

## Polling Place Safety Checklist

School district campuses and facilities may from time to time serve as polling places. While the district endeavors to maintain the sanctity of the election process, the safety of students, faculty and staff remain the primary responsibility. As such, election officials will be asked to remain cognizant of the importance of a safe and secure campus and will work with the facility manager or principal. In order to maintain district safety and security, the district administrator tasked with coordinating polling places should:

### Prior to Polling

- Obtain the list of requested polling sites from the County Clerk's office and discuss the portion(s) of the district buildings to serve as polling locations with the clerk or their designee. If needed, discuss alternative locations for actual voting sites. This could be a non-district site elsewhere in the precinct, a portion of campus not used regularly for educational services, or an adjacent portable or outlying building on district property.
- Encourage early voting.
- Coordinate with the clerk's office information related to the delivery of polling equipment and inform the campus or facility of that schedule. It is important to coordinate delivery as polling equipment may be delivered a week or more in advance. It is **not** the district's responsibility to keep the supplies secure.
- Remind elections officials to advise the areas respective political parties to respect school properties by limiting guerilla signage campaigns and picking up signs after the elections conclusion.
- Work with election officials to provide guidance on emergency actions and responses for polling place workers. Polling place workers are responsible for the safety of individuals at the polls as district staff is responsible for students, staff and other non-voting visitors during emergencies.
- Give election workers building access and be empowered to set limits, restrict campus access and establish safety rules. Election workers will likely begin setting up the afternoon before the election (earlier if the election follows a weekend or holiday).
- Separate the voting areas from offices and classrooms especially where students will be present. It is acceptable to have the voting area moved from its location of previous year(s). Voting locations should focus on reducing voter/ student interaction, enhancing traffic/ pedestrian safety and complying with ADA standards.
- Make sure election workers are aware of the site's camera system so they can position voting booths accordingly. Never allow them to cover or block cameras on Election Day.

- Ensure parent and website communication are disseminated notifying them that elections will be taking place.
- Provide local law enforcement or school-based law enforcement officers with a list of polling places on school property and request additional close patrol assistance to increased police presence and response capability.
- Review protocols for bomb threats, lockdown and evacuation with staff and polling place workers.
- Check your communication and announcement systems.
- Assign teams to check the campus grounds before the start of classes on the morning of the election, watching for anything suspicious.

## **During Polling**

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- Maintain a "heightened awareness" for suspicious activity; including suspicious vehicles on or near campus grounds; suspicious persons in or near school buildings (especially those taking photographs or videotaping), suspicious packages in or near the building or suspicious solicitations for information by unknown persons. Report any of these activities or persons to 9-1-1 (ensure you mention the school name and location of suspicious activity).
- Coordinate with campus parent organizations for volunteers to assist the campus in monitoring voter interaction with students.
- Be aware that polls usually are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and election officials may arrive at 6:00am and remain on site until after 8 p.m. or later if caucuses are scheduled. Arrange staff schedules to ensure a staff member is onsite from poll opening until poll closure.
- Coordinate with election workers regarding the area used for voting and stress the importance of as little disruption to safe school operations as possible.
- Make sure all polling places and access to facilities are clearly marked. Consider placing signs on doors directing voters to the main entrance and do not allow side-door access. Have staff available to direct voters who stray.
- Remind polling place workers that they must abide by all District rules and safety standards including posting signs, ensuring exits are not blocked, and checking on and off campus.
- Advise poll workers that they may not grant voters access to any part of campus beyond the voting areas; this includes restrooms and side exits.
- Encourage school staff and poll workers to be vigilant, watching for suspicious behavior or objects. Be aware of strange vehicles parked for a prolonged period near the school or facility.
- Be aware of packages or items (even lunch boxes) left out and unattended. Be particularly aware of chemical odors coming from a package or vehicle.

- Do not allow anyone, even voters waiting in line, to prop doors open. Do not open locked exterior doors for anyone.
- Remind faculty and staff to wear their official district identification and ensure that regular campus visitors wear their visitor management visitor badges. Make sure that each polling place worker and volunteer wears proper county identification.
- Ensure election workers place a dated “parking pass” on the driver’s side dashboard of their vehicle. These “passes” can be created by the district or the campus and should be returned to the district at the end of Election Day activities.
- If feasible, identify a specific voter parking area. Carefully monitor and strictly enforce all loitering, parking and stopping policies especially those in and around bus zones, fire lanes and driveways.

## **After Polling**

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- Assign teams to check the campus grounds before the start of classes on the morning after the election, watching for anything suspicious.
- Work with the county clerk’s office to encourage the prompt removal of campaign signs from school property. Set a reasonable deadline for sign removal before arranging for the district to dispose of them.
- Work with the county clerk’s office to schedule the removal of all election equipment, setting a reasonable deadline to do so. If there are equipment clearance delays, talk to the clerk’s office about a specific time for item removal. Do not volunteer to move or deliver the equipment.