

Ontario students send different message to Queen's Park ? but Simcoe-Grey bucks the trend

Simcoe-Grey might have crested a blue wave in the June 7 Provincial election, sending PC MPP Jim Wilson back to Queen's Park ? but if students Ontario-wide had their say, this blue wave might have been doused by an orange crush province-wide.

Teens in the province-wide Student Vote program bucked the Provincial trend which sent Doug Ford's Progressive Conservatives to Toronto with a decisive majority; instead, these teens, most of whom were below voting age, elected Andrea Horwath and the NDP into a majority government.

By the afternoon of election night, 2,166 schools across Ontario, representing all 124 electoral districts, reported their results.

While the students voted Mr. Wilson into office in a squeaker with NDP candidate David Matthews, he would have been part of the official opposition.

Province-wide, participants elected Andrea Horwath and the Ontario NDP to form a majority government with 66 seats and 32 per cent of the vote.

Doug Ford and the Progressive Conservatives took 45 seats and 27 per cent of the popular vote.

As far as students were concerned, however, it was very much the same story for Kathleen Wynne and the Ontario Liberals ? but just slightly better than the actual results of just seven seats, one seat shy of official party status.

Students elected 11 Liberal members, handing them 19 per cent of the popular vote. Ms. Wynne, however, would have lost her seat to NDP candidate Amara Possian.

Rounding out the results was the Green Party with two seats.

?What makes this even more incredible is the timing,? said Taylor Gunn, President and CEO of CIVIX. ?This is the busiest time of year for schools with culminating activities, assessments and exams, and more than 5,000 teachers have made citizenship education a priority. We are sincerely grateful for the time and energy dedicated to the program by teachers.?

Student Vote is the flagship program of CIVIX, a national civic education charity focused on developing the habits of active and engaged citizenship among young people. CIVIX programming focuses on the themes of elections, government budgets, elected representatives and news literacy.

The student vote in Simcoe-Grey saw PC Jim Wilson come out on top with 657 votes, followed closely by NDP candidate David Matthews with 614. Green Party candidate Jessica Perry came in third with 486, followed by Liberal Dan Hambly with 346 and Libertarian Joe Wright with 82.

Participating local schools included St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School, Father F.X. O'Reilly Catholic Elementary School, Alliston Union Public School, Banting Memorial High School, and Boyne River Public School.

Mr. Matthews took the Boyne River poll with 43 votes compared to Mr. Wilson's 32. Ms. Perry was third with 28, followed by Mr. Hambly with 13 and Mr. Wright with 10.

Mr. Wilson easily won Banting Memorial High School with 311 votes compared to second place finisher Mr. Matthews with 172. Third was Ms. Perry with 154, followed by Mr. Hambly with 130, and Mr. Wright with 35.

Alliston Union was NDP territory, electing Mr. Wilson with 33 votes compared to Mr. Wilson's 26. Next was Ms. Perry with 15,

followed by Mr. Wright with six and Mr. Hambly with five.

Mr. Matthews also took Father F.X. O'Reilly easily, winning 61 votes compared to a tie for second shared between Mr. Hambly and Mr. Wilson, who each garnered 38 votes. Next up was Ms. Perry with 33 votes and Mr. Wright with nine.

It might have been a very small poll, but St. Thomas Aquinas was very much PC territory, with Mr. Wilson securing a small but mighty 10 votes compared to second-place finisher Mr. Hambly with 4. Mr. Matthews received three votes, while Ms. Perry and Mr. Wright missed the board.

By Brock Weir