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Evergreen School honors its elected officials

by Matthew Smith | Special to The Gazette

At this Inaugural ball, the president-elect was not only a woman, a minority and underage, but also had a few ideas of her own about change – which, of course, played well to her base.

"We're planning to spruce up our playground and make our school more fun and plan more field trips," said 10-year-old Cameron Bauserman of Silver Spring, president-elect of the Evergreen School student body during a formal student government Inaugural ball on Saturday.

The event, held at Du Shor Dance Studio in Bethesda, featured dancing, cake, punch, pizza and a few stump speeches about politics and how much the children learned about the American political process.

"We learned, in depth, about what's happening with the delegates – so all the complicated stuff," Bauserman said. "It's a lot of fun and I'm proud."

The ball comes two months after the Wheaton school's student government election on Nov. 4 and was intended as the culmination of a civics lesson that mirrored the national elections with relentless campaigning, posters, ties and even a little bit of politics, Bauserman said.

Eight-year-old Secretary-elect Athena Skoufias said she made posters for the classrooms and hallways to get elected and that she took good notes about her school council's new agenda.

"We're talking about [helping] animal shelters and having a school retreat," she said.

Head of School Marcia Jacques said the point of the process was to study American politics and give her students a chance to look into their world more closely.

"It gives everyone a chance to participate in the election process and feel what's going on in the nation right now," she said.

Silver Spring resident John Bauserman, the father of president-elect Cameron, said his daughter made her own campaign materials but there were no late nights preparing speeches.

"We want to improve the school and develop some civic responsibilities, but [they] have to have fun, too," he said.

While there were some speeches at Saturday's ball, the focus was on fun. About 30 girls and boys in ballroom gowns and boys even in tuxedos with pink shirts and bowties joined proud parents and staff at the Bethesda dance studio. Speeches were brief, consisting mostly of six words: "Thank you for voting for me."

Streamers, balloons and election-related posters added to the atmosphere. On the dance floor, partners neither led nor followed. Instead, there were only "leaders and directors."

Dushar staff Alina Zavidova, originally of Russia, said the studio hosts a lot of parties and at this one the young children were happily intermingled and dancing together.

"I've never seen kids dressed up like this," she said.