

VOTER REGISTRATION ACTION PLAN

Your Guide to Starting a Voter Registration Program in Your School

FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

When We All Vote is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization on a mission to increase participation in every election and close the race and age gaps in voter registration and turnout. WWAV's **My School Votes** program supports this effort by working to change the culture around voting and guiding schools in becoming hubs for voter activity.

For support, questions, and to share highlights along the way, please email:

education@whenweallvote.org

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I. Building a Team

Identify an Educator Captain and a Student Captain

A Captain is defined as a member of the school community who is energized, committed, and ready to lead the school's voter registration initiatives.

- **Educator Captain:** This leadership role can be a teacher, a coach, an administrator, or a classroom aide. The team captain should be someone motivated and civically engaged and will be responsible for recruiting the rest of the team members.
- **Student Captain:** A student council president, a sports captain, or a dedicated student activist. The student captain will act as a liaison between the team members and the student body. This student should have influence in the school and be passionate about civics and voting.

Recruit Team Members

Once the team captains are in place, it's time to recruit team members. These members should come from diverse roles in the school. Each member should be assigned a specific role to optimize different strengths and talents. Roles can be customized depending on the specialized needs of a school, but a strong, sustainable team should include:

- **Data Collection Manager:** This team member will keep track of which students have registered, who needs to be registered, what strategies are working best. This will be essential in gauging the success of your school's efforts.
- **Student Outreach Coordinator:** This team member is tasked with making sure that students are aware of (and excited for!) all voter registration activities. This team member could send emails, hang flyers, update the school's newsletter with information—employing different marketing and outreach strategies to reach as many students as possible.
- **Logistics Coordinator:** This team member will provide administrative support for the voter registration. Tasks will include printing out voter registration forms and coordinating classroom voter registration around civic engagement discussions. The Logistics Coordinator is key to making sure everything runs smoothly.
- **Student Leads (3-4):** The Student Captain will help identify other student leaders in the school community who will assist with voter registration operations. These students, like the educator team members, should represent various interests in the student body—athletics, academics, and extracurriculars.

II. Know Your State's Rules

Every state has different rules governing age requirements, deadlines, and other regulations which can have huge impact on the logistics of your registration drive. Making sure your drive is tailored to your state is crucial to your success. Check out our website for the basics on every state in our Voter Registration Guides: weall.vote/schools.

III. Registering

Pinpoint Eligible Students

It's time to begin developing a list of eligible students! Knowing who each eligible student is will help focus your efforts. It allows you to:

- Map out which students will be eligible by birth date for specific elections
- Continually update who has registered and who needs to be registered
 - For example, there may be different deadlines for municipal, primary, and general Elections
- Assign specific students to specific team members
 - For example, if the music director is on your team, he/she can be in charge of eligible student musicians
 - For example, you can break up students by peer groups and have friends responsible for outreach

Voter Registration Action Days

It will be important to identify specific days throughout the year for voter registration. Of course, voter registration can and should be done on any day of the year, but these will be days that the entire school community can rally around. For specific dates suggestions see our best practices.

Some options you might consider for Voter Registration Action Days include:

- **Prom or Homecoming:** when students have to hand in permission slips or Safe Prom or Homecoming Pledges these are great opportunities to register students
- **Standardized Testing Days:** upon completion of standardized tests (i.e. SAT, ACT, state exams) students can be guided to register before exiting the building
- **Senior Class Trips:** prior to Senior Class trips while handing in permission slips or riding on a bus together present great opportunities to register students
- **School Assemblies:** School assemblies focused on voting and civic engagement preceded or followed by in-class discussion. For classes with eligible students, encourage lessons on the importance of youth voting paired with registration. For classes of younger students, explain when they can register and the importance of civic engagement.

Amplification

Before each Voter Registration Action Day it will be important to build enthusiasm for the Action Day. It is important to note that amplification precedes Action Days to ensure teachers are prepared with lessons and discussions for their classrooms and continually remind students what they will need to register. It will be as important to follow Action Days with highlights of success.

To motivate the school, we recommend incentivizing success through competition. Introduce friendly competitions like seeing which homeroom can have the most students register over the course of the year to create energy and momentum for the initiative.

REGISTER, REGISTER, REGISTER!

This is why we are here!

When you have built your team and reviewed your state's laws, registration deadlines, and upcoming elections, you are ready for registration.

Students can register online at weall.vote/schoolsreg or use your smartphone's camera to scan the QR code to visit our registration portal.



IV. Sharing Your Voter Registration Success

Data Collection

After each voter registration activity, it is important to collect and return all forms (if you did not register online), properly report (and celebrate) your success, and analyze your efforts.

First, if using paper registrations, make sure that all forms are signed, collected, and submitted to the proper locations. You can find this on your Secretary of State's website.

Second, make sure that you report all of your voter registration numbers and highlights of your work for us to share at weall.vote/regtracker or use your smartphone's camera to scan the QR code.



V. GOTV: Getting Out the Vote

Pledge Cards

When people pledge and make a plan to vote, they are more likely to vote in an upcoming election. Have new voters fill out a pledge card so we can stay in touch with them with reminders of when and where to vote. Find pledge cards in the worksheet.

Eligible Student List

Lead: _____ **Due Date:** _____

Use the space below to build out a list of eligible students by birthday and election. Work with your principal or counselors to develop a list. Use this spreadsheet as an example.

Eligible Student	Birthday	Registration Deadline	Election	Has Student Registered?

Our VR Action Days

Lead: _____ **Due Date:** _____

VR Action Day 1: _____

VR Action Day 4: _____

VR Action Day 2: _____

VR Action Day 5: _____

VR Action Day 3: _____

Register

Lead: _____ **Due Date:** _____



Students can register online at weall.vote/schoolsreg or use your smartphone's camera to scan the QR code to visit our registration portal. (If you don't have access to WiFi or are in a non-online state access paper registrations at weall.vote/schools).

