



California Department of Education

Tony Thurmond, *State Superintendent of Public Instruction*
1430 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
916-319-0800

California Secretary of State

Alex Padilla, *Secretary of State*
1500 11th Street, 6th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814
916-653-7244

September 9, 2020

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

High School Voter Education Weeks (September 14–25, 2020)

As we grow close to the 2020 General Election in November, it is important to ensure that our students are learning to become active and engaged participants in our democracy. We encourage your school to participate in High School Voter Education Weeks from September 14–25 to put young people on the path to a lifetime of civic engagement and voting.

California *Education Code* designates the last two weeks in September as High School Voter Education Weeks. We encourage schools to designate students as voter outreach coordinators to lead the efforts to pre-register and register their peers.

It is now easier than ever to get sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds civically engaged through pre-registration. Once pre-registered, they will automatically become active voters on their eighteenth birthday.

Pre-registration for sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds has been a huge success in California, with close to 500,000 pre-registrations since the program launched in September 2016.

The Secretary of State's office can provide resources and county elections officials can serve as partners to make it easy for schools to participate. Teachers can help eligible students pre-register or register to vote online. Voter outreach coordinators can lead registration drives and other school activities to promote civic participation at their schools.

Here are some ideas and online resources to help you:

- To learn more about pre-registration in California, please visit <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/high-school-programs/#prereg>.
- Encourage eligible students to visit <https://registertovote.ca.gov/> to register or

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pre-register to vote. Include the link in online communication with parents and on your school website.

- Consult the Best Practices for Voter Outreach in High Schools document at <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/outreach/pdf/best-practices.pdf> to find tips and tools from various California counties.
- Urge administrators, students, and parents to visit the Secretary of State's High School and Youth Initiatives web page portal, which includes important information about voter registration and pre-registration, the Student Mock Election, the Student Poll Worker program, and High School Voter Education Weeks: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/high-school-programs/>.
- Review the High School Voter Education Weeks section of the web portal, which provides an opportunity for high schools and students to partner with county elections officials to promote civic education and foster an environment that cultivates lifelong voters and active citizens.

By working together, we can educate and encourage our young citizens to register to vote and turn out at the polls to ensure their voices are heard in 2020 and beyond.

If you have any questions about High School Voter Education Weeks or other civic engagement opportunities, please feel free to contact the Outreach Team at the California Secretary of State Elections Division at 916-651-3070 or MyVote@sos.ca.gov or Pete Callas, Education Administrator, High School Innovations and Initiatives Office, California Department of Education, at 916-319-0669 or pcallas@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Alex Padilla
California Secretary of State

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