

# Empowering High School Age Voters

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# Overview

## *Description*

A voter registration drive and early voting field trip for high school students qualified to vote.

## *Goal and Objectives*

### Goal

Encourage informed and active participation in government by facilitating voter engagement.

### Objectives

Engage students in political decision-making process through:

- Registering to vote
- Voting

## *Activity Segments*

1. Voter registration drive for high school students
2. Field trip to vote center during the early voting period



# Voter Registration Drive

The LWVUS Education Fund has published a comprehensive guide to organizing and conducting a high school voter registration guide. *Empowering the Voters of Tomorrow: Developing Effective High School Voter Registration Programs* (2018) is found at: <https://tinyurl.com/yaf8wern>

A second helpful resource is the Texas Civil Rights Project *Texas High School Voter Registration: A How to Guide* available at <https://tinyurl.com/y958sfu2>

Planning for a voter registration drive for spring should begin no later than 4 months prior to the day set for voter registration at the high school. A sample work plan is found in Appendix D of the manual, *Empowering the Voters of Tomorrow*, referenced above.

## Texas Election Code

According to 2 TEX. ELEC. CODE, SEC. 13.046 HIGH SCHOOL DEPUTY REGISTRARS:\*

- Each high school principal or the principal's designee shall serve as a deputy registrar in the local county.
- The high school deputy registrar may distribute and receive voter registration applications only to/from students and employees of the particular school.
- At least twice a year, the high school deputy registrar shall distribute an official voter registration application to each student who is or will be age 18 or older during that year.
- Accompanying the application form must be a notice informing the student or employee that the voter registration application form may be submitted:
  - In person or by mail to the voter registrar of the county in which the applicant resides.
  - In person to the high school deputy registrar or volunteer deputy registrar for delivery to the voter registrar of the county in which the applicant resides.
- The high school deputy registrar may review the voter registration application for completeness out of the presence of the applicant. If the application does not contain all the required information and required signature, it should be returned to the student or employee for completion and resubmission.
- The applications must be submitted by the high school deputy registrar to the county voter registrar and received by the county voter registrar no later 5 pm on the 5<sup>th</sup> day after receipt by the deputy registrar (and not later than the 29<sup>th</sup> day before Election Day). A group of applications may be delivered to the county voter registrar by mail.

\*<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.13.htm>

## Texas Administrative Code

According to 1 TEX. ADMIN. CODE, PART 4, RULE 81.7 DIRECTIVE FOR HIGH SCHOOL DEPUTY REGISTRARS:\*

- If students attending the high school reside in more than one county, the high school deputy registrar shall serve as a deputy registrar in each county regardless of the physical location of the high school.
- Voter registration applications and materials should be obtained directly from the school board administrator or Texas Secretary of State, not the county voter registrar. These applications are coded for use by high school registrars.
- The deputy registrar may distribute voter registration application forms to eligible students and employees any time during the school year. However, they must be distributed to students during the final month (last 30 days) of each semester.
- The student or employee may request assistance from the high school deputy registrar in filling out the voter registration application.
- In order that eligible students (18 years old on Election Day) and employees can vote in an upcoming election, the deputy registrar should confer with the county voter registrar or

elections administrator to learn the deadline for voter registration for the upcoming election to insure that the applications are received by the county registrar in a timely manner.

- Failure to deliver the voter registration applications by the deadline will result in criminal sanctions: Class C misdemeanor if inadvertent failure; Class A misdemeanor if intentional failure.
- Provisions related to transfer or termination of employment of the high school deputy registrar or designated representative and removal of a designated representative are outlined in 1 TEX. ADMIN. CODE, PART 4, RULE 81.7.\*

\*<http://tinyurl.com/hh45n6v>

## Early Voting Field Trip

### *Description*

A 1-hour visit to the early voting location nearest to the high school. Students travel by school bus to vote at the vote center and return to school.

### *Process*

1. Gain approval for the field trip.
  - a. Contact high school principal.
  - b. If an early voting field trip has not occurred within the school district, contact the district superintendent's office for approval.
2. Contact the county elections administration office.
  - a. Locate the nearest early voting location.
  - b. Seek assistance in determining a day of the week for the field trip that has a record of relatively low attendance.
3. Early in the semester, arrange the field trip through the high school senior social studies teachers (government and economics classes).
  - a. Contact teachers personally or through a group meeting to gain their support, approval, and cooperation for the field trip.
  - b. Mutually agree upon the particular date the field trip will be scheduled during all their class periods on that date.
  - c. At least 1 month prior to the field trip, provide the teachers with sign-up sheets for registration for the field trip and field trip information sheets for their students.
4. Follow school/district procedures for the field trip to:
  - a. Secure school buses for transporting students to/from the vote center.
  - b. Report student attendance on the field trip.
5. One week prior to the field trip inform the students in writing to:
  - a. Review an individualized nonpartisan voters guide at [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org).
  - b. Print and complete a sample ballot individualized to their address from the county elections website. Bring the sample ballot to the field trip.
  - c. Obtain an acceptable form of identification required for presentation at the polling place before voting. Provide the current list of acceptable forms of identification. See the Texas Secretary of State website: [www.votetexas.gov/faq/index.html#2071](http://www.votetexas.gov/faq/index.html#2071)
6. One day prior to the field trip the government and economics teachers should remind the students to bring the following materials to the field trip:
  - a. Completed sample ballot
  - b. Acceptable voter ID.
  - c. Cell phone to be photographed outside the voting center following voting
7. At the field trip:
  - a. Check off each student on the field trip registration list as students get on the bus.

- b. Verify that the student has sample ballot and voter ID.
  - c. Photograph students after they have voted.
    - i. See example frame for taking the picture.
    - ii. Ask students to post their photos on their social media accounts and encourage others to vote.
8. Report student field trip attendance according to school/district procedure

### Example Picture Frame



## Resources

- The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. (n.d.). *2018 election center*. Retrieved from <https://civicyouth.org/quick-facts/2018-election-center/>
- Directive for High School Deputy Registrars, 1 Tex. Admin. Code, Part 4, Rule 81.7 (1998). Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/hh45n6v>
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- Texas Civil Rights Project. (n.d.). *Enforcing high school voter registration laws*. Retrieved from <https://texascivilrightsproject.org/voting-rightsold/enforcing-texas-high-school-voter-registration-laws/>
- Texas Secretary of State. (2019). *What kind of identification is required to qualify to vote in person?* Retrieved from [www.votetexas.gov/faq/index.html#2071](http://www.votetexas.gov/faq/index.html#2071)