



## California Department of Education

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## California Secretary of State

**Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.**, *Secretary of State*  
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August 17, 2023

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

### **High School Voter Education Weeks: September 18–29, 2023**

Civic engagement is an ongoing learning experience. As educators, it is important to ensure that students learn how to become active and engaged participants in our democracy. We invite your school district and campuses to participate in the 2023 High School Voter Education Weeks from September 18–29, 2023. The goal of these weeks is to bring civic engagement awareness to our young and future voters. Eligible students ages 16 and 17 can pre-register to vote. When students pre-register to vote, they will automatically become registered voters at 18 years old. Since the California pre-registration program launched in September 2016, over one million students have pre-registered to vote.

Participation is key to being civically engaged. To increase student engagement in the democratic process, students can participate as election workers during election season. With the recent passage of Senate Bill 955 (2022), students in sixth to twelfth grades are eligible to receive one excused absence per year to participate in a civic or political event—provided that the student notifies the school ahead of the absence.

The California Secretary of State's (SOS's) office is available to provide support, and county elections officials can serve as partners to make it easy for schools to participate in the democratic process.

Below is a list of online resources and ideas to support your school in sharing this information with your students and family:

- To learn more about youth programs within the SOS's office, please visit the SOS High School and Youth Initiatives web page at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/high-school-programs>.
- Urge administrators, students, and parents to review the SOS's High School Voter Education Weeks section of the High School and Youth Initiatives web page at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/high-school-programs#hsview>, which includes

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important information about voter registration and pre-registration, the California Student Mock Election, the Student Poll Worker program, and guidance for school administrators and teachers.

- Encourage eligible students to visit the California Online Voter Registration website at <https://registertovote.ca.gov/> to register or pre-register to vote. Include the link in communications with parents and on the school website.

By working together, we can increase youth voter registration and voter turnout. Our partnership can help ensure all voices are heard through civic engagement participation.

If you have any questions about High School Voter Education Weeks or other civic engagement opportunities, please feel free to contact Jannell Jackson, Deputy Secretary of State, Outreach and Education, at [SosOutreach@sos.ca.gov](mailto:SosOutreach@sos.ca.gov) or 916-584-3538, or the California Department of Education's High School Innovations and Initiatives Office at 916-319-0893 or [HSIIO@cde.ca.gov](mailto:HSIIO@cde.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Tony Thurmond  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction



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California Secretary of State