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## COMMUNITY



Students Caroline Alac and Aaron Jones served as masters of ceremony for a mock meeting of Halton Hills Town Council last Thursday at Acton High School. At right are Councillors Mike Albano & Moya Johnson. Photo by Eamonn Maher

## Local government goes back to school

By Eamonn Maher  
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For Acton High School students who've felt disengaged from the political process at the municipal level of government, Town of Halton Hills Council held one of its meetings in the school's library last Thursday morning to help close any perceived gap.

The two-hour session was somewhat of a 'mock' Council meeting, crammed with more than two classes of students and a full turnout of the elected officials, but the message from youth in Acton was direct and straightforward; they'd like to see improvements in their community.

"We got taken to school today," Mayor Rick Bonnette said at the conclusion of the meeting, complimenting the four delegations of students for their preparation and eye-opening observations on the state of affairs for young people in Acton.

Council heard from four delegations: the Grade 9 geography class presentation of David Suzuki's Blue Dot Movement; the Challenge and Change address by the Grade 12 group during which students shared their 'Empathy Library' with Coun-

cil, challenging the single story and stereotypes of Acton through the narratives of students and community members; Acton High School's Gender & Sexuality Alliance (GSA), who presented their proposal/rationale to designate gender neutral washrooms in municipal buildings such as libraries, arenas and the Civic Centre; a Grade 10 Business Class regarding the promotion of small business collaboration with local youth through the Acton Business Company concept.

Council members fielded some tough questions from students and were challenged to act on some of the requests made for change in Acton.

The meeting resulted from the efforts of Rob Pozeg and Tanya Melykuty of the Halton Region Health Dept., along with three Acton High School teachers, Joanne Pattison, Don Evoy and Virginia Houston.

The region's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Hamidah Meghani, also participated in the meeting.

Mayor Bonnette noted that couldn't speak for Council as a whole, but said he'd be receptive to considering another meeting at AHS.



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