

## Students chat with Rep. Hoyer through Telepresence technology

Posted by [TBN\\_Admin](#) On 10/03/2014

Several Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) students were part of an inaugural event on Tuesday, Sept. 30, that mixed video conferencing technology and chat rooms with politics and history. The event was a Google Hangout with Congressman Steny Hoyer, who represents Charles County as part of Maryland's Fifth Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives. Students in Advanced Placement (AP) Government classes at La Plata, North Point and Westlake high schools, along with students at two Prince George's County high schools, participated in a question and answer session with Hoyer on issues such as minimum wage and internet fair usage using computers and video conferencing features available through a Google chat setting.

The Google Hangout was hosted by the Close Up Foundation and moderated by the organization's director, Joe Geraghty. The Close Up Foundation partners with educators, schools, and youth organizations throughout the country to help young people become informed about the democratic process and become engaged citizens. According to Jack Tuttle, content specialist in social studies for CCPS, Maryland State Department of Education staff selected CCPS to participate in the event.

Students from Westlake joined their peers at North Point in the Telepresence classroom to participate in the Hangout, and students at La Plata also participated through use of the Telepresence technology at their school. During the Google Hangout, selected students chosen to represent their schools took turns asking Hoyer questions. To prepare for the event and help their students come up with questions, Close Up provided teachers the curriculum and supporting materials on the topics up for discussion.

Students chosen to represent their schools during the event were Carleigh Zimmerman, senior at La Plata, Kristen Kriegh, senior at North Point, and Georgia Benson, senior at Westlake. La Plata's question to Hoyer focused on net neutrality and its impact on cable company incentives, and both North Point and Westlake's questions discussed the possibility and effects of an increase in minimum wage. The idea behind the Google chat is to better connect students on a nationwide level to government leaders.

During his closing remarks to students, Hoyer thanked Close Up and Google for their efforts in organizing the event and remarked how advancements in technology will continue to help students learn and succeed. "Here I am sitting in Washington D.C., and students are at their schools. What a wonderful way technology has found to bring us together in real time, seeing one another, talking to one another and learning from one another," Hoyer added.

Other schools selected to participate were Frederick Douglas and Parkdale high schools from Prince George's County Public Schools. To watch the Google Hangout, visit <https://plus.google.com/events/cppdoo8ug8q3bkrihcmvntgngno>.

Charles County Public Schools provides 26,500 students in grades prekindergarten through 12 with an academically challenging education. Located in Southern Maryland, Charles County Public Schools has 35 schools that offer a technologically advanced, progressive and high quality education that builds character, equips for leadership and prepares students for life, careers and higher education.

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