



Empowering Future Voters

The How-To of **STUDENTS VOTING**

Minnesota's Statewide K-12 Mock Election

Concepts



- Challenges around classroom lessons or discussions of elections generally, and participating in Students Voting in specific.
- Barriers to civic engagement and future voting.
- Need for resources and support for schools and teachers

Today's Objectives:



- 1) Increase confidence to incorporate conversations and lessons around elections and voting into the classroom
- 2) Highlight the impact mock elections have on students' short-term and lifelong civic engagement
- 3) Help create comfort around customizing and successfully running the MN Students Voting program for newly registered and returning schools

Standards to Keep In Mind



- Demonstrate the skills necessary to participate in the election process and evaluate how access to voting is impacted by law and application of law.
- Explain the responsibilities and duties for all individuals in a republic.
- Analyze how the U.S. political system is shaped by elections and the election process and procedures involved in voting.

The Challenge of Teaching Elections



- In a recent EdWeek Research Center survey, 58% of K-12 teachers answered “no” when asked if they planned to talk about the election with their students primarily due to the following concerns:

The Challenge of Teaching Elections



- The possibility of receiving complaints from caregivers
- The possibility of disrespectful classroom discussions

Why Mock Elections Are Important



- Learning opportunity connected to academic standards.
- Authentic, hands-on opportunity for students to practice decision-making AND promote civil conversations.
- Boost students' political knowledge, interest, and engagement.
- Lead to an increased desire among students to participate in real elections.

Why Mock Elections Are Important



- Even as brief intervention, taught only during the weeks before an election, teaching elections:
 - Increases students' attention to the news
 - Encourages deliberative issue-based discussions both inside and outside of school
 - Enhances students' sense of civic identity

Students Voting:



- Highlights elections as a way to understand and honor civic responsibility, something for students to embrace lifelong.
- Encourages students to research the candidates and offices on the ballot and make an informed decision based on personal beliefs.
- Provides a unique opportunity for students to learn how to vote and become comfortable with the mechanics of ballots and polling places.
- Helps prepare students for a life of active, informed, and responsible citizenship (and see themselves as future voters!).

Students Voting 2026 Plan:



- Support over 200,000 students in K-12 schools across the state to cast their vote on or before Election Day (one of the largest mock elections in the nation)
- Increase participation and student/teacher satisfaction through support
- Collect election results on Election Day and publish results on Wednesday, November 4th to promote conversations and reflections on the statewide mock election outcomes
- Provide ongoing resources for incorporating civic engagement, the development of a personal voice, advocacy, and civil conversation in your classroom.

How Does Students Voting Work?



- **We** (Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State and YMCA Center for Youth Voice) **provide:**
 - Physical materials to set up polling places including tabletop privacy screens, and "I Voted" stickers.
 - Access to Ballot Ready before and after: Informative youth-focused dashboard with an unbiased voter guide with candidate information and office descriptions and the statewide mock election results.
 - Real, customized, printable sample ballot based on your school zip code.
 - Support and guidance for participating schools on how to set up and run an authentic, inclusive mock election.

Getting Involved and Next Steps

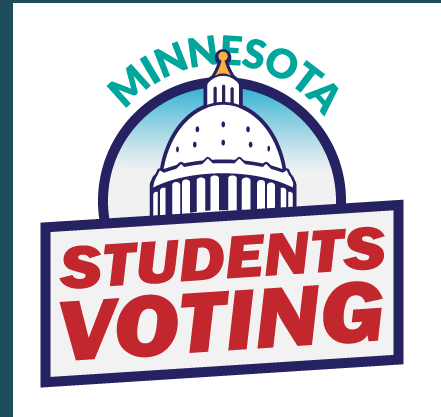


- Register by Friday, September 20 to receive the physical polling place materials via the mail, access to the online Ballot Ready voter guide, and a custom, printable ballot.
- Schools and districts that register after Friday, September 20 will receive access to the online Ballot Ready voter guide and a custom, printable ballot but not the physical polling place materials.
- Physical and electronic materials will be distributed in mid-October.
- Scan the QR code to register your school for Students Voting or complete the sign-up form [here](#).

QUESTIONS?



Thank you for giving your students the opportunity to participate in
Students Voting!



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