

NASS Survey: Polling Places in Schools  
Last Updated: 1/30/2008

Question: The Pennsylvania Department of State is gathering information from other states about polling places in schools. Would you please review and respond to the questions below?

Please note: For questions 4 and 5, please clarify if the school closure applies to both students and faculty, or does the closure apply to students only (i.e. the faculty reports for an in-service day).

State	1. Is the day of the primary election a holiday?	2. Is the day of the November election a holiday?	3. Are there polling places located within schools?	4. Are schools closed on the day of the primary election?	5. Are schools closed on the day of the November election?	6. To the extent there are polling places located in schools and the schools are not closed on the day of an election, are there any restrictions to where the polling place can be located within given school?
CO	No	No.	Yes.	No.	No.	No. After 911 and Columbine, etc. Schools are much less interested in this public service
DE	No.	Yes.	Yes.	No.	Yes.	This is an ongoing issue in Delaware and I'm sure we are not alone. We try to be located in the same area in the school for Primary and General Elections, however, that does not always work. Often when school is in session, we are moved to a less desirable location (not the cafeteria or gym, etc.). Both our Presidential Primary and State Primary were on Saturdays and were moved to Tuesday due to a move by the Jewish community who did not want to vote on their Sabbath. While I understand their issue, that change made running the Primary while the buildings are open a challenge. We have tried unsuccessfully to pass legislation that would make the schools schedule an in-service day on the day of the Primary. It is a "recommendation" with no enforcement. There are parking issues, safety issues, handicapped voter access issues (due to the length they may have to walk to the new voting room), etc.



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						If anyone has successfully worked with their schools to mandate an in-service day, please contact Delaware with your legislation.
DC	No. Local primary day is different from presidential primary day. Neither are a holiday.	No.	Yes.	No.	No.	I don't know. I do know that polling places within schools (e.g. auditorium) are off limits to students, faculty, and staff.
GA	No	No.	Yes.	No.	No.	Not in Georgia Election Code or Election Rules.
FL	No.	No.	Yes.	It has been reported that some counties have passed local ordinances closing schools on election day, for example, Broward County.	See answer to question 4.	No restrictions other than accessibility requirements.
ID	No.	No.	Yes.	No.	No.	No, the location is determined by the school principal.
IN	No. Primary day is a state holiday and holiday for most county/city offices. However, it is not a school holiday unless the school district declares it so.	No. See answer to question 1.	Yes.	No. See answer to question 1.	No. See answer to question 1.	It is up to the school administrators where the polling places are located within their buildings.
KS	No.	No.	Yes.	No.	No.	Restrictions only if needed to comply with school security policies. Schools, as other facilities, must give their permission to be used as polling places,



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						so they can say where the poll will be within the facility.
KY	No.	No.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	
LA	No.	Yes.	Yes.	No. State education policy does not call for school closures on the date of the primary election. However, each district sets their own calendar and may choose to do so.	Yes, once every four years schools are required to close on the dates of presidential election, per the following policy.  General election day shall be designated by each LEA as a holiday every four years for the presidential election. ( <u>Bulletin 741-Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators</u> , 333.D.) <a href="http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v115/28v115.doc">http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osr/lac/28v115/28v115.doc</a>	No.
ME	No.	No.	Yes. Municipal jurisdictions choose the location of their polling places. Some are in schools, some in other public buildings, and others are in private facilities if there are not	Yes.	Yes.	No.



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			suitable public buildings in the municipalities.			
MN	No.	No.	Yes.			The space being used as a polling place must be separated from other activities.
MS	No.	No.	Yes.	No.	No.	
MT	No	Yes	Yes	Yes. Most schools are out for the year.	No.	No.
NE	No.	No.	Yes.	No.	No.	N/A
NJ	No.	Depends on school district.	Yes.	No.	Depends on school district.	No restrictions
NM	No.	No.	Yes.	No. Local schools may close at their discretion. To my knowledge, none currently close for elections	No. Local schools may close at their discretion. To my knowledge, none currently close for elections	None by state law, other than accessibility issues.
NC	No.	No.	Yes.	No. County school systems have the authority to declare either a primary or election day a teacher work day (where children do not report to school).	No. See answer to question 4.	No legal restrictions. There are defacto restrictions that are there because you do not want to expose children to heavy traffic and to have voters wander the hallways.
ND	No.	No.	Yes.	No. ND's primary election is held on the second Tuesday in June in each	No.	There are no specific restrictions. However, many counties/cities/schools work to ensure a separation whenever possible of the students and the general public. The state's largest populated county recently removed most of its polling



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				even numbered year. Therefore, the schools are often closed. However, in some cases, they have summer classes and are open. Regardless, the school may be used for a polling location.		locations from the schools, in part at the request of the largest school district. They had concerns about security. In the past, many of the schools within the county were used. Now, only two schools in the county will be used and that is because of a lack of other locations that are accessible by persons with disabilities. This is a fairly common reason why schools are used because they tend to be accessible and alternate locations just are not available.
OR	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Oregon is vote by mail, does not have polling places.
SC	No.	Yes.	Yes.	Schools are out of session (June primaries and presidential primaries are held on Saturday).	Yes (some may have teacher work days).	No.
SD	No.	No.	Yes.	No. Our primary is the first Tuesday in June and most schools have dismissed by then.	No.	No.
VT	No.	No.	Yes.	Yes. No law requires this, but most schools simply extend the February break to include the 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday in March.	No.	The election is generally held in the gym and gym classes are cancelled. It is up to the school board and the town clerk (who runs the election) to come to an agreement. The biggest issues are generally parking and traffic control.



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VA	No.	No.	Yes.	Whether or not to close schools is a decision of the local school board and while many school divisions do close others do not, believing that it is good for students to see the process. Some school divisions schedule a teacher work day, citing concerns over student safety or traffic and parking issues.	See answer to question 4.	The location of the polling place within the facility is a decision that is made between the school system, the local electoral board, and in some cases, the local governing body.
WA	No.	No.	Yes. Our counties prefer churches and community centers wherever possible. Schools have become appropriately security conscious, and the strict control of people coming and going isn't necessarily conducive to poll site voting.	Yes. As of 2007, our primary is held in August when the schools are closed for summer vacation.	No.	Again, schools are not as preferred as fire houses, churches and community centers. Balancing voter accessibility with school security means occasionally voting in a hallway, or in a room near an exit access. Occasionally libraries are used. The main restrictions involve strict sign-in and security measures to protect the schools.
WY	No.	No.	Yes.	Yes. School is not in session in	No.	No statute regulates this issue. The agreement would be with the County Clerk and the school



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				August. Teachers may be setting up classes.		administrative office if any restrictions.
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