

Boulder County Clerk and Recorder
2020 EAC Clearinghouse Award Submission
Category: Outstanding Innovation in Elections

**High School Voter
Registration Program**

*Engaging youth to become future voters & raising awareness of
17-year-olds' ability to vote in primary elections*

Submitted by:

Molly Fitzpatrick, Boulder County Clerk and Recorder
1750 33rd Street, Boulder, CO 80301
303-413-7740 ▪ mfitzpatrick@bouldercounty.org
www.BoulderCountyVotes.org

Background and Overview

In 2019, Colorado passed a new piece of legislation, the Colorado Votes Act, which created important changes to the Colorado Election Model. A key change was granting 17-year-olds the right to vote in a primary election if they turned 18-years-old by the following General Election. For 2020, this allowed many 17-year-olds to participate in two primary elections – the March Presidential Primary and the June Statewide Primary.

In response to this new opportunity, Boulder County Elections developed a High School Voter Registration Program. This program created a “Student Voter Registration Awareness Week” and sought to identify a voter registration liaison at each public high school in the county. We then leveraged the connections with these liaisons to amplify and implement additional voter outreach and education efforts within the schools. Alongside the liaison outreach, we worked countywide to educate our community about this new opportunity to participate in our democracy and to prepare our newly enfranchised youth to vote.

The Challenge: Lack of awareness of the new law

Our Elections Division prides itself on our voter education and outreach efforts. During the 2019 Coordinated Election, we hosted several community presentations in which we highlighted many of the changes instituted by the Colorado Votes Act, including the provision allowing 17-year-olds to vote in primaries. During our dialogue with community members at these informal presentations, we discovered that many of our constituents, including educators, parents of teenagers, and teens themselves, were unaware of this new provision.

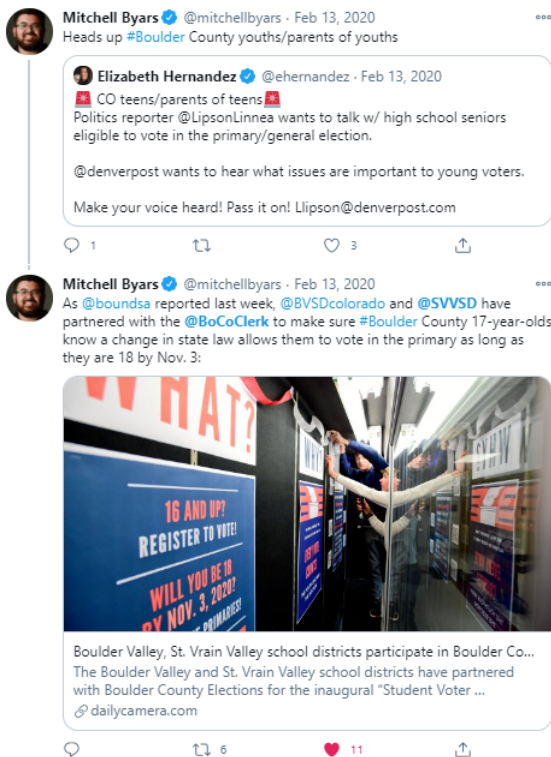
After the conclusion of the 2019 November election, and with the Colorado presidential primary only three months away, we knew we had to act fast to ensure everyone in our community was aware of the change – in particular, our students and parents. Our staff felt strongly that we needed to ensure that every newly eligible 17-year-old had the information necessary to participate in the upcoming primaries, so we developed a strategy to fill the existing educational gap.

Our Approach

With a short timeline to raise awareness, we knew we had to target students directly. However, our budget would not permit us to conduct a full-fledged advertising campaign targeting youth. We needed partners and what better partners than the schools themselves? Reaching students through their teachers and peers would provide us with an unparalleled opportunity to engage these young voters in a way we otherwise could not.

