



TAEA Newsletter

Texas Association of Elections Administrators

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Are the Days Numbered for Polling Places in Schools?

In the wake of school shooting tragedies both in Texas and elsewhere, I wonder if you're starting to see in your counties what I am in mine: some public school administrators are notifying our office that they won't be hosting polling places in future elections; effective immediately and in spite of a [state election law that mandates they make it available for election use](#).

I'd be lying if I wrote that I don't understand their concerns; I absolutely do. Their priority is campus safety and the security of students, faculty & staff. And our focus in using schools is a matter of convenience, for both the voting public and election administration staff. I get that the former trumps the latter.

But that convenience only increases when your county uses vote centers. In using schools, we just don't have to worry as much about polling places on the thoroughfares of driving voters. Much of that work was done for us when they were planned & built.

The Legislature even addressed polling place security in schools last session, albeit in a very limited fashion. [HB 332](#), signed into law and effective 9/1/17, only mandates that a security policy focusing on polling places *be included* in a school district's "multihazard emergency operations plan". But conversely, the law also goes out of its way to ward off any misinterpretation that law enforcement/security personnel need be present. Maybe they do need to be present? I dunno.

What I do know is that [Governor Abbott is considering a special session to address school security](#) generally. And even if that doesn't happen before next year's regular session, you can bet your bottom dollar that this issue about polling places will be coming up again then. And I'm concerned that this time around, they'll exempt schools from having to provide availability altogether. If that happens, how would that affect your county's elections?

Please [take this short\(-ish\), 5-question survey](#) to let us know. Responses will be shared with everyone in next month's article.

-CJD

Vice President

Happy June, 2018 to everyone. By now, most of us have finished or are in the process of wrapping up our May runoff elections, and hopefully, we will be able to enjoy some down time before the bond and TRE elections begin. It's never enough time to recuperate after our primaries, as those are the most difficult elections to oversee.

My staff and I have so many questions regarding new laws. For example, in regards to SB 42, when we suppress the Privacy voter information on those requests made through the Office of Court Administration, what do you do when a political subdivision runs their own election and you provide the voter database information? The information is suppressed, so what are we to provide to them? We are in the process of researching the law, as we need clarification as to how to share this information with them, as they cannot post this information. If you run all elections in your county, you don't have this issue. And, where and when and why did I miss that now all elections have a 22-month retention period? As much as I read and try to keep up with so many changes, I wish I had more time and energy to do all that this job demands.

Be ready for our TAEA Summer Business Meeting set for Tuesday, July 31, 2018, and review the preliminary agenda for the 36th Annual Election Law Seminar for County Election Officials. Lots of new acronyms such as EI-ISAC and MS-ISAC plus speakers from the OAG and Department of Homeland Security. Lots happening in Hidalgo County and throughout our nation. Stand up straight, chin up, follow the law that sets up our policies and then sets up procedures, and God bless us all.

-Yvonne Ramon



SOS 2018 Election Law Seminars:

July 30 - August 1, 2018 36th Annual Election Law Seminar for County Election Officials

[Preliminary Agenda for 36th Annual Conference](#)



November 28 - November 30, 2018 30th Annual Election Law Seminar for Cities, Schools, and other Political Subdivisions

Continuing Education

Until next time...

- John Oldham



Treasurer



Happy June Everyone! I hope that you are all catching up on your rest and are able to relax some. Here in Aransas County early voting for our 4th election started yesterday. If a winner isn't declared we are looking at having a 5th election in September. I resent these mandated unfunded special elections. We had fifty five voters yesterday. Each vote literally cost our county \$5.45. I can only imagine how much more it cost the larger counties. On top of everything else hurricane season began on June 1st. Thanks to Harvey I am now more aware of the weather than ever before. According to the news we are expecting rain over the next 6 days due to a tropical disturbance. This won't be the first time we've had to deal with flooded parking lots in the middle of early voting. Thank goodness most people here own kayaks and paddle boats. Haha!

If you haven't registered for the SOS Seminar, which will take place next month, you definitely need to get moving and make your reservations with the state and with one of the overflow hotels. The TAEA summer meeting will also be held during that time and for those of you that have already submitted your TAEA membership registration forms and fees - Thank you. We have been busy planning something fun to do while we are all in Austin next month. I hope everyone can make it next month and look forward to seeing you all!

I've attached the latest membership list (that should include all current members). If you notice that your neighboring county isn't a member please reach out to them and encourage them to join.

- Michele Bennett

Legislative Chair



Summer has begun, & we have at least 3 elections behind us this year! I know some of you are conducting now or will very soon have other elections for your area. We wish you the best and hope everything goes smoothly.

The SOS conference will be held the end of July, and hopefully everyone can make it. Also, if you are interested in joining the Texas Association of Election Administrators (TAEA), please refer to the TAEA website to find the membership form you need to complete & mail. Below is the link to that website: <http://www.taea-elections.org/>

This site includes a list of your TAEA officers, members, forms, regional groups you could join, as well as education programs that are available. The website has been up for a while, but I think we all forget about it.

Hope to see you all in Austin and in the meantime, have a great summer! Until next time, y'all have a good one!

- Mina Cook

Secretary

Started packing my bags for Austin. I am a slow packer. I am enjoying the machinations of a summer runoff underway for a college district at the moment so I am looking forward to the down time. My sympathies to those who are in the same boat. I sat in on the newly formed Rural Counties Committee this month and am excited to participate with such dedicated professionals. I know their efforts will benefit every county regardless of population. I have stated collaborating with Michelle to prepare our minutes for consideration at our next meeting and hope to have something soon for distribution. If your committee has met we would appreciate a copy of any agenda's or minutes that might need to be included in the meeting packet. I would recommend you send them to the entire executive board ([Chris Davis](#), [Michele Bennett](#), [Yvonne Ramon](#) and [Remi Garza](#)) so they can get a chance to reach out if they have any questions. Until Austin, I wish you all well and its back to packing for me. Now... where did I leave that swimsuit?

- Remi Garza

Just a SPECIAL NOTICE for the recipients of the newsletter. The association newsletter is intended for members and associates of Texas Association of Election Administrators. Those individuals who are not members or associates of the association may be removed at any time.