Tell Us How Your School Is Doing

Lead: _____ **Due Date:** _____



Make sure that you report all of your voter registration numbers and highlights of your work for us to share at weall.vote/regtracker.

Pledge Cards

Have new voters fill out a pledge card so we can stay in touch with them with reminders of when and where to vote. Make copies of these templates and cut into individual cards. Hold onto the pledge cards for GOTV.

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

- Opt-in to receive SMS messages about election updates.
- I pledge to vote in the next election.

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

- Opt-in to receive SMS messages about election updates.
- I pledge to vote in the next election.

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

- Opt-in to receive SMS messages about election updates.
- I pledge to vote in the next election.

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

- Opt-in to receive SMS messages about election updates.
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MY SCHOOL VOTES BEST PRACTICES

FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Planning and Development

To stay up to date on the latest resources and updates, make sure you are on our email list (sign up here: weall.vote/schoolsignup), and follow us on social media:

- **Instagram:** [@WhenWeAllVote](https://www.instagram.com/WhenWeAllVote)
- **Twitter:** [@WhenWeAllVote](https://twitter.com/WhenWeAllVote)
- **Facebook:** [@WhenWeAllVote](https://www.facebook.com/WhenWeAllVote)

Administrative Support

Many successful voter registration initiatives start with support at the top. Work with superintendents, district leaders, and the school principal so they can help the program be successful. Some examples of support include:

- Making enrollment lists with birth dates identifying eligible students available to the VR Team running the school's voter registration program
- Providing occasional coverage periods or stipends for teachers or staff members leading voter registration efforts, so they have time to plan and collaborate
- Supporting the creation of inter-district, cross-departmental teams to lead voter registration planning

Clear and Focused Efforts

Use demographic and enrollment information to create a list of individual students who will be eligible to register to vote and know when they will become eligible. Then, look for one-on-one or small group settings in which you can encourage those students to get registered.

Time of Year

Voter registration can, and should, happen throughout the school year. Students should be registered as they become eligible and encouraged to vote in the upcoming elections (i.e. local, special, primary elections, etc). The mass of students will become eligible in the Spring semester giving you the Fall semester to plan, practice, and test with smaller numbers of students.

Some options you might consider for VR ACTION DAYS are:

- **September 17, 2019:** Constitution Day
- **September 24, 2019:** National Voter Registration Day
- **December 15, 2019:** Bill of Rights Day

- **January 20, 2020:** Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- **February 17, 2020:** President's Day (National holiday, but you can run an event ahead of or after the holiday)
- **March 3, 2020:** National Anthem Day
- **March 23, 2020:** Anniversary of Congressional passage of the 26th Amendment (right to vote for 18 year olds)
- **May 25, 2020:** Memorial Day (National holiday, but you can run an event ahead of or after the holiday)

Data Collection

Keep track of every student who registers, so that you can evaluate which initiatives are most effective. Additionally, as elections approach, you will be able to communicate with students who have registered to remind them to vote.

Avoid Big Registration Drives

Avoid large-scale voter registration drives—such as setting up tables in the cafeteria or at football games—tend to be ineffective.

No Incentives

It is illegal to directly incentivize voter registration through any form of reward in exchange for registering. If you have any questions about what types of voter registration activities are permissible, you can contact your state's Secretary of State office for state-specific information.

No Assistance

Students must fill out their own voter registration forms. Teachers and schools should not assist students in filling out their voter registration forms.

Undocumented Students

In order to vote, students must meet state eligibility requirements and be citizens of the United States. While undocumented students should not participate in actual voter registration, there are many ways to include ineligible students in the voter registration process even if they cannot register themselves. Some examples include, helping with being part of the My School Votes team or amplifying Voter Registration Action Days. It should be a focus to make voter registration and civic engagement an inclusive activity welcome to all members of the school community.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Below you will find useful lessons plans to use in high school classrooms or to generate ideas for lessons of your own. Use these to support the conversation around civic engagement and citizenship with young students. These conversations should precede or follow voter registration activities where possible.

Rock the Vote Democracy Class

Democracy Class is a free, nonpartisan curriculum that educates high school students about the importance and history of voting, pre-registers, and registers them to vote.

Lessons include:

- The history and importance of voting
- Modern-day voting rights
- The importance of local elections
- How voting can impact issues in communities
- The 2020 Census

Share My Lesson

Share My Lesson allows educators to share professional development resources and lesson plans to provide high-quality education to all students

The Election Resources collection includes high school lesson plans that:

- Show how to register to vote in their state
- Empower student voices and encourage civic participation
- Emphasize the importance of midterm elections
- Demonstrate the implications of the 26th amendment and the power of the youth vote

Center for Civic Education

The Center for Civic Education has lesson plans for students in grades K-12, focusing on understanding the basic functions of our democracy, our constitutional rights, our role as citizens.

Lessons include:

- **Becoming a Voter:** registering to vote
- **Becoming an Informed Voter:** learning about ballot questions
- **Simulated Election:** how casting a vote works

PBS

PBS' "To Vote or Not to Vote" includes lesson plans that incorporate three of PBS' We the Voters films to encourage students to reflect on the importance of voting and their role in the process.

The three lessons include:

- The Importance of Voting
- Challenges to Voting
- Expanding the Right to Vote

iCivics

iCivics provides games and classroom resources to teach young people to understand how our political systems work by allowing them to experience it first-hand and empowering them to address real-world issues.

Resources include:

- Activities and lessons on the [voting age](#)
- Lesson plans on [voting rights](#) and obstacles to voting