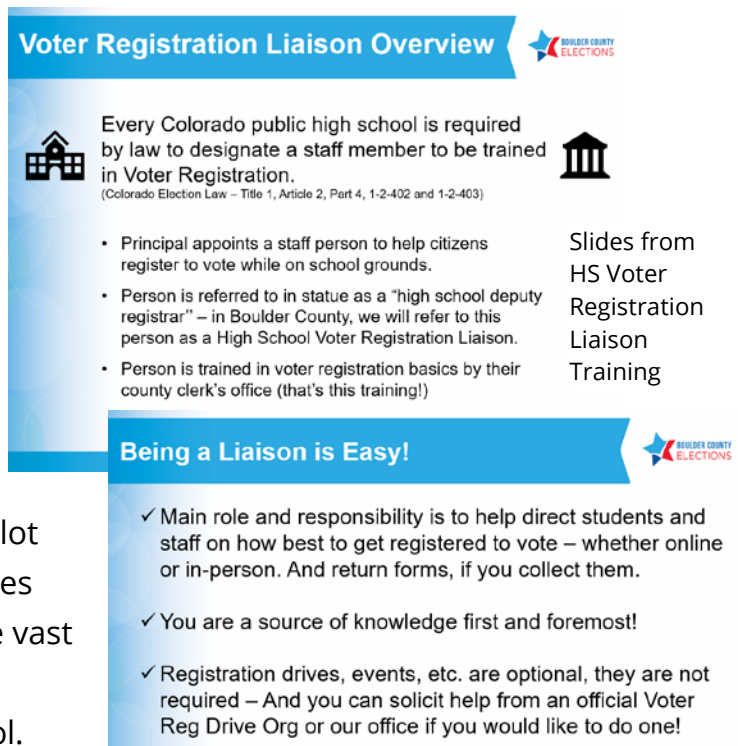
With our target audience set, we knew that we needed to put together a program and materials that were easy to understand and implement due to the busy and demanding lives of teachers, school staff, and the students themselves. We also wanted these materials to speak directly to young people, so we created a tailored brand that was complementary to our Boulder County Elections brand, but a more “youthful” version of it.

Our first step was to obtain leadership buy-in from our two local school districts. While we expected them to be generally supportive, we knew that establishing



meaningful connections at schools would be challenging on short notice without a mandate from the district. In order to provide the districts with an easy opportunity to publicly back our efforts, we proposed the creation of a “Student Voter Registration Awareness Week.” Our office drafted a formal resolution designating February 3-7, 2020 as the awareness week and asked both school district boards to officially sign on to help educate youth in Boulder County about the new law. This proclamation served two purposes: it created a buzz in the community that generated increased awareness about the new provision, and it formalized several key commitments from the schools to expedite our engagement with students.

Our office was also able to capitalize on an old provision in state law that required every high school principal to appoint a staff member to help citizens register to vote while on school grounds. While this provision had been in law for years, it was widely overlooked as it lacked any enforcement mechanism. Nor was there much of an incentive for meeting this requirement as most students would not be of age to cast a ballot until after high school prior to the Colorado Votes Act. However, the new provision meant that the vast majority of high school seniors would have the ability to cast their first ballot while still in school. While pre-registration of students as young as 16 existed in Colorado prior to the new law, school administrators and educators now had an overwhelming reason to help their current students register to vote.



Voter Registration Liaison Overview

Every Colorado public high school is required by law to designate a staff member to be trained in Voter Registration. (Colorado Election Law – Title 1, Article 2, Part 4, 1-2-402 and 1-2-403)

- Principal appoints a staff person to help citizens register to vote while on school grounds.
- Person is referred to in statute as a “high school deputy registrar” – in Boulder County, we will refer to this person as a High School Voter Registration Liaison.
- Person is trained in voter registration basics by their county clerk’s office (that’s this training!)

Slides from HS Voter Registration Liaison Training

Being a Liaison is Easy!

- ✓ Main role and responsibility is to help direct students and staff on how best to get registered to vote – whether online or in-person. And return forms, if you collect them.
- ✓ You are a source of knowledge first and foremost!
- ✓ Registration drives, events, etc. are optional, they are not required – And you can solicit help from an official Voter Reg Drive Org or our office if you would like to do one!

