

## NEWS RELEASE

### **Students visit courtrooms and see K9 unit in action at Board's annual Youth in Government Day**

**February 6, 2020, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI.** – Yesterday, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners hosted nearly 100 high school students from across the county during its annual Youth in Government Day, where students learned about local government, participated in mock debates and interacted with county elected officials and judges.

“It was great to see the kids so engaged in the program,” said Commissioner **Kristen Nelson** (D-Waterford), who emceed the event this year. “Youth in Government Day gives students the opportunity to see firsthand how county government works and the many ways that it impacts their lives and communities. It was a really fun day!”

Attendees heard from their county-wide elected officials, including County Executive David Coulter, Clerk/Register of Deeds Lisa Brown, Treasurer Andy Meisner and Water Resources Commissioner Jim Nash.

Youth in Government Day featured interactive sessions facilitated by the dynamic MSU Extension 4-H Leadership & Civic Engagement team who challenged students to actively engage in the sessions and to think critically about media consumption, complex legislative topics and the role of local government in their lives.

“Young people have innovative ideas and aren’t mired in the cynicism that so many adults are caught up in,” Darren Bagley, an educator with MSU Extension 4H who facilitated sessions during the event, said. “Youth in Government Day invites and encourages them to be civically engaged, which can help break through the gridlock in many of our political processes.”

Participants also learned about the county judicial system. Chief Judge Shalina Kumar of the Oakland County Circuit Court, and Chief Judge Pro Tem Jeffery Matis of the Oakland County Civil/Criminal Court, demonstrated mock plea deals and hosted Q&A sessions with the students.

After their visit to the courtrooms, attendees heard from Oakland County Sheriff Michael J. Bouchard, who talked about county government from a law enforcement perspective. A highlight of the event was a demonstration by two members of the Sheriff's K9 unit – K9 Mordus and his handler Deputy Chris Topacio.

"Teaching Oakland County students how their county government works is extremely important," Chairman **David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak), said. "County departments constantly provide direct services to people and our local communities, and we hope this event encourages and inspires young people be civically active in their communities."

Since the 1970s, Youth in Government Day has aimed to help develop young adults into future leaders. Today, the event continues to connect students with local government and works to emphasize the idea that they are never too young to be involved or to make a difference. Youth in Government Day encourages Oakland County youth to understand and participate in the politics and policies that impact their lives and communities.

For more information about Youth in Government Day, visit [www.oakgov.com/yigd](http://www.oakgov.com/yigd). For more information about the Board of Commissioners, visit [www.oakgov.com/boc](http://www.oakgov.com/boc) or call 248-858-0100.

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