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MEMORANDUM

December 5, 2024

To: AISD Members	City of Austin Members	Travis County Members
President Arati Singh Trustee	Alison Alter Council Member	Brigid Shea Commissioner
Noelita Lugo Trustee	José Velásquez Council Member	Jeff Travillion Commissioner
	Ryan Alter Council Member	

From: Office of the Travis County Clerk

Dyana Limon-Mercado County Clerk	Victoria Hinojosa Assistant Director External Affairs	Lily Zamarripa-Saenz Community Liaison External Affairs
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Re: Travis County Elections Student Clerk Program

The Student Election Clerk program allows high school students, aged 16 or older, to serve as election clerks at polling locations on Election Day. Open to students from public, private, or home schools with the consent of a parent or legal guardian and the principal of the school, the program provides an opportunity to learn about the electoral process through firsthand experience. Participation in the electoral process empowers students to give back to their communities and to become well-informed, lifelong voters.

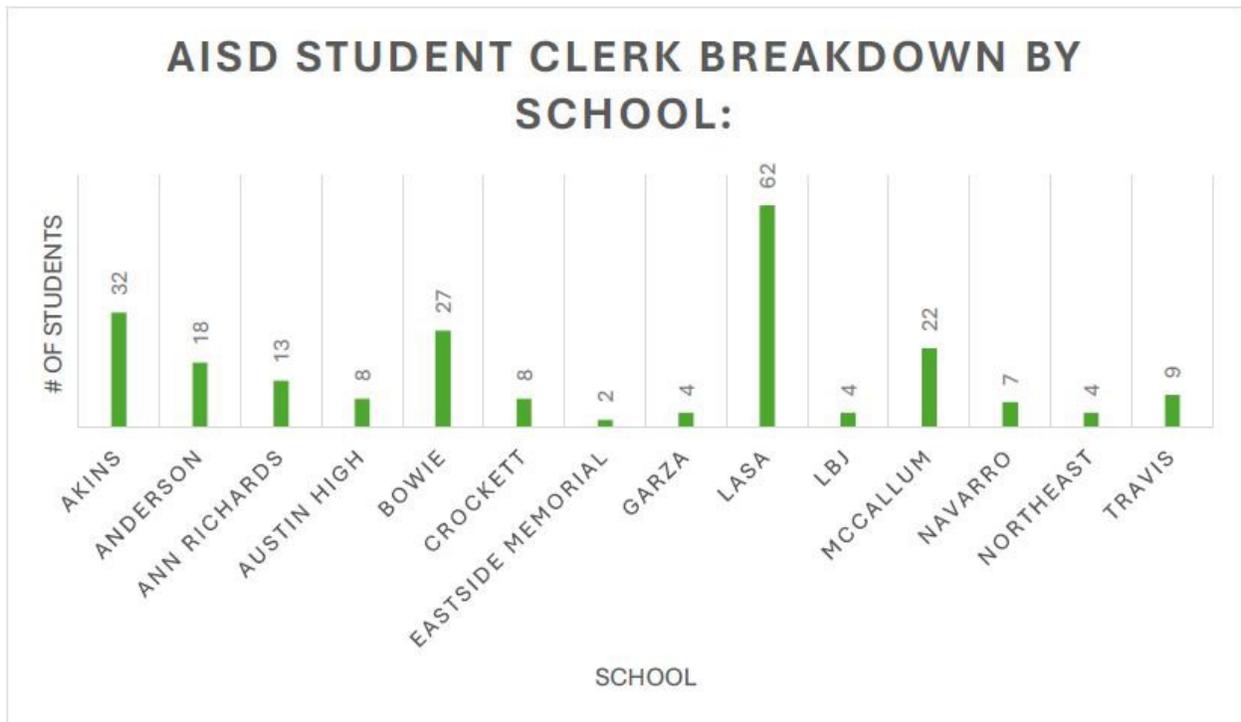
This year, the Office of the County Clerk expanded the Student Election Clerk program to include a dedicated page on our website highlighting opportunities for student clerks, a partnership with the Austin Independent School District (AISD), the League of Women Voters (LWV), Austin Community College (ACC), and robust community outreach efforts. These efforts include distributing materials designed to inform students about the critical role they play in supporting elections and strengthening civic engagement in our community.

Expanding the program allowed us to connect with more students, schools, and communities during the November 5, 2024 General Election. This fostered a deeper understanding of what it means to participate in and support our democracy. This year's efforts demonstrated not only the extraordinary potential of our youth but the importance of investing in the next generation of civic leaders.

November 5, 2024 General Election Numbers

Our office received a total of 330 student applications from eight independent school districts, five charter schools, and six private schools in Travis County. Of those 330 applications, 220 were from AISD high schools. In total, 123 students from across Travis County were selected to serve as election clerks on Election Day, including 83 from AISD schools. On Election Day, all 83 AISD students actively worked at polling locations throughout Travis County. We had no absences; every student worked their assigned shift.

