



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

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February 9, 2016

County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum # 16058

TO: All County Clerks/Registrars of Voters

FROM: /s/ Steven Carda
NVRA and Voter Outreach Program Manager

RE: Presidential Primary: School Availability as Polling Places

Secretary of State Alex Padilla and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson are partnering together to remind each California school administrator of the requirements of Elections Code section 12283 with regards to the use of schools as polling places. Attached for your reference is a copy of the letter that was sent to each of your county and district superintendents, charter school administrators, school board presidents, and school principals.

The school administrators have also been encouraged to promote the high school student poll worker program and to participate in the MyVote Student Mock Election which will be held on October 11, 2016. We plan to continue this partnership to encourage the use of schools throughout the 2016 election cycle. Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions at (916) 695-1570 or Steven.Carda@sos.ca.gov.

Thank you.



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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(916) 319-0800

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE
ALEX PADILLA, Secretary of State
1500 11th Street, 6th Floor
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February 5, 2016

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

ELECTION INFORMATION

With the 2016 presidential election right around the corner, this is a perfect time to stress the importance of civic engagement to our state's future voters and confirm our commitment to our nation's democracy. Using school campuses as polling places, encouraging students to be poll workers, and participating in mock elections is a great way to provide valuable experience to our future voters as well as help our community, state, and nation. In the coming year, we hope you will make every effort to adjust your calendars to accommodate the use of your school as a polling place for elections in 2016 and to encourage your students to volunteer as poll workers and participate in the MyVote Student Mock Election.

Campus Polling Places

As you know, when your local election official asks to use a public school campus as a polling place, that request must be honored (*Elections Code* Section 12283); however, there are three options available under the law so that you can decide how best to comply with the request and meet the needs of your own community. They are:

- 1) Leave the school open and in session while a specific area of the school is designated as a polling place.
- 2) Designate the day as a staff training and development day.
- 3) Simply close the school to students and non-classified employees.

Local election officials are encouraged to make the request to use your school as a polling place early enough for your school board to consider their options before school calendars are printed and distributed to parents.

Student Poll Workers

According to many county election officials, students are often the most helpful and enthusiastic poll workers, and students who serve as poll workers report they learn a

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worthwhile lesson about the importance of civic engagement and voting. *Elections Code* Section 12302 requires that student poll workers must:

- 1) Be at least 16 years old on Election Day;
- 2) Be a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident;
- 3) Be in good standing with a grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale;
- 4) Get permission from parents and school; and
- 5) Attend a training session.

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.

Mock Election: October 11, 2016

California's MyVote Student Mock Election program allows middle and high school students the opportunity to research and vote for real candidates and ballot measures. School registration will be available on the Secretary of State's Web site at <http://sos.ca.gov/> in early spring. Make sure to register early to ensure your school receives its free tool kit, which includes research materials, mock ballots, "I Voted" stickers, and more.

We appreciate your assistance in making California's upcoming elections a success and engaging your students in civics. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have.

If you have any questions about this subject, please contact Jason Spencer, Principal Advisor to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, by phone at 916-319-0521 or by e-mail at jaspencer@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
California Department of Education



Alex Padilla
California Secretary of State

TT/AP:js