



## Texas Association of Community Schools

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### Texas Educators Vote Update

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We are down to the wire, as the deadline to register to vote in the March primary elections is February 5<sup>th</sup>, a mere week away. Please stress the importance of registering to vote in your schools and communities. Every eligible voter (student, teacher, staff member, parent, volunteer, etc.) should be registered to vote, so he or she can stand up for the 5.4 million Texas students, most of whom are not old enough to have their own voice at the polls. Registration info and application [here](#).

Early voting begins on February 20<sup>th</sup>, less than a month from now. The countdown to the primary is visible on the [Texas Educators Vote](#) website. Soon voters will be able to research candidates on [vote411.org](#) where they can build their own ballot and read candidate information compiled by the non-partisan League of Women Voters. Another good place to research candidates is on [Teach the Vote](#)'s website where all candidates have been invited to answer questions on education-related issues. There, voters can see where candidates stand and determine which candidates best align with their personal beliefs and concerns.

Many of you are encouraging educators to vote in all elections, to model civic engagement for students, and to participate in our democracy by voting for the people who will make important decisions that affect each and every one of us every day. Some districts are creating websites with important voter information, some are creating videos to encourage voting, some are hosting candidate forums, and some are planning to have friendly competitions to see which campus, grade, or department, has the highest voter turnout. Anything you can do to increase voter turnout in Texas is praiseworthy. If you have an idea worth sharing, let us know at [info@texaseducatorsvote.com](mailto:info@texaseducatorsvote.com)!

As a result of gerrymandering, most (almost all) Texas elections are determined in our primary elections. **Texas, unlike many states, has open primaries since voters don't register with a specific party. Instead, any voter can vote in either the Republican or Democratic primary, with a few related stipulations. If you signed a candidate's petition in 2017 to get them on the ballot, you can only vote in that party's primary. Also, whatever primary you choose to vote in, that is the only primary run-off you can vote in. However, whichever primary you choose to vote in, it does not in any way limit how you can vote in the general election.** This is often confusing to voters, so it is important to clarify these unique Texas rules.

Data from recent elections show that close to 98% of Texas elections are determined in the primary. It is also an interesting fact worth noting that every state leader in the last two decades has been chosen by GOP primary voters. **Be careful not to tell anyone how to vote or in which primary to vote,** but feel free to share the facts so voters can understand how our democracy works.

Primary elections, THE big elections in Texas, have had pitiful turnout among educators and all voters. In the 2014 March Gubernatorial elections, 9.98% of registered voters voted in the Republican primary and 4.12% of registered voters voted in the Democratic primary. Those percentages aren't even of eligible voters, but rather registered voters! The turnout among eligible voters is even lower! When it came time for the primary run-off elections in May, a mere

5.53% of registered voters participated in the Republican primary, and 1.48% of registered voters participated in the Democratic primary. These are staggeringly low figures and embarrassing in light of the fact that each year we teach students (as required by the TEKS) about the importance of civic engagement and voting.

1. So, use this week to make one last push for people to [register to vote](#) in the March primary elections.
2. Share the importance of the primary election with your staff and students. This is each voter's chance to decide who runs the state and makes vital decisions about education and other issues.
3. Please feel free to share the above information to help you express the importance of registering, researching candidates, and voting.

By the way, if you are located in an area that was affected by Hurricane Harvey, click [here](#) for some voting information especially for you from the Texas Secretary of State's office.

Many thanks for your hard work educating children and modeling good civic behavior!

Regards,

Laura Yeager  
Director, Texas Educators Vote