

VOTER REGISTRATION ACTION PLAN

Your Guide to Starting a Voter Registration Program in Your School

FOR ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE 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 Parent 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.
- **Parent Captain:** Having strong parent partners will be important to instituting voter registration programming geared toward parents. The Parent Captain should be an active and engaged parent who will be comfortable recruiting other parents and have the time to lead voter registration activities during the school year.

**Captains may consider having students, particularly middle schoolers, assist them with hosting aspects of voter registration throughout this program.

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 parents 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.
- **Parent Outreach Coordinator:** This team member is tasked with making sure that parents 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 parents 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.
- **Parent Leads:** The Parent Captain will help identify other parent leaders in the school community who will assist with voter registration operations.

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

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:

- **Enrollment:** This is the best time to register parents. Parents new to the community and of younger ages will most likely need to register and will have the necessary ID requirements on hand. This is a unique opportunity for a parent to be face to face with an administrator or teacher.
- **Open School nights:** When the entire school comes together, it is important to harness the feeling of community and urge parents to take it a step further with voter registration. In welcome packets, you could include VR forms and have collection boxes throughout the school. Or, you could include slides on VR during a welcome presentation with an opportunity to register.
- **Parent/Teacher nights:** Utilizing this rare one-on-one time with parents is crucial in successfully registering parents. Each teacher could provide guidance on registering or at a dedicated sign in desk.

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 parents what they will need to register. It will be as important to follow Action Days with highlights of success.

To motivate the community, we recommend incentivizing success through competition. Introduce friendly competitions like seeing which homeroom can have the most parents 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.

Parents 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 Success and Getting Out the Vote

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.

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: _____



Parents 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. I pledge to vote in the next election.

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MY SCHOOL VOTES BEST PRACTICES

FOR ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE 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.

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:

- 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

Research shows that small groups and one-on-one conversations are more successful in registering voters than large tabling efforts. Try to be in contact with the parent of every child in the school. We recommend gathering a list, and dividing responsibilities among teachers and administrators by assigning certain subsets of the student population.

Opportunities for Voter Registration

Voter registration can, and should, happen throughout the school year. Every opportunity to engage with parents is an opportunity to register them. As they are registered, they should be encouraged to vote in upcoming elections (i.e. local, special, primary elections, etc). One key opportunity to register parents is during every district or school's enrollment periods. Parents with students just beginning school or moving into the school community are very likely in need of registering to vote.

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 parent who registers, so that you can evaluate which initiatives are most effective. Additionally, as elections approach, you will be able to communicate with parents 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.

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No Assistance

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

Undocumented Parents

In order to vote, parents must meet state eligibility requirements and be citizens of the United States. While undocumented parents should not participate in actual voter registration, there are many ways to include ineligible parents 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 ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Below you will find useful lessons plans to use in elementary and middle school classrooms or to generate ideas for lessons of your own. Use these to begin the conversation around civic engagement and citizenship with young students. Be sure to include them where possible when registering parents.

Scholastic

Scholastic's Unit Plan, 'Making a Difference Through Civic Action', provides resources for students in grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Over a three day period, students can learn how to make a difference in their communities and become participatory citizens. Students will:

- Publicly state a perspective on an important community issue
- Support their perspective thoughtfully, using information culled from several resources
- Demonstrate listening skills and the ability to engage in civic discussion
- Show an understanding of different policy perspectives and the importance of listening to different perspectives when forming their own views towards policy

Constitution Center

'We the Civics Kids' is an initiative designed to enhance and build upon current civic education curriculum through children's literature and other famous historical texts. Help your students build their basic civic knowledge and understand their role as active citizens. Each month, they will share a list of [recommended reading](#) and suggested lesson plans and activities that correspond with a specific civic holiday.

The program consists of eight lessons. You could plan to teach one lesson each month or teach it as a complete unit. Each lesson plan begins with a building background component that introduces the topic.

PBS

PBS provides a 3 day lesson plan with homework geared at helping middle and high school students discuss civic engagement and the role citizens play in making our voices heard. The goal is to understand the importance of civic participation and the tools which allow individuals to engage in the political process.

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:

- [What Basic Ideas Are in the Preamble to the Constitution?](#)
- [What Responsibilities Accompany Our Rights?](#)
- [Why do we need a government?](#)