The Youth Governance Program (YGP) provides an opportunity for high school youth to serve on six standing Dane county board committees. The program offers an opportunity for youth to experience local government while bringing youth voice to community issues and fostering the development of confident, capable and independent leaders for the next generation.

Evaluation

A post/pre survey was administered and completed by 8 members(n=8) of the 2016-2017 class of YGP at the end of their one year appointment. 12 questions total were asked centered around civic engagement and leadership skills on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being strongly disagree/no ability and 5 being strongly agree/excellent ability.

Question	Pre (average)	Post (average)
I am knowledgeable about Dane County Government	1.75	4.5
I am aware of local issues that affect Dane County	2.38	4.63
I can talk knowledgeably with others about local issues	3.13	4.63
I feel a strong connection to Dane County	2.75	4.13
I can speak confidently before a group of adults	3.25	4.5
I have a useful role in the community	3	4.25

In addition, students provided answers to the following questions:

What has been the most important thing you have gained from participation in YGP?

"I gained a greater awareness of community issues and a better understanding of how local government works. I learned how to voice my opinion and explain why I have the views that I do."

"I feel more comfortable presenting my thoughts and ideas in front of influential adults."

What is one thing you are most proud of that happened during or because of YGP this year?

"I am proud that, throughout my term, I learned to voice my opinion more on different issues that we talked about on the committee."

"If I hadn't gotten in and had this learning experience, I wouldn't be as interested in politics and my community."

"I gained enough confidence to present my thoughts and run for office at school."

"I was able to reach out to other schools about the environmental survey published by EANR."



Testimonials from YGP members about their experiences:

“Being in YGP has allowed me to learn so much about how the legislative process actually works. It’s one thing to listen to a lecture about how legislation goes through committees and back to the legislative body, but it’s another, more rewarding and informative thing to actually be a part of that process. It was also an interesting experience to serve on ZLR and get to see all the additional factors pressuring decisions, such as the towns, organizations, residents, and the state (particularly after the zoning opt-out bill).”

“In the last two years, I have learned a bunch on the ins and outs of government and what the County of Dane does for its citizens. What is really cool is how over time, I start noticing things that we discuss in committee being applied to the county as I drive through and live within it. I am very happy I have gotten to understand an unique perspective like this and I am very appreciative.”

“The opportunity to sit next to the people who actually run county government revolutionized both my understanding of this county’s governance and my ability to talk to important people in general. More importantly, the Youth Governance Program has taught me just how important--and interesting--local government can be.”