After the formal resolutions were adopted by the school districts, it was easy to package our high school voter registration program with the rollout of a Student Voter Registration Awareness Week. Schools were asked to promote voter registration and provide voting information by:

- Designating a “Voter Registration Liaison” who would be trained in voter registration basics and act as an information source for all voter registration and election questions
- Promoting voter registration by making registration accessible and convenient and/or by holding voter registration events
- Displaying registration information posters and flyers provided by Boulder County Elections
- Leveraging formal and trusted communication channels for voter registration information – including school emails, loudspeaker announcements, student-run news sources, and classroom presentations
- Inviting Boulder County Elections to present during class or at an assembly



See below for full size poster.

Working in conjunction with the school liaisons, we were also able to connect directly with excited and engaged students who were eager to promote the ability of their peers to register and vote. In addition, we worked with school district communication staff to

draft articles for parent newsletters letting them know about the change in law. We also conducted our normal voter outreach efforts through city newsletter channels, social media, and other outlets to make sure the change in law was highlighted to the adult voting population. We wanted to make sure that parents were aware that their 17-year-old could vote!

VOTER REGISTRATION



Did you know that voters who will turn 18 by the November election can vote in the upcoming primary?

Boulder Valley School District encourages all students to register, or pre-register, to vote. Help us get the word out to our students.

[READ MORE >>](#)

FOLLOW BVSD ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Article teaser from BVSD parent newsletter.

Benefits & Results

The efforts we undertook were varied depending on the approach the school and our designated liaison wanted to take, but key highlights included:

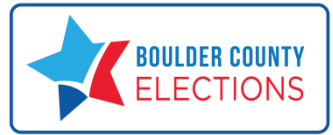
- Identifying a voter registration liaison at almost every high school in Boulder County and working with many of them on student outreach efforts
- Being invited as a special guest on Monarch High School's "Coyote TV" to promote the week, which was played throughout the week during morning announcements
- Attending a Voter Registration "Assembly Style" Voter Registration event, where teachers brought their classes to the gymnasium to register to vote
- Distributing voter registration toolkits to every school in Boulder County, which included posters, handbills, a link to our 60-second [Presidential Primary PSA](#) (to share with students/parents), and sample loudspeaker announcements
- Registering hundreds of students to vote, resulting in one of the highest voter turnouts of registered 17-year-olds in the state – 61% in Boulder County compared to 43% average statewide.

Vision moving forward

We were thrilled with the results of the program. And while the idea spawned from wanting to ensure these students participated in the two primary elections before the General Election in 2020, we created it with an eye toward it being a long-term, sustainable effort for the schools.

Since students can pre-register to vote in Colorado starting at age 16, we believe this model is flexible enough to be implemented in high schools every single year, regardless of election cycles. We look forward to continuing to support our students and teachers in preparing the next generation of voters to be active participants in our democracy.

Boulder Valley & St. Vrain Valley School District Resolutions in support of a Student Voter Registration Awareness Week



BOULDER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-2 RESOLUTION NO. 19-38

In Support of a Boulder County Student Voter Registration Awareness Week in BVSD High Schools

WHEREAS, the right to vote is an important civil liberty and the core of the American democratic system; and

WHEREAS, voter pre-registration for high school students who are 16 or 17 and registration for high school students who are, or will turn 18 before an election, should be accessible and convenient; and

WHEREAS, educators play a critical role in the development of their students as productive, active citizens, and participation in the electoral process is one way students can become informed and engaged citizens; and

WHEREAS, Boulder County Clerk and Recorder, Elections Division will work with Boulder Valley School District, as well as other interested parties, to conduct voter registration outreach and education to high school students across Boulder County; and

WHEREAS, February 3 - 7, 2020 will be the first annual Boulder County Student Voter Registration Awareness Week, in which teachers and staff will be encouraged to: educate students on voter registration and the ability of 17-year-olds to vote in primary elections (if 18-years-old by a General Election), hold registration and civic engagement opportunities, and make voter registration accessible and convenient for eligible high school students throughout the district; and

WHEREAS, Students can apply to register to vote by submitting paper applications to their appointed school liaison or local county clerk and recorder office; completing the online form on the Colorado Secretary of State's website; or at a voter registration drive; and

WHEREAS, voting is a vital part of our democracy and ensures that everyone's voice is heard;

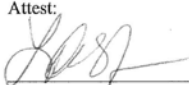
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Boulder Valley School District supports the growing involvement of the student body in the democratic process; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Boulder Valley School District designates the week of February 3 - 7, 2020 as Student Voter Registration Week.

