

Youth In Government Day

On November 14th, the Institute for Local Government partnered with Sacramento County to pilot a Youth in Government (YIG) Day for students at Carver High School. The purpose of this day is to help students become more familiar with, and explore potential career pathways to, various county departments. LPC Consulting Associates, Inc. conducted an evaluation to assess what people learned, liked, and or would change about the YIG day. ILG sent online surveys to both the adult county staff and the students who participated in the event to understand their perspectives of how the day went and what was learned. A total of 32 county staff and 54 students completed the survey.

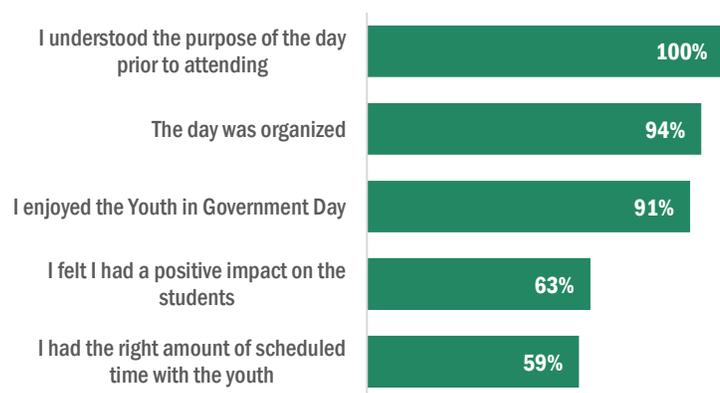
County Staff

There was a diverse set of county staff who filled out the evaluation survey. All departments that conducted tours were represented along with most of the departments who hosted booths during lunch. On average the staff have 16 years of professional experience working for the county. The staff also served a variety of roles during the YIG day. Half were part on the YIG coordinating team or line staff. The other half served as managers, tour guides, presenters, shop supervisors, and setting up/cleaning up for the event.

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According to the staff, almost all (88%) agreed that they were prepared for YIG day. All staff agreed they understood the purpose of the day and most had received sufficient communication from the YIG coordinating team about the event (91%). While many felt prepared, some staff provided a few suggestions to better help staff feel even more supported by the YIG coordinating team. Suggestions included providing more detailed agendas of the event prior to the day of the event, and giving presenters of each department clearer definitions of what they were expected to present to the students.

Percentage of County Staff agree...



Overall, most staff agreed that they had enjoyed the YIG day (91%). Additionally, staff agreed that the day was worthwhile (97%), was organized (94%), and there was good coordination throughout the day (94%). Additionally, many staff had positive interactions

with the students. The majority of staff (63%) agreed that they felt they had a positive impact on the students and that the students were both respectful (84%) and actively engaged. However, about 41% of the staff were either ambivalent or disagreed that they had the right amount of scheduled time with the students.

In open questions about what staff liked most about the YIG day, similar themes emerged. Staff enjoyed the tours and presentations of the various departments, seeing "intergenerational interaction" between staff and students,

"The various departments coming together to show and teach young people what they do. Many representatives exhibited a passion for their jobs and encourages the students to pursue a career in their field."

and seeing students engaged in their type of work. In contrast, staff also provided feedback on what they would change to improve the YIG day. Primarily, departments would like to have more time to interact with the students. Staff mentioned they did not have time for students to ask enough questions and further interact. Secondly, they thought it would be helpful for the youth to have more supervision. Some students were

"Increasing the tour time to allow for some Q & A after the presentation." & "Perhaps, allow more time for interaction between the host departments and the students during the event."

observed not respecting other people or the county department property. Other suggestions included inviting a different age group, having more departments present, having more field visits, and managing how students visited displays by the departments. One staff observed that one department had no students visit their display.

School Partnership

One of YIG day's goals was to expose students to different potential careers with Sacramento County by partnering with local schools. As a result of YIG day, almost half (48%) of county staff agreed they have a better understanding of how to partner with schools to link students to careers in their department. Yet only a third of the staff agreed they have connections to education staff who they can work with to help build pathways into careers in their department. Additionally, only of a fourth of the county staff were aware of Carver High School's pathway programs.

When asked whether the day was valuable for their department, some participants in various departments thought it was a great opportunity to pitch job opportunities to the future workforce. Only one participant, in real estate, felt the outreach was not as valuable for their department because they typically have more barriers to entry compared to the other departments present. As a strategy, about 84% of the county staff rated YIG day between a good and an excellent strategy in creating career pathways for their county department. Most believed that it was a positive strategy because it brought early exposure to potential career options otherwise not as well known to students. One staff stated, "the sooner we can provide young people with the tools and information, the more time they will have available to plan their career path." In comparison, staff who rated YIG lower as a strategy responded that they believe the target audience was not a right fit and this event could better serve students closer to graduating from high school.

