**2020 Spring Conference Information -- Sunday, March 29, 2020**

**Parents and Students :**

Here are some of the details about how the Coronavirus situation has impacted the Youth in Government 2020 Spring Conference – I acquired most of this information when I attended a virtual meeting of YIG administrators and advisers on Thursday. I communicated the main ideas yesterday to students through GroupMe.

**Postponement or Cancellation?**

Currently, YIG is looking into having the conference at a later date. Having it in late spring or early summer (May-June) seems like a remote possibility, because of the uncertainty of what will happen when (or if) we return to school this year. A return to school would probably mean an intense emphasis on academics – districts might not want to release students for two extra days for a field trip.

There is also a possibility that the conference could be held in September. This solution wouldn’t be best for seniors, though they would be welcome at the conference if they were close enough and could work the conference into their schedule. If the conference happens in September, seniors would have the option of receiving a refund or attending the conference. I’m not sure about other students, if they could still get a refund if they decided not to attend a September conference.

There is, of course, the possibility that the conference will simply be cancelled, which leads to the next topic – Refunds.

**Refunds**

If the conference is cancelled, refunds would be issued. Of the total of $405, most of it would be eligible for refunds. The cost of the fall conference ($30) would not be refunded, since we attended the fall conference. The final payment of $275 would be refunded, and probably the first payment of $100. This payment is supposedly listed as non-refundable, but advisers pointed out that students weren’t actively choosing not to attend the conference, so YIG administrators said they would look into refunding both payments. Stay tuned for further updates on this topic . . .

If the conference is cancelled and refunds are issued, non-seniors who are going to attend next year’s conference would have the option of getting a refund or applying this year’s payment to next year’s conference.

As far as the timing of refunds, any quick refund may be a little tricky. Administrators pointed out that the way they would normally refund money would be to send the refund to the school, so that school personnel (in our case, Marcy Dekett) could process the refund and help me get the refunds to students. The problem with this plan is that there are few school employees who are working at the schools right now, so any refund received at our school would face a delay in being distributed. YIG officials are also working on different plans for distributing refunds, if the conference does officially get cancelled.

**Virtual Conference?**

YIG administrators are looking into the possibility of putting together a virtual conference in the late spring, if the conference is cancelled. The thinking is that students put a lot of work into writing bills, and a virtual conference would allow students to participate in committees and even a virtual legislature to debate bills and move through the legislative process. If you can picture a Zoom virtual meeting, where students could raise their hands and participate (parli pro, of course!), much of the committee and legislative work could be accomplished. This alternative would pale in comparison to the actual conference at the Capitol Building, but might be better than nothing at all. I’m not sure how a virtual conference would impact refunds – since much of the payment goes toward hotel rooms, I’m sure most of the money would still be refunded. Stay tuned for more on this topic . . .