

# Senator Harris Engages Students In State Government During Fall Youth Council

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October 19 2023 10:16 AM



EDWARDSVILLE – State Senator Erica Harriss (56<sup>th</sup>-Glen Carbon) welcomed nearly 50 high school students from a dozen different schools for her Youth Advisory Council (YAC) Tuesday at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

“This event is always a great way to offer a glimpse of the state government process to area high school students interested in government,” said Senator Harriss. “We had a lot of robust conversations pertaining to legislation our students would like to see moving forward and students were able to hear from three incredible speakers who are leaders in our community about their career paths.”

Speakers at this year’s YAC included SIUE Chancellor James T. Minor, Damian Jones, Executive Director of Student Athletes Leading Tomorrow (SALT), and Judge Sarah Smith, Circuit Judge in Madison County.

Maryville Christian School student AJ Whitley said the discussion with Judge Smith was his favorite part, “I really liked how she shared the opportunities she got and how she shared her military experience and how it has helped her get into the position she is today. I learned a lot and it was overall a great experience.”

The fall event is the first of two parts in Senator Harriss’ Youth Advisory Council. Participants from this YAC will come together in the spring at the State Capitol to debate legislation during a mock committee hearing and to experience the legislative process firsthand in Springfield.

“My favorite part was being able to connect with people from different schools, and different backgrounds, ethnically, socially and economically,” said Alton High School student, Makenzie Jones. “And just be able to see their point of view and come together and talk about it.”

Lunch for the Fall YAC event was provided by Meridian Health.