



## Preparing to Vote in College

Alexis Earp, Senior

Admission letters are received. Enrollment fees are paid. Students pack their belongings and move to a new place to continue their education. With all of the stress and excitement that comes with starting college, many students will forget about other important milestones that often coincide with the beginning of their post-secondary schooling. One of these milestones: voting for the first time. While some students may have had the opportunity to vote when they were seniors in high school, for many, the first election in which they are eligible to vote occurs during college. Registering to vote and casting a ballot can be confusing for anyone who has never voted before and doing so while away from home can make the process even more challenging. So, if you are or know a college student, what can you do to ensure the process goes smoothly?

Before you think about how to register or cast a ballot, you should research what will be on your ballot. Learning about the candidates and ballot questions during each election cycle allows you to cast a well-informed vote, regardless of your age. If you find a candidate whose platform aligns well with your own values, consider volunteering for their campaign if you have the time. Campaigning can help you become more knowledgeable about general political processes, as well as how to make a voting plan for yourself and others. I spoke with Emma Szalewicz, a Marblehead High School Alumna and current senior at Emmanuel College. Szalewicz, who was involved in several political organizations in high school, said, "my involvement in [those] organizations better prepared me to know what I would have to do to be able to vote in college."

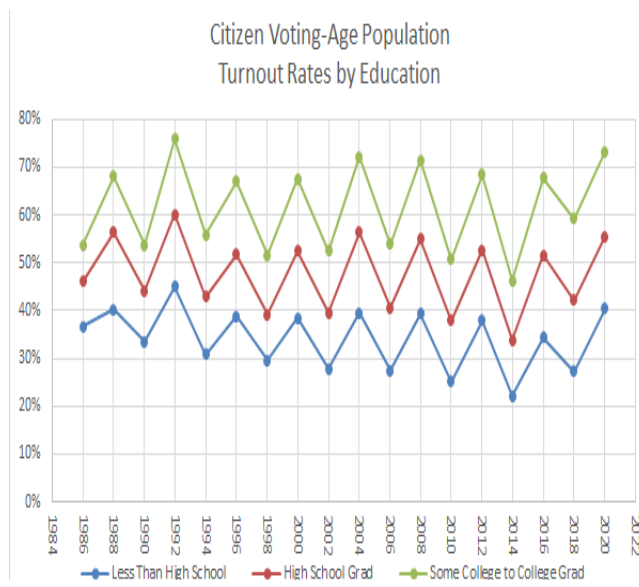
Registering to vote may seem like a daunting task, but in Massachusetts, it is fairly easy. I preregistered to vote when I got my learner's permit, and when I decided to change my party affiliation about a year later, all I had to do was visit this website: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/> In addition to containing instructions for changing party affiliation, this site also has information for those who wish to register or preregister, update their address or name, or check their registration status. If you are registered with the correct address, checking your registration on

that site will give you the address of your polling place, as well as the names of your current representatives in the Massachusetts state government.

Once you have registered, making a voting plan is crucial. If your campus is near the address at which you are registered, or if you live at the address at which you are registered and commute to school, all you need to do is find your polling place, its hours of operation, and a time when you can stop by to cast your vote. If you live on a campus that is far away from the address at which you are registered to vote, you can request an absentee ballot. During Szalewicz's freshman year of college, she attended Long Island University Global in Heredia, Costa Rica. She requested an absentee ballot for the 2018 general election before she left Marblehead and received it in October of that year. When I asked Szalewicz about the process of casting an absentee ballot, she replied, "I...simply filled it in, scanned it, and emailed it back to the Town Clerk. Being abroad, I was worried the process may be challenging but was relieved to discover the opposite to be true."

Colleges and universities also have many organizations that assist students with the registration process. Irina Costache, another senior at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, recalled that the school's branch of the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group (MASSPIRG) had clipboards so students could register. "Some of [my friends] hadn't registered to vote at all," Costache mentioned as she told the story of how she got a large group of people to register. Sophia Gardner, another senior at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, explained that going into college, she did not know what she would need to do to vote in college, saying, "I definitely needed organizations like MASSPIRG and get out the vote organizations to help me along." Thanks to the efforts of groups like MASSPIRG, the process of registering once on-campus is simple.

