

## Idaho's 4-H Know Your Government Conference has a new evaluation

### AT A GLANCE

A newly developed evaluation for the Idaho's 4-H Know Your Government Conference shows youth gain valuable skills while attending.

### The Situation

The 4-H Know Your Government Conference (KYG) is in its 32nd year. Formal evaluation of the conference has been done annually but has not provided rigorous feedback on whether the conference is achieving its mission, namely: "Empowering youth to be well-informed citizens who are actively engaged in their communities and the world."

### Our Response

A team of 4-H professionals reviewed the previous evaluation protocol regarding what we wanted to know about the program effectiveness and how to obtain useful feedback for improvements. A new evaluation was developed and implemented at the 2019 KYG conference.

Two rubrics (standard score sheets) were introduced this year to be used by the Idaho legislators and legal experts who volunteer to mentor youth at KYG during both the mock legislative session and mock trials respectively. The rubrics were designed to provide consistent assessment, constrained within appropriate expectations for the youth teams and the program. A point scale was developed for ease of use with one or



Judicial track workshop participants preparing for their role as defense attorneys in mock trials. Photo: KYG reporter youth.

two as inadequate, three or four as basic and five as proficient.

An end-of-conference youth evaluation was administered by an Extension faculty member utilizing handheld Turning Point clickers and a PowerPoint presentation. While this is similar to years past, new questions were utilized pertaining to educational outcomes for the program. These questions included 4-H Common Measures 2.0 citizenship questions, conference experience questions and demographic questions.

### Program Outcomes

Youth from 27 Idaho counties participated as delegates (eighth and ninth graders) and conference steering committee youth (10th and 11th graders). During the

conference evaluation, youth self-identified the workshop track they were a part of: legislative (77 youth), judicial (63 youth) and reporter (8 youth). These tracks had varied, but preassigned roles. Towards the end of each workshop track, youth participate in a mock legislative committee meeting (legislative track) or a mock trial (judicial track). Steering committee members take on the leadership roles as the chairman for the legislative committee meetings and the judges for the mock trials. Other youth steering committee members report on the happenings of the conference as reporters in the reporter track.

Results of the rubrics varied and were difficult to draw conclusions from because only five of the six possible rubrics were returned for the mock committee meetings and only four of the possible six mock trial rubrics were completed. However, results from these rubrics (Tables 1 and 2) may help in future planning of learning opportunities before and during the conference. Further training for those completing the rubrics may also help in return rate and scoring.

While conference experience questions are designed to aid the steering committee in making decisions about the functions of future conferences, Common Measures questions and two additional research questions were designed to answer the question of whether KYG is reaching its mission. Questions were asked using a four-point scale: strongly disagree (one), disagree (two), agree (three) and strongly agree (four). Common Measures questions indicated 50 percent or above agree or strongly agree in most question responses. The additional questions were in reference to confidence in knowledge of the judicial and legislative processes. Youth indicated that 71 percent of those participating in the judicial workshop track agreed or strongly agreed they felt comfortable explaining the judicial process to another person. Youth participating in the legislative committee meetings indicated that

89 percent of them would feel comfortable explaining the legislative process.

Table 1. Mock legislative committee meeting scores presented as averages of scores assigned from five rubrics completed by Idaho legislators.

Indicator	Average Score
Participation by Group	4.4
Decorum	5.0
Parliamentary Procedure	3.6
Evidence of Preparation	4.4
Evidence of Research	4.0

Table 2. Mock trial scores presented as averages of scores assigned from four rubrics completed by legal experts assisting in each trial room.

Indicator	Average Score
Participation by Group	4.0
Decorum	5.0
Trial Procedure	3.6
Evidence of Research & Preparation	3.7

These two indicators, along with the Common Measures and the rubrics, indicate that youth attending the conference are gaining skills to empower them to be well-informed citizens who are actively engaged in their communities.

## The Future

Extension professionals will continue to refine evaluations for KYG and inform the steering committee planning future conferences of our findings.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Carrie Johnson**, Extension Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Canyon County • 208-459-6003 • [carriej@uidaho.edu](mailto:carriej@uidaho.edu)

**Nikola Dalton**, Extension Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Bannock County • 208-236-7310 • [nmdalton@uidaho.edu](mailto:nmdalton@uidaho.edu)

**Timothy G. Ewers**, Extension 4-H Youth Development Specialist • University of Idaho Extension • 208-885-4080 • [tewers@uidaho.edu](mailto:tewers@uidaho.edu)

**Donna R. Gillespie**, Regional Youth Development Educator • University of Idaho Extension • 208-312-4109 • [donna@uidaho.edu](mailto:donna@uidaho.edu)

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