



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

Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D., *Secretary of State*
1500 11th Street, 6th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814
916-653-7244

March 22, 2024

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

High School Voter Education Weeks (April 15–26, 2024)

Civic engagement is an ongoing learning experience. As educators, it is important to ensure that students learn how to become active participants in our democracy. It is never too early to motivate students to be involved. We encourage your school district and campuses to participate in the 2024 High School Voter Education Weeks during April 15–26, 2024. The goal of these weeks is to (1) bring civic awareness to young, future voters and (2) inspire eligible students ages 16–17 to pre-register to vote so they will automatically be registered when they turn 18 years old. Since the California pre-registration program launched in September 2016, nearly 1.2 million students have pre-registered to vote, which accounts for 911,461 eligible voters.

Participation is key to civic engagement and a crucial component of democracy. The California Secretary of State's office can provide resources and 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 other ideas to support your school in sharing the information with your students and families.

Online Resources

- **Poll Workers:** Another way students can engage in the democratic process is to participate as poll workers during election season. With the passing of Senate Bill 955 (Chapter 921, Statutes of 2022), California students in grades 6 through 12 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. More information about this opportunity is available on the California Secretary of State Be a Student Poll Worker web page at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/high-school-programs#pollworker>.

March 22, 2024

Page 2

- To learn more about the youth programs within the California Secretary of State's office and resources available to you, please visit the California Secretary of State High School and Youth Initiatives web page at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/high-school-programs>.

Additional Civic Engagement Ideas

- **Student Mock Election:** Encourage schools to participate in the California Student Mock Election. Registration for the Mock Election opens on **Monday, April 15, 2024**. Participating in the Student Mock Election is a great way for educators to provide relevant and active learning experiences about voting and the civic process. To learn more or to sign up, visit the California Secretary of State California Student Mock Election web page at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/studentmockelection>.
- **Voter registration:** Encourage eligible students to visit the California Secretary of State California Online Voter Registration website at <https://registertovote.ca.gov/> to register or pre-register to vote. Include this 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 or 916-584-3538, or the California Department of Education High School Innovations and Initiatives Office at 916-319-0893 or HSIIO@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Tony Thurmond
State Superintendent of Public Instruction



Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.
California Secretary of State

TT/SW:df