This year's 330 applications compare to 58 student clerk applications we received in 2020, further highlighting a significant increase in student interest and participation.



While our office received a significant amount of interest from students seeking clerk positions, we did not have enough available spots to accommodate all applicants. This high demand created a challenge in balancing the allocation of positions, as we needed to ensure that each site had a mix of both experienced workers and less experienced students. By carefully distributing students across various roles, we aimed to maintain efficient operations for voters while also providing valuable learning opportunities for those who were newer to the election worker experience.

In addition to a high number of applications, some students were not selected to participate in the Student Election Clerk Program due to logistical challenges. Several students were only available to work during the early voting period but were unable to commit to working on Election Day, which is a key requirement for the Travis County program. We appreciate the effort and enthusiasm of all the students who applied and hope to work with them in future opportunities, including in the current December 14 Runoff Election.

Program Feedback

The feedback from poll workers regarding the student election clerks was overwhelmingly positive. Many poll workers praised the students for their professionalism, enthusiasm, and ability to quickly adapt to the demands of Election Day.

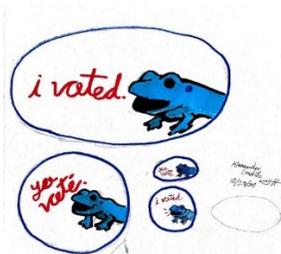
Senior Kamily Delgado-Perez (Liberal Arts and Science Academy) and junior Jonas Schoolfield (Liberal Arts and Science Academy) were both described by Anna Foster, Election Judge at Windsor Library, as, "prompt, pleasant, and prepared to handle their duties and immediately got to work. They handled everything they were asked to do with professionalism, asked questions when they needed help, and showed a great willingness to learn. Kamily was an especially valuable member of the team as she put her bilingual skills to use assisting voters...Young people like them give me hope for the future."

This feedback underscores the value of involving students in the election process, providing them with meaningful real-world experience while contributing to the smooth operation of the polls.

School Partnerships

In 2022, our office held Travis County’s first “I Voted” sticker design competition. Students attending college in Travis County were eligible to submit designs for an “I Voted” sticker that was printed and distributed among every polling location during the November 8, 2022 General Election.

During the November 5, 2024 election, students at Bailey Middle School, Blazier Intermediate School, and St. Edward’s University designed and printed their own “I Voted” stickers. These stickers were included in the official Election Day supply list and distributed at their respective locations on Election Day.



“I Voted” Student Design
Bailey Middle School



“I Voted”
St. Edward’s University

These collaborations highlight the potential for schools to engage in creative and impactful projects that connect students with the democratic process. Moving forward, our office is eager to explore more opportunities to partner with schools and districts in innovative ways, fostering creativity and helping students feel more connected to elections, while making each election experience more memorable and engaging for the community.

In the past, our office has partnered with AISD schools to host mock elections for student council and homecoming, as well as provide general election presentations. These events offer students a hands-on, educational experience of the voting process. Our office has set up schoolrooms to mirror polling locations, allowing students to experience the full scope of election procedures. We have also provided interactive demonstrations to teach students about the election process in a more dynamic and engaging way. These initiatives aim to encourage civic engagement and familiarize students with the importance of voting in a fun and informative manner.

Our office is committed to making these demonstrations a regular part of students' education, helping them connect with the electoral process and inspiring them to become engaged, informed voters who shape the future of their communities.

Election Day Student Holidays

Austin, Lago Vista and Leander ISDs designated November 5, Election Day, as a student holiday, highlighting the benefits of this practice in supporting civic engagement and community participation. Making Election Day a school holiday allows more schools to serve as polling locations without conflicting with school safety requirements and protocols. Additionally, this holiday enables eligible high school students to participate as Student Election Clerks, further promoting civic engagement. We welcome collaboration with neighboring school districts to adopt this practice and make Election Day a holiday across all 15 school districts in Travis County.

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|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Austin ISD | 6. Elgin ISD | 11. Leander ISD |
| 2. Coupland ISD | 7. Hays CISD | 12. Manor ISD |
| 3. Del Valle ISD | 8. Johnson City ISD | 13. Marble Falls ISD |
| 4. Dripping Springs ISD | 9. Lago Vista ISD | 14. Pflugerville ISD |
| 5. Eanes ISD | 10. Lake Travis ISD | 15. Round Rock ISD |

Conclusion

The expansion of the Student Election Clerk program has shown the incredible potential of our youth when given the opportunity to step up and contribute. By working together – students, schools, and our community – we strengthen the democratic process and help shape and enable the next generation of leaders. As we look ahead, our office plans to continue to find new and creative ways to engage our youth, amplify their voices, and remind them that they have the power to make a difference. Thank you everyone who made this program successful.