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Local students put their leadership skills to the test during three days of legislative debate at the State Capitol

Students at Baker Middle School apply their classroom skills in a real world immersion in governmental legislation.

OLYMPIA, WASH. – Eighteen 8th grade students embarked on a four day field trip to the State Capitol this week to speak to state legislators and senators about the new bills they propose.

This field trip is part of a program at Baker Middle School that supports students in learning about governmental affairs. Over the course of the year, students enrolled in the Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID, Program learn how to research, write and present their bills to other students, all culminating with this event at the State Capitol. The class applies parliamentary procedure for debate.

One student's bill pertaining to increasing the penalty for first degree rape passed, and the student will speak before all 180 delegates on Saturday.

"Democracy needs to be learned by each generation and we strive to teach them about the world they will lead," said AVID Program Director Ashley Miraflor. "This is something I love to teach because it's important and I believe in it."

Inspirus Credit Union, a credit union that is committed to supporting education, donated \$1,400 to support students on scholarship, who otherwise would have been unable to attend the event at the Capitol.

"I sincerely appreciate the support from Inspirus Credit Union," said Miraflor. "There are students who wouldn't be here if it wasn't for you."

Miraflor has been teaching Youth and Government for five years and the AVID Program for seven years. A number of years ago, one of Miraflor's students found his passion during his experience in her classroom.

"He was a student who absorbed everything he was taught and he always wanted to learn more," said Miraflor. "He found his niche in my class and now he has a job with the Washington State legislator."

That student is Jabin Webster, who is currently acting as the Youth Legislature Speaker of the House in Olympia. Webster hopes to attend Central Washington University in the fall and major in marketing.

“It truly does come full-circle,” said Miraflor. “It’s so rewarding to see that the skills students are learning in my class will stay with them in their future careers.”

Providing students with the opportunity to learn more about government legislation and giving them the skills they will use for everything in life is a passion for Miraflor. She hopes to continue to inspire future generation for years to come.

About Inspirus Credit Union

Founded in 1936 by a Seattle math and journalism teacher, Inspirus serves 80,000 members across Washington who share a passion for education. With \$1.1 billion in assets, Inspirus operates branches in Seattle, Spokane, and Lynnwood. Its philanthropy model includes education-giveback programs that allow members to direct charitable contributions to schools in their communities. Inspirus employees donate upwards of 1,000 volunteer hours each year in support of education. Inspirus Credit Union is a 2017 winner of Puget Sound Business Journal's Corporate Champion Awards, honoring their contributions to education. For more information, visit inspirusCU.org.

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