



ALEX PADILLA | SECRETARY OF STATE | STATE OF CALIFORNIA
ELECTIONS DIVISION

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April 1, 2016

County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum #16106

TO: All County Clerks/Registrars of Voters

FROM: /s/ Milena Paez
NVRA and Voter Outreach Analyst

RE: Civic Engagement: High School Voter Education Weeks

The California Education Code designates the last two full weeks in April and September to be High School Voter Education Weeks. This provides an opportunity for high schools and their students to partner with county elections officials to promote civic education and participation on campus and foster an environment that cultivates lifelong voters and active citizens.

Secretary Padilla is excited to partner with the California Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson to be a part of this initiative to engage high school students and prepare them to become active participants in our nation's democracy. To help recognize the importance of the upcoming weeks, Secretary Padilla and Superintendent Torlakson have issued a joint letter to schools across California encouraging participation. In addition, Secretary Padilla has issued a resolution encouraging all California high schools to participate in California's High School Voter Education Weeks, April 18-29, 2016. You can view the [letter](#) and the [resolution](#) online. Feel free to use these resources as a tool to gain support and recognition from your Board of Supervisors or County Board of Education.

In addition to these resources, our office conducted a brief survey of counties on their participation and ideas for this event. Some of the most popular ideas and activities are attached and have been posted to our web page for High School Voter Education Weeks at <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/help-strengthen-our-democracy/high-school-voter-education-weeks>.

If you have questions about this or any other outreach related matter please feel free to contact me at (916) 695-1577. Thank you.

Attachments

California High School Voter Education Weeks

Best Practices Shared by County Elections Offices

Below are ideas that have been shared by counties to promote civic engagement in high schools around California. These projects have been used and proved to be successful. If you have ideas that you would like to share, please email them to Milena.Paez@sos.ca.gov so they can be included in future communications.

Political Party and Candidate Forum in a Mock Election Atmosphere **(Placer County)**

- ✓ Select a school or schools that would like to encourage their staff and students to become more civically engaged.
- ✓ Contact representatives of political parties and invite them to come make a short presentation to the school about their party and its platform (set boundaries on subject matter).
- ✓ Invite local candidates that may have been elected recently and encourage them to tell their story. Have them explain the process and experience from the time they decided to run for office to the day they were elected (set boundaries on subject matter).
- ✓ Encourage a question and answer period where the students can inquire about the process of a working democracy.
- ✓ Allow teachers and students who are eligible to register to vote, to apply on site.
- ✓ Create a mock election ballot and give attendees the opportunity to cast their ballot, just as they would on Election Day.

Conduct a Mock Election **(Sacramento County)**

- ✓ Select a school that is enthusiastic about giving students the opportunity to encourage their students to become involved in their democracy.
- ✓ Create a mock election ballot with issues relevant to high school students.
- ✓ Work with school to provide a “polling place” on campus. Bring voting equipment that students can use to simulate an actual Election Day.
- ✓ Use this time to encourage students to become poll workers on Election Day.

Host a Voter Registration Drive on Campus **(Plumas County)**

- ✓ Select a high school with a Government teacher who is passionate about democracy.
- ✓ “Elections 101.” Present a slide show to Government classes giving the basics of participating in a democracy.

- How to Register.
- Am I eligible to register to vote?
- What to expect after you're registered to vote.
- What the County Elections Office does.
- How does the county know which contest I get to vote on?
- Where can I find information on what I am voting for?
- ✓ Coordinate a Voter Registration Drive on campus.

Assist High School with Student Body Elections
(Plumas County)

- ✓ Select a high school with an upcoming student body election.
- ✓ Create a schedule with the Student Leadership Instructor and school administration, and select a location on campus for the polling place.
- ✓ Work with a local ballot printer to have mock ballots donated to school.
- ✓ Provide poll worker training class to Senior class volunteers (these students were selected because they were not voting on student body officers for the upcoming year).
- ✓ Election Day! Set up a polling place! Provide the roster, badges, voting booths, ballot boxes, polling place signage, "I Voted" stickers, and of course, the American flag to make it identifiable.
- ✓ Allow student poll workers to announce results at school assembly/rally.

Create a Voter Registration Toolkit
(Contra Costa County)

- ✓ Include flyers, registration cards, and voter education and outreach materials.
- ✓ Distribute toolkit to all high schools to get students familiarized with voting.
- ✓ Conduct a Mock Election on campus.
- ✓ Ask students their opinions on current election topics such as:
 - Who should be president?
 - Should 17-year-olds be able to vote in the primaries?
 - Other topical issues related to the 2016 election.
- ✓ Encourage teachers to post the flyers and materials in the classroom.