

Submission for the 2025 EAC National Clearinghouse Award

Category

Communications: Distinguished Voter Education and Communications Initiatives

Polk County Supervisor of Elections

High School Voter Registration Drive: 2025–2026

Overview

The Polk County Supervisor of Elections office is proud to submit our 2025–2026 Annual High School Voter Registration Drive for consideration in the Communications category. Over the past two years, we implemented a communication-first strategy that transformed the way we educate and engage with high school students across our county, resulting in dramatically increased voter registration transactions and deeper student involvement.

Challenge

Registering high school students can be difficult due to limited time on campus, competing academic schedules, and inconsistent preparation among students. In past years, our program saw moderate student engagement, but participation levels were not reaching their full potential, and registration transactions plateaued.

Innovative Communications Strategy

For the 2025–2026 cycle, we redesigned our communication and outreach processes to proactively educate students *before* we arrived on campus. The objective was simple: **equip students with the knowledge and materials needed to confidently register on the day of our visit.**

Key components of our strategy included:

Pre-Event Educational Video (9 minutes)

We produced a comprehensive YouTube video that explains:

- Who we are and what our office does
- The importance of voter registration
- The registration process, including document requirements and FAQs

This video was distributed to participating schools *ahead of time* to ensure students arrived prepared and informed. The video also helped reduce repetitive questions and allowed students to complete registration efficiently.

Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gv1eHPAA0i4>

Interactive Engagement through Trivia

On the day of the registration drive, we played trivia based on the video content.

Every student who participated received a custom lanyard, and *correct trivia answers earned full-size candy prizes.*

This approach:

- Reinforced learning from the video
- Increased student engagement and excitement
- Turned voter registration into an interactive experience

Streamlined Staffing Model

Instead of sending large teams, we adjusted our staffing from 4–5 staff per visit to **just 2 trained Supervisor of Elections team members**, allowing us to visit more schools while maintaining high-quality interactions.

Competition and Recognition

We worked with schools to foster friendly competition across campuses. Two awards were created:

- **Most Total Student Registration Transactions**
- **Highest Percentage of Eligible Students Registered**

Winners will receive celebratory plaques to display in their schools — a visible recognition of student civic participation.

Improved Tracking and Outreach

We overhauled our tracking system to capture:

- Total registration transactions
- Percentage of eligible students registered
- School engagement metrics

This data was shared with schools, providing transparency and encouraging participation.

Our outreach included:

- Reminder emails to school contacts
- Personalized follow-ups with non-responsive schools
- Delivery of informational packets and flyers for school displays
- Encouragement and support for student volunteers to assist with the drives

Results

This initiative led to a **transformational increase in engagement and registration outcomes:**

Year	Staff Model	Registrations Completed
2024–2025	4–5 staff per school	529 transactions
2025–2026	2 staff per school	1,330+ transactions (ongoing)
Increase	—	151%

This significant improvement happened *despite a smaller team per site*, underscoring the impact of better communication, planning, and student engagement.

Why This Deserves Recognition

Our High School Voter Registration Drive excels in communications by:

- Educating students *before* their point of contact with elections staff
- Driving engagement through creative, positive incentives
- Leveraging digital and in-person communications seamlessly
- Using data to refine outreach and measure success
- Encouraging civic pride through friendly inter-school competition

This initiative not only increased transaction outcomes but fostered a culture of civic awareness among graduating seniors — a lasting impact beyond the registration period.

Conclusion

The Polk County Supervisor of Election office believes our High School Voter Registration Drive embodies the spirit of the EAC’s Distinguished Voter Education and Communications Initiatives. Through thoughtful, student-focused communication strategies and measurable results, we successfully elevated civic engagement in our community’s next generation of voters.

Thank you for your consideration.