



Texas Association of Community Schools

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Texas Educators Vote Update

February 1, 2018

Get ready for the primary elections!

The last day to register to vote in the Texas primary elections is only a few days away, February 5th, 2018. All eligible students, staff, parents, and community members should check to be sure they are registered. This link from the Texas Secretary of State's website allows voters to check their registration status, update a change of address, or apply to register for the first time. Please be sure your staff has access to this helpful link. Texas does not allow online voter registration (38 states do) but this link is the first step in the application process. The time is now! <https://webservices.sos.state.tx.us/vrapp/index.asp>

This week:

You might consider letting staff know that a tiny percentage of Texans have been deciding Texas elections because voter turnout is so low in the primaries where almost all our elections are decided.

Participation is critical for several reasons:

1. Educators' voting models civic engagement for students, and helps build a culture of voting.
2. Election Day is when you have the most power – at the ballot box – but only if you use it.
3. Don't let others decide for you. Every eligible voter who doesn't vote is handing her/his power to those who do.

Planning ahead:

Early voting starts February 20th, and the Texas Secretary of State has proclaimed the first Friday of early voting (February 23rd, 2018) to be **Student Voting Day**. Make that day all about civic engagement.

1. Inform staff, students, and community members about any upcoming candidate forums where voters can learn about candidates and ask questions about issues that are important to them. Often PTA's, retired teacher groups, and local League of Women Voters groups organize candidate forums. Here are links where you can find contact info for your region. ([TRTA](#), [LWV](#))
2. Encourage early voting between February 20th and March 2nd.
 - Some districts are offering a blue jeans day to any employee who wears their "I Voted" sticker.
 - Some districts are offering awards to whichever team (campus, department, grade, etc.) has the highest participation in a) registration b) early voting c) voting on Election Day.
 - One district put out a challenge! If all eligible voters in any campus vote, they can wear blue jeans for the rest of the year!!!

Blue jeans and a little friendly competition seem to get people moving!

We understand that letters have been sent to the homes of some (if not all) districts' employees encouraging them to become whistleblowers and look for things you are doing wrong. **It is your right and responsibility to teach about civic engagement, and for all eligible members of a democracy to participate by voting. Don't be intimidated out of voting, and please remind your staff of the same.** Stick within the law and don't tell anyone how to vote on any candidate or ballot issue. But, registering, becoming an informed voter, and then casting a ballot are all part of citizenship, and as such should be encouraged.

Many thanks for working to fulfill the Texas constitutional requirement of providing public education to the more than 5 million Texas school children. Please keep on doing what is right for the students and the future of the great state of Texas.

Respectfully,

Laura Yeager
Director, Texas Educators Vote