



CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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September 1, 2016

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

HIGH SCHOOL VOTER EDUCATION WEEKS (SEPTEMBER 19–30, 2016)

As we approach the presidential election in November, it is important to ensure that our students are learning to become active and engaged participants in our democracy. That is why we strongly encourage your school to participate in High School Voter Education Weeks on September 19 through 30, 2016. Let's get our students on the path to a lifetime of civic engagement and voting.

California *Education Code* designates the last two weeks of 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 who will be eighteen years old by the next election learn how to register to vote—either on a paper form or electronically. Voter outreach coordinators can lead registration drives and other school activities aimed at civic participation.

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

- Review the High School Voter Education Weeks Web page on the California 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>.
- Partner with your county elections officials, invite them to visit your school, and learn from these experts how to register and vote: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/county-elections-offices/>.
- Provide a link to the Secretary of State's online voter registration application on your school Web site and e-mail it to students and parents: <http://registertovote.ca.gov/>.

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- Register your school in the MyVote California Student Mock Election, which takes place on October 11, 2016. The program allows students to cast a vote for actual candidates and measures appearing on the statewide ballot. Sign up early to receive a free tool kit for your school. <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/student-mock-election/>.
- Inform students how they can learn about the electoral process firsthand—and get paid—by working 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 from the Power of Democracy: <http://www.powerofdemocracy.org/>.

A presidential election is the perfect time for students to begin their civic involvement. The excitement of voters casting their ballot at their polling places, some for the first time, is contagious. Working together, we can educate and encourage our young citizens to register to vote, turn out at the polls, and ensure their voices are heard in 2016 and beyond.

If you have any questions about High School Voter Education Weeks or other civic engagement opportunities, please contact Steven Carda, Voter Outreach Program Manager, Office of the California Secretary of State, by phone at 916-695-1570 or by e-mail at Steven.Carda@sos.ca.gov, or Jason Spencer, Principal Advisor to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, California Department of Education, by phone at 916-319-0521 or by e-mail at jaspencer@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
California Secretary of State



Tom Torlakson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction