



School district facilities often 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. The following are a number of ideas and suggestions to keep in mind as schools prepare for Election Day.

Prior to Election

- Ensure parents/guardians, students, and staff are properly notified that elections will be taking place in the building. Be sure to include any changes to arrival/dismissal time, entrances, or parking.
- Review protocols for bomb threats, protests, lockdown, and evacuation with staff.
- Check communication and announcement systems, leaving time to make repairs or changes if needed.
- Consider increasing security measures on the grounds and in the buildings on Election Day.
- Consider distance learning on Election Day for students.
- Coordinate the delivery and set-up of the election equipment with the clerk's office. Equipment may be delivered up to a week in advance. Election staff may begin setting up the day(s) before the election.
- Separate the voting areas from offices and classrooms, especially if students will be present. When deciding on voting locations, focus should be on reducing voter/student interaction, enhancing traffic/pedestrian safety and complying with COVID 19 and ADA standards. This year's location may not be the same location used in years previous and that is ok.
- Work with election staff to provide guidance on emergency actions and responses for election staff. Election staff are responsible for the safety of individuals at the polls as district staff are responsible for students and staff during emergencies.
 - Establish open lines and methods of communication between election staff assigned to your building(s) and on-site school administrators. Consider using cell phones or two-way radios.
 - Share the importance of minimizing disruption to the daily safe school operations.
 - Give election staff building access and be empowered to set limits, restrict access to areas and establish safety rules.
 - Make election staff aware of the site's camera system so voting booths can be positioned accordingly. Remind staff that covering or removing cameras on Election Day is prohibited.
- Clean and disinfect voting area before election staff and voters arrive to help stop the spread of COVID 19 and other seasonal viruses.

During the Election

Establishing pre-determined modes of communication with the election staff stationed at your facilities. Share your emergency/evacuations routes and shelter locations and share any changes to your daily routine with students and families.

- Assign teams to check the campus grounds before the start of classes on the morning of the election, watching for anything suspicious.
- Coordinate with volunteers to assist the campus in monitoring voter interaction with students.



- Be aware of polling times. Polls are usually open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and election officials will likely arrive early and stay late. Arrange staff schedules to ensure a staff member is onsite from polls opening until polls close.
- Make sure all polling places and access points to facilities are clearly marked. Place signs on doors and near entrances directing voters to appropriate entrance. Do not allow side-door access. Have staff or volunteers available to direct voters.
- Remind faculty and staff to wear and display their official district identification.
- If feasible, identify a specific voter and election staff parking area away from bus and parent drop off areas. Carefully monitor and strictly enforce parking and stopping policies, especially those in and around bus zones, fire lanes, and driveways.
- Report any suspicious activity or persons to 9-1-1.
- Continue open communication and set limits with election staff assigned to your building(s)
 - In the morning of (or before), go over evacuation routes, shelter areas and other basic emergency protocols with election staff to ensure comfortability of their surroundings
 - Ask election staff to wear and display proper identification.
 - Remind election staff that they must abide by all district rules and safety standards including posting signs, ensuring exits are not blocked, and checking into and out of school buildings.
 - Coordinate with election staff regarding the area(s) used for voting and restricting access to others. Remind election staff that they are not to grant voters (or any other guests) access to any part of campus beyond the voting areas; this includes restrooms and side exits.
 - Remind election staff (and voters) of the importance of minimizing disruption to the daily safe school operations.
 - Do not allow anyone, even voters waiting in line, to prop doors open or open locked exterior doors for anyone.
- Encourage school staff to be vigilant.
 - Watch for and report any 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.

After the Election

- Assign a team to check the campus grounds before the start of classes the day after the election, watching for anything suspicious.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect voting areas to stop the spread of COVID-19, along with other seasonal viruses.
- Work with election officials to ensure the prompt removal of election equipment from school property.

Find this document, along with additional resources, on the MnSSC website at www.dps.mn.gov

[The Minnesota School Safety Center](#) (MnSSC) cares about the safety of Minnesota schools. The MnSSC provides training and resources to schools to help them prepare, respond, mitigate and recover from all hazard emergencies.