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TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

HF Schools

RHS students vote today

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■ More than 4,000 high schools across Canada participated in Student Vote Canada program

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TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

Most of them aren't old enough to vote in Monday's federal election, but about 700 students at Riverview High School will be eligible to cast ballots today as part of a nationwide exercise to get Canada's youth involved in the democratic process.

All four candidates in the Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe riding appeared before a packed auditorium at RHS yesterday to field questions about their campaign, their personal goals, the environment and other issues that affect Canada's youth.

Organizer Zoe Buechler, a Grade 12 student at RHS, said it was an interesting exercise for everyone.

"I think the students were really interested, especially those who are 18 and able to vote in Monday's real election," she said.

The audience included students from Grades 9 through 12. Students who are enrolled in Grade 9 or 10 Social Studies, Grade 11 Modern History or Grade 12 Law and Eco-

nomics classes were automatically registered for the vote. Others could sign up on their own.

Following the debates, the students will vote today in a mock election using ballots with the names of the actual candidates in the Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe riding. The results will be tabulated and sent to Student Vote Canada, a national organization with a goal of encouraging Canada's youth to get involved in the process.

Taylor Gunn, chief electoral officer for Student Vote Canada's headquarters in Toronto, said it has been an exciting week as similar debates have been held all over the county. He said a total of 4,325 schools in Canada have gotten involved this year. That number includes 120 schools in New Brunswick, about 35 per cent of the total, and the highest in the four federal elections during which the program has been in existence.

Buechler said 451 of the 1,100 students at Riverview High School cast ballots during the 2008 federal election.

"We're hoping to beat that this time, as we have about 700 students registered," she said.

Student Vote Canada will not release the results of the votes until after the polls close on Monday.

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