

STATE EDITION



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## Bush, Kerry win JSRHS mock vote

By JOE COX  
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WEARE — Even though most are too young to vote in the New Hampshire primary, students at John Stark Regional High School staged a mock election yesterday.

More than half the 880 students turned out at polls set up in the expanded building's new atrium area. Most voted in the Democratic primary, according to social studies teacher Tim Finn.

John Kerry was the victor with 25 percent of the vote. Wesley Clark was second at 20 percent, followed by Howard Dean with 16 percent. Joe Lieberman garnered 7 percent, just ahead of Dennis Kucinich at 6 percent. Dick Gephardt, Al Sharpton, and Carol Moseley-Braun each picked up 4 percent.

John Edwards came in at 3 percent and various other candidates combined totaled 11 percent of the mock vote.

On the Republican side, George W. Bush cruised to victory with 68 percent, and the balance of the vote went to a mix other GOP candidates.

"Our results were actually pretty interesting," said Caitlin Franciscovich, 17, a John Stark senior from Weare. She organized the polling and invited real Presidential candidates to appear at the school prior to the mock election. A visit by John Kerry's daughter Vanessa and his stepson, Chris Hines, was broadcast on C-SPAN. Chrissy Gephardt, Dick Gephardt's daughter, and a representative from the Clark campaign appeared at the school to speak to students about campaign issues, as well.

The polling was held in conjunction with the NH National Primary Mock Election program that runs from this week through the end of next week. Results from John Stark and those from 130 other schools across the state will be posted on the

program's Web site on Jan. 23.

"It's a lot of work," Franciscovich said. "I didn't think it would be as much work as it was. But it was worth it."

Caitlin made arrangements to borrow authentic voting booths from the town and she recruited volunteer students to staff the election site. Franciscovich made phone calls and sent emails as part of her activities and learned about how candidates run their campaigns, she said.

And she learned about the issues. The mock election served as Caitlin's senior project, a graduation requirement for all students at John Stark.

As for the results in the mock Democratic primary being different from public opinion polls, Franciscovich said she was not surprised. "I actually thought Kerry would win," she said, because his campaign "was bigger" among students after C-SPAN came to the school. Clark's representative was well received, whereas Chrissy Gephardt's appearance was less popular with the students, according to Franciscovich.

The voting process closely mirrored the real thing. "I was very impressed with the way the students respected the process," Finn said. Students arrived at the atrium, went through a name check, chose a Democrat or Republican ballot, voted in actual voting booths, and then submitted their ballots.

A core group of about 50 to 60 John Stark students were intensively involved in following candidates and participating in events leading up to the mock election, according to Finn. Some of them attended the College Convention 2004 event presented by New England College in Manchester last week.

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[www.nhptv.org/mockelection](http://www.nhptv.org/mockelection)