

Third graders cast presidential votes

BY CAROLYNN MOSTYN

The Suburbanite

COVENTRY

Third grade social studies teachers at Erwine Intermediate School decided the best way to teach their students about voting and elections was to hold their own presidential election.

Teachers Amanda Wood, Michele D'Alessio, Emily Studeny, Monica Milosevic and Rita Dial organized the mock election.

"The students are hearing all kinds of things at home, so we thought they could experience it from beginning to end," Wood said.

She said classes talked a lot about who gets to vote and how to register to vote.

"We did the whole process from registering, voting and then we are going to talk about the results," Wood said.

All 3rd graders had a job during the voting process. They were signing people in, working a booth and guarding the ballot box. The entire school voted.

Students received stickers from the board of elections just like regular voters do.



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Ma'Kya Keyes, Faith Hinzman and Maryssa Heard checked Erwine Intermediate School principal Donald Schenz's ID before he voted in the school's mock election Nov. 6.

"The kids (were) really excited. It is a real authentic way for them to learn the process, the vo-

cabulary and the importance," Wood said.

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Student Shane Busch worked the sign-in booth.

"I think this is a good way for us kids to learn how to do it and how it goes," Busch said. "It is important to vote because we have to get a good president".

Student Faith Jones greeted voters to the school's makeshift polling place.

"I stood by the door and said hello and told them where to go. (Voting) is a reason for people to get out so we can have a president," Jones said. "Then there is no more 'I want to be the president, I want to be the president.' Then the arguing will be over."

Wood said students also learned bits of trivia about the candidates. Jones said she learned that Republican Mitt Romney's favorite food is meat-loaf pies and that Mitt is his nickname. She knew Paul Ryan would be vice president if Romney won.

Busch said he learned that Democrat Barack Obama "has 41 years of age" and was not sure what his favorite food was. However, Jones said it was hot dogs.

Principal Donald Schenz voted after showing his ID and receiving instructions on how the process worked.

"When the teachers came and talked to me about how the kids would be setting it up and that it

was real-world learning experience, I thought it was a pretty cool thing," he said.

Schenz said the teachers went to the board of elections and got stickers and talked to them about how to set up a polling station.

"We are always pushing to get the kids to learn ... what is real life," Schenz said. "That is what is really neat about it. They are incorporating many of those skills into what they did today. We like those kid-centered things where they put forth all of the effort and did a lot of the work. We are real proud of them."

After 457 total votes were cast, Obama was the winner with 328 votes. Romney received 129 votes.