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## TEACHER DIRECTIONS/SUGGESTIONS FOR RUNNING THE VOTER REGISTRATION/TURN OUT THE VOTE DRIVE WITH YOUR STUDENTS FOR THE NOVEMBER 5, 2024 GENERAL ELECTION

Although these directions and suggestions may seem long, and some of them are totally obvious, they will prove helpful I trust! And thanks for participating! And most importantly, do things the way that works best for you and your students and HAVE FUN!

A few key notes first:

- 1) Please make sure to **note the red highlighted section at the bottom of this document:** Registering 16 year olds (your pupils' fellow students at your school and other schools) for future elections is legal and a valid part of this voter education and the Voter Tally Sheet signature/commitment gathering process! This brings the process of future voter outreach right into your classroom and school hallways!
- 2) This process can support registering students who are already 18 or will turn 18 before Election Day. All such students must be registered to vote if at all possible!

### **PHASE ONE: Late September, early October: 15 - 50 minutes of class time: Introducing the project**

- 1) Once you have decide to commit to doing this one to three or four class period project the first step is to skim this admittedly long set of directions, most of which are obvious.
- 2) Introduce, with great enthusiasm(!), the Voter Registration Drive plan ASAP to students. This should be just a quick, general heads-up overview of the overall process to come.
- 3) Choose the day you will start the process and tell your students you will soon be introducing the voter registration and get out the vote drive.
- 4) Download and photocopy the necessary number of photo copies for your student load, including the following docs which are all linked on this website's Essential Docs:
  - a. EdWeek op-ed copy: Producing a downloadable, photocopy of the EdWeek op-ed for your students (pdf)
  - b. Parent Guardian Permission Slip for Student Participation in Getting Out the Vote (pdf) Some teachers will feel the need to get parent permission and some will not- do as you see fit. If you do so, I recommend making it a "for points required assignment."
  - c. Voter Registration Student Tally Sheet (pdf)
  - d. Customizable Voter Registration and Ballot Submission Handout for students to give to prospective voters in your state (Word.doc)
- 5) You can hand out the docs one at a time or all at once I manilla file folders or with clipboards. (see below under Expenses and Implementation Procedures).
- 6) A great way to introduce the project is by reading the op-ed with the class – you can tell them how influential EdWeek is by saying it's the WSJ/NYT of the education world if you want!
- 7) Emphasize, how important this is and HOW LITTLE TIME THERE IS TO ACCOMPLISH THE TASKS AT HAND!!!

- 8) Share this op-ed and your commitment to doing it with your colleagues at school and across your district. Also, consider posting the information on your private social media sites. I strongly encourage you to use strictly non-partisan language and tone in such posts.

### **Suggestions and Considerations Re: Bureaucratic Matters, Implementation Procedures, and Helping Students Keep Organized**

#### **Bureaucratic Matters:**

- a. **Administrative Concerns:** If your school administration is stuck to iron clad curriculum coverage approaches you may have concerns about getting admin buy-in for this project. The first step in building administrative support is for you to forward an all staff email with a link to the EdWeek op-ed saying you are interested in doing this project.
- b. You will be far more likely to get the highest level of administrative support if you can organize a cadre of social studies teachers to do the Voter Registration Drive Project. I would recommend advising, not asking, your most cooperative administrator that you are doing a Voter Registration Drive with your students.
- c. Further, if you feel you need to, you might explain that it is a proven, legally sanctioned project that will provide a pedagogically and affectively rich learning opportunity for your students. *You should explain that conducting the drive will take little class time and thus sap away little time from required content coverage commitments that your department might have. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, tell them civics ed is part of your job and the kids will love it, just as they do in Seattle and elsewhere!*
- d. **Expenses:**
  - i. This project requires a fair amount of photocopying of a handful of core documents. If your school is iron-fisted about such expenses (as well as clipboards and/or file folders), you might seek ancillary funding sources like the PTSA, the League of Women voters, etc.
  - ii. Clipboards and/or manila file folders. Clip boards are ideal for signature gathering (and kids love using them) and if your school can't/won't pony up the money for a mass clipboard purchase, students can be encouraged to buy their own. Yet file folders will work ok too. Having students simply keep their Voting registration materials loose in their 3 ring binders or backpacks is not "professional" and easily leads to disorganization and less success in the project.

