

# SANTA FE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Santa Fe – September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### **The Santa Fe County Clerk's Office Kicks Off its High School Outreach Program, #Democracy101**

Katharine Clark, the Santa Fe County Clerk, came into office with the goal of increasing participation and excitement among youth voters in Santa Fe County. This outreach program, #Democracy101, will teach high school students how the voting process works in New Mexico. The program consists of voter registration, presentations about voting and the importance of civic engagement, and a mock election to familiarize students with the voting tabulators. Young people who are familiar with the election process will be much more comfortable when they show up to the polls to vote for the first time.

In the mock election, students will take turns filling out ballots that ask a few non-political questions and cast them into the tabulator. The tabulator will then print the results, and the Clerk's office staff will present those results to the students. One of the most important goals of the mock election is to dispel misinformation about how the voting machines work. Clerk's office staff will also take the opportunity to [recruit student poll workers](#), who can serve at the polls as young as 16. The first events will take place in September at the New Mexico School for the Arts, Pojoaque Valley High School, and Early College Opportunities High School. The Clerk's office plans to continue coordinating these events after the general election and beyond.

Younger voters tend to have far lower turnout rates than their older counterparts, especially in non-presidential elections. Students who register to vote early are naturally far more likely to participate in elections at a young age and throughout their lives. Voting at a young age is vitally important because it gives young people the power to have a say in their future. Students can [pre-register to vote](#) as young as 16, and their registration will automatically activate once they turn 18. Additionally, students who turn 18 before a General Election are eligible to vote in that year's Primary.

For any further inquiries, contact Mitchell Cox, the Voter Outreach Coordinator.

**Email:** [mcox@santafecountynm.gov](mailto:mcox@santafecountynm.gov)

**Phone:** 505-992-9858

For other information, consult the County Clerk's Web page (<http://www.santafecountynm.gov/clerk>) or call the County Clerk's Office (505-986-6280).