



California Department of Education

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March 26, 2018

Dear County and District Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, and High School Principals:

High School Voter Education Weeks (April 16-27, 2018)

As we approach the upcoming statewide primary and general elections this June and November, it is important to ensure that our students are learning to become active and engaged participants in our democracy. It is never too early to motivate your students to get involved. That's why we strongly encourage your school to observe High School Voter Education Weeks on April 16-27 to put your students on the path to a lifetime of civic engagement and voting. With online pre-registration available for sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds, it's easier than ever to get students prepared to cast their own ballots. Once pre-registered, they will automatically become active voters on their 18th birthday.

California *Education Code* designates the last two weeks of April and September as "High School Voter Education Weeks" and authorizes schools to designate students as "voter outreach coordinators." With county elections officials as partners, we provide resources to make it easy for schools to participate. Teachers can help eligible students pre-register or register to vote either on a paper form or online. Voter outreach coordinators can lead registration drives and other school activities aimed at civic participation.

We encourage you to make High School Voter Education Weeks just the start of your school's civic engagement activities this year. Here are some ideas and resources to get you started:

- Encourage eligible students to visit <http://registertovote.ca.gov> to register or pre-register to vote. Set up pre-voter registration terminals in the school library or at large school events.
- Urge administrators, students and parents to visit the new HighSchool.sos.ca.gov portal that includes important information about voter registration and pre-registration, Student Mock Election, Student Poll Worker and High School Voter Education Weeks.

- Review the High School Voter Education Weeks page on the Secretary of State's web site: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/help-strengthen-our-democracy/high-school-voter-education-weeks>.
- Students can also stay informed with the Secretary of State's VOTE CALIFORNIA smartphone app.
- Partner with your county elections officials, invite them to visit your school, and learn from these experts about registering and voting. Locate your local official here: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/county-elections-offices/>.
- Place a link to the Secretary of State's online voter registration application on your school website and email the link to students and parents: <http://registertovote.ca.gov/>.
- Inform students how they can learn the electoral process firsthand—and get paid—by serving as poll workers on Election Day. <http://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/pdfs/student-poll-worker-flyer.pdf>.
- Use the California Voter Bill of Rights to teach students about rules that govern the act of voting: <http://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/voter-bill-of-rights/voter-bill-of-rights.pdf>.
- Adopt recommendations from the California Task Force on K-12 Civic Learning and use lesson plans and other resources of the Power of Democracy: <http://www.powerofdemocracy.org/>.
- Inform parents and students of changes to the voting process in Nevada, Napa, Madera, Sacramento and San Mateo counties per the Voter Choice Act by sharing <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voters-choice-act/>.

Working together, we can educate and encourage our young citizens to register to vote and turn out at the polls to ensure their voices are heard in 2018 and beyond.

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If you have any questions about High School Voter Education Weeks or other civic engagement opportunities, please feel free to contact Evelyn Mendez, National Voter Registration Act and Voter Outreach Program Manager, by phone at (916) 695-1561 or by email at evelyn.mendez@sos.ca.gov, or Jason Spencer, Principal Advisor to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, by phone at (916) 319-0521 or by email at jaspencer@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson
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California Department of Education



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Secretary of State
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