#### **Phase Two: Implementation Procedures and activities – early October until the last legal day for voters to register in your state – (note- you can find this date for your state right now at this Official Voter Registration Deadlines and Contact Info for All States [website from BallotPedia](#)**

- A. Introduce the project and hand out the materials.
- B. If you have not already, offer students a general description of the election process in presidential election years, offering age-appropriate explanations about:
  - a. how the Electoral College System works,
  - b. the crucial role of the Swing States,

- c. down-ballot voting effects of voter participation, including explanation that there are many other Congressional elections that are held at the same time, as well as Voter Initiatives in numerous states, etc.
  - d. Voter Registration and Voting Deadlines and Ballot Submission – when you register online states with mail in voting will mail you your ballot. States that don't have mail in voting will require voters to, of course vote in person either on election day or before in random states that might allow early voting.
- C. Helping students stay organized: Hand out clip boards or manilla folders enclosed with all the relevant documents students will need and use in the Voter Registration Drive. The classic stapled "packet is NOT ideal for this work but will do in a pinch.
- D. Setting Expectations, Due Dates, and Competitions
- a. These are your personal decisions of course. However, I would recommend consideration of the following:
    - Requiring immediate return of *Voter Registration Drive Parent/Guardian Introduction and Permission to Participate* hand-out.
- E. **Voter Tally Sheets: These are the KEY TOOLS in this project!** For simplicity's sake I have students turn them all in when the project essentially ends on your state's final voter registration date. I keep a stack of them handy and hand out them out one or two at a time as they get them filled in and need new ones.
- a. Because some students will naturally gather far more signatures than others it is important to decide in advance, perhaps via discussion with students, whether or not you will be giving regular credit (points) or extra credit for numbers of signatures gathered on the Tally Sheets. No credit at all is my preference in deference to the selfless virtue inherent in Jefferson's maxim: *"There must be a positive passion for the public good."*
  - b. Encouraging teamwork AND competition within *and* between classes to get the most signatures/commitments on the Voter Tally Sheets – you can post a tally sheet comparing class signature numbers gathered if you like – or not.

### Teaching the kids how to approach people about the registration process, etc.

Most important is to tell them that their safety is paramount, and that it is unwise for them to go alone door to door to get out the vote or similar, etc.

Keeping it simple: tell kids to take this process of interacting with others in a serious yet positive manner. Tell them their job is to help others understand the registration and voting process in an encouraging manner and that every vote counts!!!

Encourage kids to focus first on making sure every one of their eligible family members signs their Tally Sheet and commits to registering to vote. Second, encourage them to make sure to approach all of their family's friends and known neighbors to make sure they are registered and if not, to commit to doing so by signing on the Tally Sheet and giving them the Voter Registration and Ballot Submission Handout. Lastly, encourage kids to step outside of their comfort zone and approach people they do or do not know at school, at their places of worship, at games, etc.

Also, it is helpful to set required Tally sheet objectives/goals/requirements such as: Each student should attempt to register all unregistered family members, and at least 2-6 other adults, and at least 6 other students.

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**This is a crucial consideration to jump start the process because:**

*In many states, almost all states in fact, any naturalized citizen who is 16 years or older can be registered to vote so they are ready and registered to vote when they turn 18.* Therefore, your students can go around school getting many sophomores and most all juniors and seniors to commit to register by signing up to do so on the Voter Tally sheet.

Check this website from the Civics Center - <https://www.thecivicscenter.org/map> - and find out the rules for pre-18 voter registration in your state.

Kids will be running up and down the halls to register classmates they know and to meet and register other students! I always take a flexible approach and say that it is ok if some kids register the same other students more than once but that is your call.

### **Phase Three: Closure and Celebration - Late October & through Election Day**

How you do these things are, of course, your decisions to make! Enjoy!