

Canton Students Attend Economic Summit

Ten Canton High School students from Mrs. Kerry Hartley's high school Economics classes traveled about three hours to participate in the first ever New England High School International Economic Summit at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts. On Saturday, December 19, 2009, 240 students, representing 12 school districts from 3 states, experienced a valuable hands-on lesson in global trade negotiations and economics.

As part of the day-long summit, students were separated into a number of groups, each representing a different country. Throughout the day, the groups

competed for points which they won by passing written tests, presenting economic proposals, and trading goods and services with other groups. Students also earned points for donning costumes representing their "home nations" and creating table displays that best represented these countries.

The students' goal was to serve as economic advisors to their selected countries, while aiming to increase the standard of living. The day began with a geography quiz -- only 11 groups got 100%. Next, the students forming trade alliances and took part in a global debate, a signature campaign followed and alliances tried to gain support for their proposals. The top six teams were then asked to present



their proposals to the whole group. An economics quiz came next -- only 3 groups got 100%, and the event ended with a trading session.

This was the first time the event such as this has been held in New England and the students loved it. The entire group that went wants to go again and hopes that the Federal Reserve Bank will host a second competition in the spring, which they have talked about doing. Eamonn McHugh-Roohr labeled the experience, "The best field trip ever!"



Kerry Hartley, the student Economics teacher, felt the summit offers students the ability to truly see how real world economics can affect international relations. The students had to deal with the realities of scarcity of resources, exchange rates, and tariffs as they impact international trade. They created alliances with students from other countries to negate the effects of these factors and watched to see if they honored their agreements as the trading session unfolded. Students had to demonstrate their knowledge and skills of concepts they have learned, not just this semester, but also from previous social studies courses in Canton, in order to successfully navigate the summit.

Teachers have to be licensed before they can have access to the summit materials and work with students planning to compete. Hartley underwent training at the Boston Federal Reserve Bank at the end of June 2009. She attended a three-day conference where teachers learned how to run the program and actually competed in a mini-summit similar to what the students experienced. Only 40 teachers in the Northeast attended the training and Hartley was the only high school teacher from Connecticut, thus qualifying Canton's students to participate.

The event was coordinated by Bridgewater, the Economic Education Division of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, and the Massachusetts Council on Economic Education. To read more, and view a YouTube video of the event, follow this link to Bridgewater's Article:

http://www.bridgew.edu/Newslog/view_story.cfm?StoryID=646

