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## **MAYOR DE BLASIO CELEBRATES FIRST CITYWIDE STUDENT VOTER REGISTRATION DAY**

*Part of City's Civics for All Initiative which aims to teach students about current events and engage them in democratic process*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio joined high school seniors at the Manhattan Hunter Science High School today for New York City's first-ever citywide Student Voter Registration Day, which aims to help register all eligible students who are currently 18 years old or will turn 18 by November 6, 2018. SVRD is part of the City's Civics for All initiative announced earlier this year, which will also include new civic engagement curriculum and resources that address current events, participatory budgeting for New York City high school students, and new professional development for teachers.

"Young people across the nation have been speaking up loudly for their values. To sustain real change, we must bring that activism to the ballot box," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "Our first – ever citywide student voter registration day will help more young people get involved in the civic process and make our democracy stronger."

"With Student Voter Registration Day and our investments in civic education, New York City schools are helping the children and young adults of today become the active, engaged citizens of tomorrow," said **Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza**. "This is so essential to our work as educators, and it's part of the reason I became a teacher. I'm excited to hear from students and schools across the City about their Student Voter Registration Day activities, and to see more young New Yorkers raising their voices and going to the polls."

"Young people should be empowered to be more involved in the democratic process, bringing their creativity and energy to help solve important problems. At the same time, we will continue working to ensure our laws are changed to make voting more accessible and easier for all New Yorkers," said **Deputy Mayor Philip Thompson**.

SVRD is a partnership with DemocracyNYC, the City Council, New York Immigration Coalition, NYC Board of Elections, and NYC Votes. All schools have received a Resource Guide ([LINK](#)) with suggested lessons and activities for the event, and have received voter registration forms as well as civic engagement pledge forms in multiple languages.

The City's Civics for All initiative includes:

- Curricula for Grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 that explore civic ideals and civic participation related to freedoms, rights and responsibilities of people in the community and nation. Grade 6-8 curricula will be piloted this fall.
- \$2,000 per high school for a student participatory budgeting process. Students will identify priorities and direct the spending of the \$2,000. This will be piloted at a small group of high schools this fall.
- Training teachers in the civic education curriculum and in facilitating civic action projects.
- Providing resources throughout the school year that will address current events such as elections, Supreme Court decisions, and major government and civic news.

Civics for All builds on existing work to strengthen civics and social studies education, including NYC's *Passport to Social Studies* curriculum, which has been adopted by over 70 percent of the City's elementary and middle schools in just its second year. The *Passport to Social Studies* curriculum integrates civic participation practices with the curriculum content through social science and historical thinking skills.

Mayor de Blasio has been an advocate for reforming the State's antiquated voting laws. He is pushing for the Senate to pass legislation that would allow individuals that are at least 16 or 17 years old to pre-register to vote and become automatically registered when they turn 18. He is also pushing for the Legislature to pass other measures that would expand access to early voting, require the use of electronic poll books, allow same-day voter registration, allow no-excuse absentee voting, authorize automatic voter registration at state or local agencies, and reform the NYC BOE.

"Voting matters - but with all the barriers that new voters face before getting to the ballot box, it's harder than ever for young people to make their voices heard. With Student Voter Registration Day, New York City is taking a critical step forward in raising civic participation among our next generation," said **New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer**. "When it comes to the issues facing our city, from climate change to accessible transit options, the stakes are highest for our young people. Empowering our next generation to register to vote and show up at the polls is how we will make the progress we need - not just for our city, but for our democracy."

"Civic engagement among New Yorkers of all ages has never been more important than it is in this moment," said **State Senator Brian Kavanagh, Ranking Democrat on the Elections Committee**. "Student Voter Registration Day will help ensure the next generations of New Yorkers are able to make their voices heard in elections – the cornerstone of our democracy. I'd like to thank Mayor de Blasio and the DOE for making today such a success."