Adopted this 14th day of January 2020.

BOULDER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-2


Tina Marquis
President, Board of Education

Attest:

Laura Shafer
Secretary to the Board of Education

Student Voter Registration Awareness Week February 3-7, 2020

WHEREAS, the right to vote is an important civil liberty and the core of the American democratic system; and

WHEREAS, voter pre-registration for high school students who are 16 or 17 and registration for high school students who are, or will turn 18 before an election, should be accessible and convenient; and

WHEREAS, educators play a critical role in the development of their students as productive and active citizens, and participation in the electoral process is one way that students can become informed and engaged citizens; and

WHEREAS, Boulder County Clerk and Recorder Elections Division will work with the St. Vrain Valley School District, as well as other interested parties, to conduct voter registration outreach and education to high school students across the St. Vrain Valley School District; and

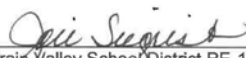
WHEREAS, February 3-7, 2020 will be the first annual county-level Student Voter Registration Awareness Week, in which teachers and staff will be encouraged to: educate students on voter registration and the ability of 17-year-olds to vote in primary elections (if 18-years-old by a General Election), hold registration and civic engagement opportunities, and make voter registration accessible and convenient for eligible high school students throughout the district; and


WHEREAS, students can apply to register to vote by submitting paper applications to their appointed school liaison or local county clerk and recorder office, completing the online form on the Colorado Secretary of State's website, or at a voter registration drive; and

WHEREAS, voting is a vital part of our democracy and ensures that everyone's voice is heard;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the St. Vrain Valley School District supports the growing involvement of the student body in the democratic process, and designates the week of February 3-7, 2020 as Student Voter Registration Awareness Week.

Adopted this 22nd day of January, 2020.


St. Vrain Valley School District RE-1J
Joie Slegrist, Board President

Attest:

St. Vrain Valley School District RE-1J
John Ahrens, Board Secretary

Daily Camera (Boulder, CO newspaper) article

To read the full article, visit: <https://www.dailycamera.com/2020/02/06/bvsvsd-participate-in-boulder-county-voter-awareness-week/>



Boulder Valley, St. Vrain Valley school districts participate in Boulder County voter awareness week



From left: Silver Creek High School juniors TJ Nicholas and Jackson Helwig work on a voter registration display in Longmont on Feb. 6, 2020. Boulder County Elections announced Feb. 3-7 as Student Voter Registration Awareness Week, in partnership with the St. Vrain and Boulder Valley School Districts. (Matthew Jonas/Staff Photographer)

By **AMY BOUNDS** | boundsa@dailycamera.com | Boulder Daily Camera

PUBLISHED: February 6, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Monarch High senior Grateful Beckers watched the Democratic presidential candidate debates with interest, but only found out through a campaign at her Louisville school this week that a new law allows her

vote in the primary at 17.

The next day, she registered to vote at a booth set up in Monarch's hall with the help of Colorado Democracy Challenge.

"I'm really excited about it," she said. "This is such an important election. I want to make sure the Democratic candidate is a strong one."

The Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley school districts have partnered with Boulder County Elections for the inaugural "Student Voter Registration Awareness Week."

The goal is to educate high school students about upcoming elections — the March 3 presidential primary, the June 30 statewide primary and the Nov. 3 general election.

A recent change in state law allows 17-year-olds who will turn 18 by the Nov. 3 general election to participate in both primaries.

Boulder County Clerk and Recorder Molly Fitzpatrick said she's found many high school seniors don't know about the new law.

"We wanted to support new voters in participating," she said. "We can really create a lot of buzz and momentum and awareness for this new change. These are our democracy's newest voters. Registering and voting can be overwhelming at times. We want to break it down for them."

Boulder County asked schools to promote voter registration by designating a voter registration liaison to serve as an information source, holding voter registration events and displaying posters and fliers provided by the elections division.

"Research shows that, if young people vote in three consecutive elections, they are more likely to be a lifelong voter," Fitzpatrick said. "High school is such a formative part of a young person's life. We want to help the high schools in promoting civic engagement."

To read complete article, see link above.



WILL YOU BE 18 BY NOV 3, 2020?

