

Mayor visit inspires students to dream big

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By Junette Reyes Staff Writer

Some local students recently got a first-hand look at local government — thanks to the mayor.

Davie Mayor Judy Paul recently visited a class of third grade students at NSU University School. The students in the class have been learning about laws and the branches of government, with Paul's visit serving to tie into the lecture as a representative of the local sector of government.

"They had a lot of background knowledge prior to the mayor coming to visit," said Cory DeLaFuente, the Lower School associate director. "They did research, they read about local government and they designed their questions so they'd be ready to ask pertinent questions when the mayor came."

DeLaFuente also said the school typically brings in professionals depending on the current subject the students are focusing on. For example, being a part of NSU gives them the opportunity to partner with the law school. Professors then visit students to explain the process of law and various topics. Some third graders have even participated in mock trials.

"It's very important that they have an opportunity to interact, ask questions, engage and apply what they're learning to people that are in the world doing what they're learning about," DeLaFuente said.

Paul said the students' questions were insightful and surprising, especially given how much they wanted to know about council meetings and her responsibilities.

"They're like little sponges. I worked with elementary students when I was in the school system and I always loved the third, fourth and fifth grades," Paul said.

Paul added that it is important to reach out to kids this early, as a lot of movements and initiatives for the



betterment of the community start with younger generations.

"They'll go home and they'll talk to the parents and it'll give them a different feeling because a lot of times, the only time they see politicians is on the TV," said Paul. "This way, they get to know an elected official who is a person and can communicate with them."

Rubi Katz said she learned about local government, petitions and how to reach the mayor. Aleix Murphy, on the other hand, said he didn't know how busy the role can be given the mayor's responsibilities.

Sara Schumanis said she learned more about the mayor's free time and connected with her through their mutual love of riding horses.

When asked if they ever wanted to become mayor one day, the students enthusiastically responded with the exception of Schumanis, who has her eye on the White House.

Paul ultimately said she wanted them to take away from the Q&A session that they can be a part of government in helping come up with solutions instead of being part of the problem.