

Texas Independent School Districts High School Voter Registration Compliance Initiative

Background

Voter participation in many Texas communities is low. However, Texas high schools are obligated and have a unique opportunity to maximize voter participation. In addition to compliance with Texas Law and electing individuals that represent constituents, elections are also necessary for additional reasons including deciding the fate of voter initiatives and large public expenditures such as bonds.

Here are some examples from school districts in El Paso County during recent bond elections to underscore the problem with low voter participation. In these examples, turnout among individuals 18 years of age (at the time of the vote) was lower than the average in El Paso County.

- EPISD 2016 bond election = **3,580** (18year-olds) of **162,611 eligible** (18 year-olds) **voted** in the bond election - 2.2% turnout of that age demographic
- YISD 2016 bond election = **89** (18 year-olds) of **2,037 eligible** (18 year-olds) **voted** in the bond election - 4.3% turnout of that age demographic
89, 18 year-olds participated despite having mobile voting and early voting locations on campuses

[Education Code](#) and [Election Code](#) mandate the role of school districts relating to voter registration.

Registering students who are eligible to vote when they turn 18 years of age or will be 18 years of age during the upcoming election will provide a pipeline to ensure students can to participate in the democratic process.

Recommendation

Districts and high schools with an administration which prioritize voter registration have higher participation rates in elections.

It is my recommendation that the _____ ISD Board of Trustees authorize and designate a member of associate superintendent level staff to coordinate twice annual voter registration efforts to ensure compliance with Texas law.

With an emphasis on registration coming from cabinet-level staff, we feel the increased prioritization of voter registration will result in improved student civic engagement and increase participation in the democratic process.

Registration Resources

Texas Secretary of State

512-463-5653

<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/high-school-principal-order-form.pdf>