

Here's what I think ...

By Ty Ankrom

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I may be biased, but I'm consistently impressed by the caliber of students in Pickaway County. We have outstanding public high school students and they are excellent representatives of Pickaway County schools.

Many of them attended this year's Pickaway County Leadership Conference held at the AMVETS hall in Circleville this week. The yearly conference is designed to give student leaders the training and materials needed to run student organizations more efficiently and effectively.

It is sponsored by the Pickaway County ESC, Circleville's Noon and Sunrise Rotary Clubs, the county schools' National Honor Society chapters and AMVETS.

Students are broken into groups to allow everyone to meet students from other schools. Once in groups, students learned about leadership skills and how to conduct a meeting, explored ethical issues and exchanged ideas on events and activities that work at each of their schools.

One session, called Ethics Auction, requires students to consider situations – such as looking good, getting a diploma or traveling the word – and decide how much those “items” are worth to them. Additionally, in that session, students are given statements and must decide if they agree, disagree or are on the fence.

“This discussion is geared toward respectfully hearing others’ opinions, discussing differences and accepting that people are allowed to change their minds and opinions about things,” said Andrea Brown, a guidance counselor at Westfall High School who has been involved with the conference for three years.

Since she has worked on the conference with Rachael Gorsuch, Teays Valley National Honor Society advisor, she has found this session helpful to student leaders.

“Each year my students have talked about how beneficial it has been,” she said. “Then, as NHS (members) they discuss how to embed things they've learned” at school.

Sessions also were conducted by Brian Bigam of Circleville High School, Aaron Rothey of Logan Elm and Sgt. Jonathan McRee, recruiter in Circleville for the U.S. Marine Corps. The guest speaker was Theresa Butts, physical education teacher at Westfall Middle School and varsity girls track coach and athletic trainer at Westfall High School.

Ty Ankrom is superintendent of the Pickaway County Educational Service Center.

