



Texas Association of Community Schools

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Barry Haenisch, Executive Director

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Welcome back and Happy New Year! While you are still in resolution mode, we have an easy one for you and your team. Make a resolution to vote! You will feel great that you can succeed and there are countless secondary benefits to civic engagement.

We want to thank the dozens of member districts who have already joined "Texas Educators Vote" and committed to create a culture of voting. As of now, there are 85 committed districts, and 6 have already reached gold star status with over 75% of their employees having signed the oath. While that is only about 15% of our Association's membership, it is a start and there is still time to join in on the fun! To become a participating district, click this link {HYPERLINK "

This year, the primary election in Texas is more important than ever. With the election on March 1, Texas is now one of the earliest primary states, rather than one of the latest. What happens here could make a huge impact on who the presidential candidates will be. In addition, about 90% of local and statewide races in Texas are determined in the primary elections. Even within parties, there are candidates with wide reaching views on public education and your vote could determine whether your representatives at the capitol will support public education and your local schools. We are so proud of the almost 700,000 employees in Texas public schools and we want to be sure we use our civic right and responsibility to get out the vote. There is great power to be exerted at the ballot box, and the time is now!

This week, we encourage you to create a plan for allowing your employees to go vote. We suggest making arrangements for that to happen on the first day of early voting, Tuesday, February 16th. A few ideas include:

1. Encourage your employees to vote during their lunch or conference period.
2. Recruit parents to cover each grade level and allow grade-level teams to go vote as a group, staggered throughout the day.
3. Hold contests for which grade, type of employee, or campus collects the most "I Voted" stickers on whichever day you designate as election day for your district.
4. Organize buses to carry teachers to the early voting site after students have been taken home from school. *(Our legal advisors have researched this and found no reason that districts cannot use their buses to carry people to the polls.)

Of course, if you are concerned about these or any other strategy that you might use to encourage voting, always make the call to your school district's attorney.

If you have other good ideas to share, please email them back to us!

Let's go get us some good elected officials!

Many thanks,
Laura Yeager
TACS Governmental Relations