**YOU CAN VOTE IN THE MARCH 3RD
PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY!**

STEP 1: GET REGISTERED!

ONLINE: If you have a Colorado driver's license or state ID, you can register to vote online at www.GoVoteColorado.gov

OFFLINE: Find out if your school has a **Voter Registration Liaison!** They can help you get registered. Or download a registration form to mail at www.GoVoteColorado.gov or visit a Boulder County Clerk & Recorder's office in-person.

STEP 2: VOTE

Vote the ballot mailed to you or **vote** in-person (Bring ID)!

**QUESTIONS &
REGISTRATION
LOCATIONS**

www.BoulderCountyVotes.org
Vote@BoulderCountyVotes.org

BoulderCountyElections
 BoCoClerk
 BoulderCountyClerk
 303-413-7740

ONLY 16?

You can pre-register to vote following the same steps as above!



High School Resources website

<https://boco.org/HighSchoolVoterRegistration>

High School Resources



Purpose: This page is to provide High School Voter Registration Liaisons and all student voter registration champions (students, parents, and organizations) with a one-stop shop for resources to promote voter registration in Boulder County High Schools.

Voter Registration begins in High School

Colorado allows and encourages voter pre-registration beginning at the age of 16. Additional requirements to register include:

- Be a U.S. citizen
- Be a Colorado resident for at least 22 days before the election
- Must not be serving a sentence of confinement or detention for a felony conviction (Note: Those on probation or parole are eligible to vote.)

Visit www.GoVoteColorado.gov to register online or see our [voter registration options](#) page.

High School Voter Registration Liaison

Yes, it's true. Colorado election law states that every public high school principal needs to appoint a staff person to help citizens register to vote while on school grounds (this person is referred to in statute as a "high school deputy registrar"). In Boulder County, we refer to this position as our High School Voter Registration Liaison.

Voter Registration Liaison Training and Documentation

1. Attend/watch voter registration training: Voter registration training is complete after an appointed liaison either attends a live webinar (times/dates emailed to schools) or by [watching the training online](#) (18-minutes).
2. Complete this [high school voter registration liaison template letter](#) designating a Voter Registration Liaison for your high school. The letter must be on high school letterhead and signed by the principal. It can be emailed to: Vote@BoulderCountyVotes.org
3. Oath of Office: Contact our office by [email](#) or by phone at 303-413-7740 to have the High School Deputy Registrar / Voter Registration Liaison Oath of Office emailed to you and to arrange a time to conduct the oath verbally over the phone or in-person.

Bottom text from website:

- Other opportunities for Voter Registration Awareness Week and beyond:
 1. In-person presentation - Can an Elections Division staff member come give a short elections presentation to students? An assembly or series of classes (e.g. back to back social studies classes)? We'd love to come to your school! Email us at Vote@BoulderCountyVotes.org.
 2. Assistance with registering voters - If you need or want additional help with registering students to vote, you can reach out to an official [Voter Registration Drive organization](#). Additionally, if the time frames for a VRD organization to register students before an election has passed (22 days before an election), our office may be able to visit and help register students.
 3. Student Videos - Have students make videos about why "I'm a voter" (I'm a voter because...) or why being a voter is important.
 4. Art for Democracy - Have an art class design voting-inspired work and share it with us. We'd love to see your creations!

Student Voter Registration Week and our #IMaVOTER Program

Due to a recent change in Colorado law, youth who will turn 18-year-olds by November 3, 2020 are now eligible to vote in primary elections this year. This means that the vast majority of Colorado high school seniors can cast ballots in both the March 3 Presidential Primary and the June 30 Statewide Primary.

To help raise awareness of the ability of seniors to vote in March and beyond, Boulder Valley School District and St. Vrain Valley School District both passed resolutions in support of February 3rd - February 7th being "High School Student Voter Registration Awareness Week." The resolutions have been posted here: [BVSD Resolution](#) and [SVVSD Resolution](#).

Boulder County Elections has also produced posters for our local high schools (links below) with our #IMaVoter High School Voter Registration logo and contact information.

