



California Department of Education

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California Secretary of State

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October 1, 2019

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

Schools as Voting Locations and Student Poll Workers

The shortage of voting locations and poll workers is a growing problem facing local elections officials in California every Election Day. We are asking for your help by making your campus available as a polling place or vote center on Election Day.

As you may know, when your local elections official asks to use a public school campus as a polling place on Election Day or as a vote center beginning either 10 days (for 11-day vote centers) or three days (for four-day vote centers) before the election and continuing through Election Day, that request must be honored. The law allows you to decide how best to comply with the request and meet the needs of your own community.

Three options are available under this law: 1) leave the school open and in session while a specific area of the school is designated as a polling place or vote center; 2) designate the day as a staff training and development day; or 3) choose to close the school to students and non-classified employees. Local elections officials are encouraged to make the request to use your school as a polling place or vote center early enough for your school board to consider their options before school calendars are printed and distributed to parents (Elections Code §12283). Contact your local elections office to offer your school as a polling place or vote center.

Another Election Day problem is a shortage of poll workers. According to many county elections officials, students are often the most helpful and enthusiastic poll workers, and students who serve as poll workers report they learn about the importance of participating in an election despite not yet being eligible to vote.

High school students who are at least sixteen, are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, and are in good standing with a grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale can serve as poll workers. While serving as a poll worker qualifies as an excused absence, absences for the entire school day are not included in the average daily attendance used to generate apportionment funding.

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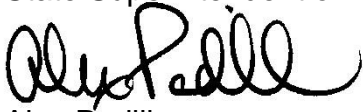
We hope you will make every effort to adjust your calendars to accommodate the use of your school as a polling place for the March 3, 2020, Presidential Primary Election and the November 3, 2020, Presidential Election. In addition, we would be grateful if you would help your local elections officials by actively identifying students who can serve as poll workers for the upcoming elections.

If you have any questions about this subject, please contact Paige Kent, Program Manager, Voter Education and Outreach, by phone at 916-695-1564 or by email at pkent@sos.ca.gov, or Cindy Quiralte, Policy Advisor to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, by phone at 916-319-0483 or by email at cquiralte@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent of Public Instruction



Alex Padilla
California Secretary of State

TT/AP:em