

# Mock-presidential primary stirs political interest at Dakota



Even Dakota High School students not old enough to vote can make their voices heard regarding presidential candidates through a mock-primary election at the school on April 21 and 22. Nicole Tuttle — For the Macomb Daily

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Jack Fornasiero, the president of Dakota's Junior State of America. Dakota's Junior State of America will hold a mock-presidential primary election on April 21 and 22. Photo courtesy of DAWN WAGNER

The upcoming presidential election is stirring interest among and providing lessons for high school students around Macomb County.

At Dakota High School students not old enough to vote can jump into the current heated political fray and voice their opinions this week when the school hosts a mock election.

Dakota's Junior State of America is hosting the vote, which will be conducted during student lunch hours. The group consists of between six and 10 students according to Dakota teacher and Junior State of America sponsor June McCallumore and Jack Fornasiero, the president of Dakota's Junior State of America. Fornasiero, a 16-year-old junior at Dakota, said that hosting the mock-primary presidential election will interest Dakota students, as many remember a similar exercise from their elementary school years.

"We are in high school now and a lot remember it being fun and interesting. I wanted to do it again and it is appealing to many students," Fornasiero said.

Fornasiero said he borrowed six actual voting booths from Macomb Township to set up at Dakota High School and Dakota Ninth Grade Center.

"I can make a difference and everyone can, really, not just myself. I think it is really important to be involved or make a difference. It is our government," Fornasiero said.

McCallumore said that Fornasiero is the principal organizer of this presidential primary mock-election and plans to run a presidential mock-election in November when he is a senior.

"Jack put it together. He wanted it to be realistic," McCallumore said.

Mock-election results will be announced to the school on Monday, April 25, according to Fornasiero.

Fornasiero said that the Junior State of America has no members old enough to actually vote in an election, as the majority are juniors and sophomores. Students have worked to promote the mock-primary election through school announcements, posters, word of mouth and other advertising, according to Fornasiero.

The goal of the mock-primary is to generate greater student interest in politics and promote the Junior State of America at Dakota High School in Macomb Township, McCallumore said.

"We're trying to get more kids involved in U.S. politics and government. So many students today are not really interested. We think it is important for students to get involved. It is our government and we need to make sure we are all active in it," Fornasiero said.

The group, which is a chapter of the national Junior State of America, meets weekly on Wednesdays as an after school club. Dakota's chapter of the Junior State of America has conducted events such as a mock-congress, according to McCallumore.

"Jack is trying to get the kids to do prep on their own and come back. He is doing a mock congress now and they are all taking different positions. They come in every week with a topic and discuss it as a role being played in congress. The kids seem to enjoy that and research what the role would be," McCallumore said.

Fornasiero is also working to obtain politicians to speak before the group.