Voter Registration Liaison Resources & Ideas

- Host a Registration Event - Even if you are not collecting paper registration forms, school liaisons can still host a student voter registration event where you provide helpful information to students on how to register and provide registration forms for them to mail or drop off themselves.
- Posters - Download these poster/flyers to advertise voter registration leading up to the March 3 Presidential Primary. Send them home with students and distribute them at parent meetings and other school and sports events. We have three versions: [Boulder County poster](#), [Boulder-Broomfield poster](#), [Boulder-Weld poster](#).
- School Announcements - Short sample announcements to be used for High School Student Voter Registration Awareness week. (link coming soon)
- Boulder Elections 60-second Presidential Primary Election Ad - Show / share / email this short YouTube Ad/PSA to students and their families.
- Ballot processing and election security videos - Find additional short (5 minutes or less) educational videos on the [Boulder County Clerk & Recorder's YouTube channel](#). And subscribe to receive alerts when new videos or PSAs are posted.
- Social media:
 - Our office will be doing a series of social media posts on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook the week of Feb 3-7. We plan to tag the districts (BVSD & SVVSD) and tag some of the high schools directly. Follow our accounts ([Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)) and share!
 - Post your own photos and videos of students registering to vote, telling us why they are registering, etc. and make sure to tag us plus hashtag #IMaVoter. We'd love to see your on the ground work in action!

Social Media Posts, Event Photos



Boulder County Clerk / Clerk Molly Fitzpatrick @BoCoClerk · Feb 3

Today kicks off HS Student Voter Registration Awareness Week in @bouldercounty! We are working w/ @SVVSD @BVSDcolorado schools to make sure students (16+) are ready to participate in our 🇺🇸 democracy. Reg 2 #Vote now at GoVoteColorado.gov!
 #IMaVoter #BeAVoter #Elections2020



bouldercountyelections

bouldercountyelections Lots of voter registration activities and information being shared with students and families across our Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley school districts this week! Welcome new soon-to-be voters!
 #vote #elections #elections2020 #imavoter #beavoter #voteready #presidentialelection #presidentialprimary #votingisyoursuperpower

18w

Liked by bouldercountygov and 8 others

February 3

Add a comment... Post

Boulder County Clerk / Clerk Molly Fitzpatrick @BoCoClerk · Feb 27

Congratulations to some of our 1st time voters at Fairview High School in Boulder. We joined them for their "March to the Polls" aka walk to our South Boulder Rec Center Ballot Drop Box to turn in their ballots and give out "I voted" stickers.

@FHS_Knights @BVSDcolorado

5 23

Boulder County Clerk and Recorder / Boulder County Elections is 🥰 feeling excited.

Published by Mircalla Wozniak [?] · January 31 ·

HS Student Voter Registration Awareness Week is NEXT WEEK! Thrilled to partner with St. Vrain Valley School District and Boulder Valley School District to promote voter registration opportunities for high school students. Efforts include:

- ✓ Voter Registration in schools
- ✓ Posters and flyers on how to register
- ✓ School announcements
- ✓ Student videos & more!

See our press release on the effort: <https://www.bouldercounty.org/.../boulder-county-elections-1.../>

Check our HS Resources page for more info: <https://boco.org/HighSchoolVoterRegistration>

Need to register or check your registration:
www.GoVoteColorado.gov

Tag a HS student you know today!



WILL YOU BE 18 BY NOV 3, 2020?

YOU CAN VOTE IN THE MARCH 3RD PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY!

STEP 1: GET REGISTERED!
 ONLINE If you have a Colorado driver's license or state ID, you can register to vote online at www.GoVoteColorado.gov
 IN PERSON Find out if your school has a **Voter Registration Labour!** They can help you get registered. Or download a registration form to mail at www.GoVoteColorado.gov or visit a Boulder County Clerk & Recorder's office in-person.

QUESTIONS & REGISTRATION LOCATIONS
www.BoulderCountyElections.org
www.BoulderCountyElections.org
 @BoCoClerk
 BoulderCountyClerk
 303-443-7140

STEP 2: VOTE
 Vote the ballot mailed to you or vote in-person (bring ID)

ONLY 16?
 You can pre-register to vote following the same steps as above!

#IMaVoter



High School voter registration event (above)

Monarch H.S. Coyote TV interview (left)

1,528 People Reached

53 Engagements

Boost Post

6 10 Shares