Voting is important, even when it is difficult. No matter your stage in life or political experience, you should register for the upcoming elections to make your voice heard. In the words of Alex Genovese, a political science major at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, "Just vote. It's important."



Graph Source: The United States Election Project

## All About NGSS

Kate Twomey, Sophomore

With climate change and pollution worsening and their effects becoming more noticeable and detrimental, people are looking for ways to contribute to environmental sustainability efforts. At Marblehead High School we do just that by hosting a chapter of the National Green Schools Society (NGSS). NGSS is a nationwide organization that focuses on helping students become more involved in environmentalism, both in their immediate community and on a larger scale. Students also receive service hours through the club, and if they earn enough they can receive awards and recognitions. The MHS chapter is actively involved in sustainability efforts both in the school and locally. For example, NGSS runs the composting stations in the school cafeteria. These stations are staffed by a few NGSS members each lunch period who help students properly sort their waste into composting, recycling, and trash. NGSS also handles the recycling at the high school. Every day after school NGSS members go around a specified floor of the school collecting recycling from the classrooms. Both of these activities help to reduce the amount of trash produced by the school by instead removing waste through sustainable disposal methods.

On a community-wide level, NGSS has been involved in clean-ups all around town. So far this year, we have had clean-ups at Seaside, Gatchell's, the bike path, Village School, MHS, and more. During these clean-ups, NGSS members pick up trash found in these locations, sort out any recyclables to be dealt with separately, and bring the rest to the dump to be disposed of properly.

NGSS also provides members with service hour opportunities. Members can earn service hours through activities such as composting, recycling, cleanups, research projects, and more. Members then accumulate their service hours, the goal being to earn 20 by the end of the year.

*"NGSS... focuses on helping students become more involved in environmentalism"*

The MHS chapter of NGSS is divided into six independent project groups. These groups each have their own specific projects they work on throughout the year, in addition to the aforementioned activities. The anti-idling group campaigns in front of MHS after school to discourage people from idling their cars, which releases harmful emissions into the air. The aquaponics group works on growing tower gardens in the school and also cares for fish in the aquaponics system. The cafeteria sustainability group works with the high school to make the cafeteria more environmentally friendly through composting, using more sustainable trays, recycling, and more. The political group focuses on the political side of environmentalism. So far this year the political group has had the privilege to meet with the Marblehead Municipal Light Department, the Marblehead Water and Sewer Commission, and Massachusetts State Senator Brendan Crighton. During these meetings, we discussed potential projects that would increase the use of sustainable energy around town and learned about environmental legislation and how we can advocate for it. The solar panel group is working to research and advocate for the use of solar panels at the high school and around town, as solar panels are an important source of sustainable energy. Lastly, the eco bricks group collects materials for sustainable building blocks in collaboration with the Eco Bricks organization, which condenses used plastics into building materials.

NGSS is a great opportunity for MHS students to get involved in their school and local communities, learn about and become active in environmentalism, and earn service hours. Any MHS students interested in NGSS are welcomed and encouraged to join.

## A Declaration of Love

Anya Kane, Freshman

The breeze lifts her hair off her shoulders, the blonde bob twisting and turning in the summer air.

*The sweet smell of sunflowers and forget-me-nots fill my senses.*

She raises her arms to smell a towering sunflower.

*Sunflowers, adoration. Zinnias, everlasting love.*

She smiles, and not even the sun could match the amount of light she gives into the world. Not the brightest stars could replace her beacon of joy in the dark night.

*He's standing behind me, I know he's watching me.*

I love her, but how do I tell her?

*He doesn't know I love him, and I'll never tell.*

I pick a flower from the garden pot next to me.

*I hear the pluck of a flower. He walks towards me.*

I approach the girl they call Lily of the Valley. I hand her a single flower.

*A rose.*

*A declaration of love.*

A declaration of love.

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