"It might be better strategy if the students were older and, therefore, closer to deciding on college or vocational training."

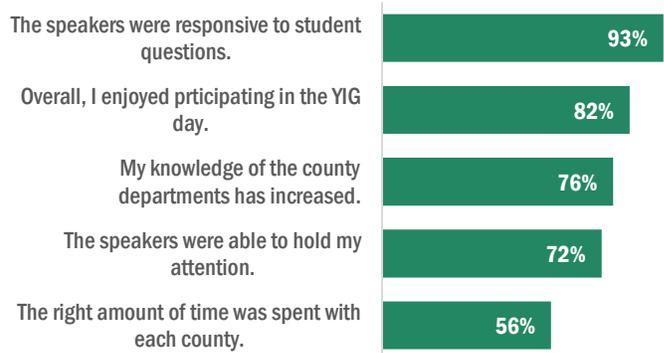
Students

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A total of 54 sophomores from Carver High School completed the evaluation survey for YIG day. Half the students were male (50%), 41% female, and 9% non-binary.

The students took a tour of four county departments: (1) waste-management, (2) fleet, (3) facilities, and (4) transportation. Youth were asked to rate their knowledge about each county department. Across all four departments, over half (59%) of the youth rated their knowledge as excellent or good and almost all students agreed (91%) that their knowledge of each county department had increased due to the visit. Three-fourths (76%) of the students agreed that prior to YIG day, they felt prepared to visit the county departments because of the speakers who spoke to their class. However, many students voiced that they would have still liked more information on what to expect during the day. (e.g. what they were going to do, who they were going to visit, and what they were going to learn during the day).

Percentage of Students agree...



During YIG day, students also rated their interactions with staff as positive across a few different dimensions. According to student surveys more than 93% of the students agreed that the speakers were friendly and responsive to student questions. Additionally, about three-fourths (72%) of students agreed that the speakers were able to hold their attention during the tour.

Overall, there were a few common themes reflecting what youth liked most about YIG day. First, many students enjoyed being able to get to learn about the different county departments and their roles within the community. Second, some students felt what they liked most was their interactions with the staff. Students characterized staff as *"polite people and very understanding."* A few also specifically enjoying having one-on-one conversations with the speakers. Some students enjoyed lunch because they were *"able to go around and socialize with the workers"* and thought *"some of their stories are pretty cool."* A third theme that students most liked about YIG day were the job-related activities. Many students enjoyed the hands-on activities, especially being able to operate the garbage truck and seeing the police cars.

One student liked *"being able to know the different types of departments that the county has within it and what the jobs in the county do to help our community"*

Students also expressed similar themes for what they would change to improve YIG day. One common suggestion was having more hands-on activities or interactions with the staff. The most memorable part of the day for many students was these activities and therefore wanted fewer formal presentations. Second, how the day was organized might be improved. While most students agreed the day was organized overall (80%), critiques focused on how groups were organized and insufficient time for department tours. Only

56% of students agreed that the right amount of time was spent with each county department. Other suggestions to improve the day were to shorten the day, keep students from being too loud, having better weather/no smoke, and having more departments present.

In the end, more than 80% of the students agreed they enjoyed participating in the YIG day and it was worth the trip. Altogether, 70% of students agreed they would recommend this event to other students.

Careers with the County

While many more students enjoyed the day, about half of the students agreed the day was relevant to their life. Nonetheless, about two-thirds agreed that YIG day helped the students think about their future career plans. For the

As a result of YIG day, **39%** of students agreed they might consider a career with the county after high school & **65%** agreed YIG day helped them think about future career plans

county departments visited, the majority of students felt they were aware or somewhat aware of the different potential careers within each department (69% - 78%). Additionally, 69% of students agreed that they know the basic educational requirements for county jobs after high school, and another 90% agreed they understand what a professional setting in the county workforce looks like. Before the YIG day, only 11 students (19%) agreed they were interested in working for the county, in contrast with as many as 21 students (39%) who were considering a career with the county after high school as a result of YIG day.

From the county departments visited, students were asked if there were any *careers* they wanted to learn more about. About half wanted to learn more about transportation and a third wanted to learn more about fleet operations. Students were also asked if there were any *jobs* in the county of interest, 19 (35%) of whom had none or were unsure.

Future Activities

Both staff and students were asked about their interest in participating in future events such as another YIG day. While there was interest from both groups, there was a difference in which activities they wanted. More staff (81%) were interested in participating in future YIG events but only about 40% of students were interested in attending more YIG events. Adults were also more interested in participating in informational interviews and speaking in classrooms. In comparison, students were more interested in spending a few hours observing a county employee with a job/career that they were interested in and or interning in a county department.

A greater % of **students** are interested in job observations and internships than **county staff** who are interested in engaging students in these activities.