"Now, more than ever, the need for educated young adults to participate in elections is critical. When our elected representatives fail to do their jobs, fail to truly represent our interests and needs, a basic return to civics lessons in schools - and the impetus for youth to make their voices heard in the voting booth is critical. We have seen how students at Parkland High School in Florida have turned a shooting tragedy into a rising wave of youth voter registration whose impact may soon be felt in the mid-term elections," said **New York State Senator Luis**

**Sepulveda.** “I salute Mayor de Blasio, Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza and their partners in this program, and wish it the much needed success it deserves.”

“Young New Yorkers should have every opportunity to make their voices heard. I commend Mayor de Blasio on today’s first Citywide Student Voter Registration Day that took place at the Martin Luther King Jr. Educational Campus. We must do everything we can to encourage civic engagement and make the voting process as accessible as possible,” said **Assembly Member Victor Pichardo.**

“I want to thank Mayor de Blasio and applaud his DemocracyNYC initiative for registering thousands of students across NYC high schools. By registering today, young people around New York City are beginning to foster the good habit of participating in our democracy,” said **Assembly Member Robert Carroll.** “It is universally recognized that if a person does not become an active voter by the time they are 25 it is unlikely that they will become a regular voter later in life. In light of this it is so important that we register as many young people as possible and instill in them the value of their vote. This initiative contributed to doing just that and I am proud to support it.”

“The stakes are too high and the margins too close to not ensure that every eligible student in New York City is registered to vote,” said **Assembly Member Linda B. Rosenthal.** “Voter registration is the engine that makes our democracy tick, offering each voter, regardless of age, a voice as loud as every other New Yorker. Americans have fought and died to protect and secure the right to vote, and this initiative will ensure students understand the importance of registering and voting.”

“Today’s young people stand poised to enter a world of incredibly complex challenges. Raising their awareness of the value of voting and civic participation is beyond critical, and as we have seen in recent elections, every vote (and voice) truly matters. Student Voter Registration Day is a direct way for our youth to understand the impact they can make through civic participation — both in and out of the voting booth. Since we began this effort in 2015, tens of thousands of high schoolers have registered to vote. And thanks to the efforts of Mayor de Blasio and the Dept of Education, students in every community in New York City will now have this opportunity,” said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal.**

“Every day, we are witnessing our city’s young people taking on a greater role in leading for the kind of change all New Yorkers can be proud of. As a former high school government and history teacher, I believe it is critical that we foster a commitment toward civic engagement among our students, and I commend Mayor de Blasio and Council Member Helen Rosenthal for working to make the civic process more accessible and providing our educators with the resources they need to help activate our city’s bright, passionate young leaders,” said **Council Member Mark Treyger.**

“Our goal is for all our students to become engaged citizens who can think critically and who are empowered to chart the course our country takes,” said **Phil Weinberg, Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning.** “With Civics for All, we are supporting our young people in making connections between history, current events, and the very structures that make up our democracy. I’m thrilled that, as part of this work, thousands of students across the City will register to vote together today.”

Student Voter Registration Day and Civics for All are part of the City's Equity and Excellence for All agenda. Through the Equity and Excellence for All initiatives, we are building a pathway to success in college and careers for all students. Our schools are starting earlier - free, full-day, high-quality education for three-year-olds and four-year-olds through 3-K for All and Pre-K for All. They are strengthening foundational skills and instruction earlier - Universal Literacy so that every student is reading on grade level by the end of 2nd grade; and Algebra for All to improve elementary- and middle-school math instruction and ensure that all 8th graders have access to algebra. They are offering students more challenging, hands-on, college and career-aligned coursework - Computer Science for All brings 21st-century computer science instruction to every school, and AP for All will give all high school students access to at least five Advanced Placement courses. Along the way, they are giving students and families additional support through College Access for All, Single Shepherd, and investment in Community Schools. Efforts to create more diverse and inclusive classrooms through Diversity in New York City Public Schools, the City's school diversity plan, are central to this pathway.

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