MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGE SOUTHEAST

Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan 2024

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

Minnesota State College Southeast 2024 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Tracy Rahim

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Minnesota State College Southeast (Southeast) in Minnesota for the 2024 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 election. We will continue to add contributing coalition members to discuss this plan and future plans with stakeholders as we develop our goals and outcomes.

The goals for Minnesota State College Southeast for the 2024 election are:
- To review the data from the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) and continue creating assessment goals based on this information.
- To increase voter registration and turnout among students on both campuses and our online students.
- To further develop a formalized campus coalition of faculty, staff, students, and student groups to continue nonpartisan voter engagement activities.
- To create a welcoming and educational environment regarding civic and political engagement.
- To encourage faculty and staff to be civically engaged and instill this in students.

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes the following, campus groups, and organizations:

- **Tracy Rahim** - Student Life Coordinator, Campus Vote Coordinator, Student Senate Advisor
- **Andrew Clift** - Student, Political Science Transfer Pathway
- **Tina Langton** - Red Wing League of Women Voters
- **Ruth Charles** - Winona League of Women Voters
- **Chelsi Wilbright** - Winona County Auditor-Treasurer
- **Micki O'Keefe** - Goodhue County Finance & Taxpayer Services
- **Minnesota State College Southeast Student Senates (Winona & Red Wing)**
- **LeadMN**
- **ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge**

As we continue to develop this plan further, we hope to include more members from the college and community. We recognize that there are people, departments, and groups missing from our coalition and hope to open this opportunity to share perspectives for all who may be interested

as the academic year begins and we get closer to civic holidays and the election cycle. We have yet to meet as a full coalition, but this will be one of our larger goals.

In the event of a change in leadership, the role of the Campus Voting Coordinator is embedded into the Student Life Coordinator position description. This Action Plan, along with voting resources and information will be documented, stored, and maintained in a Microsoft Teams channel within the college.

Commitment:

Even though civic engagement is not explicitly stated within the mission, vision, and values, the espoused points contribute to the experience of each student as an individual to inspire them to think critically and evaluate their opportunities and potential. Southeast is dedicated to the formation of well-rounded individuals where we cultivate a community of connectedness and meet students where they are at. This action plan aims to bridge our strategic plan with our goals of broader education and civic engagement.

- **Mission**
  - Minnesota State College Southeast prepares students for a lifetime of learning by providing education for employment, skill enhancement, retraining, and transfer, to meet the needs of students and the community.
- **Vision**
  - To enrich lives and communities by being the best
- **Values**
  - We believe college is for everyone.
  - We believe in meeting students where they are.
  - We believe every step towards educational success should be simple and achievable.

The Student Senates on both Winona and Red Wing campuses have been committed to civic engagement. In Spring 2024, four student leaders attended a student summit in Washington DC that was sponsored by LeadMN where students could learn advocacy and leadership skills and meet with elected officials. They are enthusiastic to partner with LeadMN and their new student leadership and professional staff to roll out efforts that the statewide student association will have to engage with students to get registered to vote and follow through with voting in the upcoming elections. They are also a key stakeholder in implementing campus-based activities and events such as tabling, Floats for Votes, class discussions, social media campaigns on the importance of voting, etc.

Southeast does not have a current signatory to ALL IN's Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation, but information has been shared along with a list of fourteen other system institutions who have already signed since 2020. One of our President's system colleagues is also on the President's Council Leadership and is a good resource for her to connect with regarding questions about signing the commitment.

This is the first action plan that our institution has developed for ALL IN. With the newly implemented Minnesota legislation, each campus must have a voting coordinator. This role will help to bring continuity and organization to the coordination of the voting process, including voter registration and educational opportunities. This role will also include working with various

internal and external stakeholders to inform students and make information more visible and available. Registration forms will be accessible to all students, Student Senate will be consulted on distribution methods and facilitating events to assist students in registering early and same-day registration.

Southeast is committed to providing students with accurate, nonpartisan information. Students can view their ballot and find links to register to vote on the college website at https://www.southeastmn.edu/fwd/page.aspx?id=14891

Landscape:

Southeast is a two-year community and technical college, and part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. Southeast has campuses in Winona and Red Wing and a robust presence of online students, with a total headcount of 2667 who are both full-time and part-time. Approximately 38% of enrolled students (excluding PSEO) are Pell eligible/low income. Our high job placement rates for our graduates are indicative of the success that they have finding jobs in their field within the first year after graduation (on average we have about a 97% job placement rate). Moreover, many of our programs like truck driving, welding, cosmetology, and nursing have a 100% job placement rate. More than 75% of our students come from the 7 main Minnesota counties we serve and choose employment close to home after graduation in healthcare, computer technology, manufacturing, construction, transportation, and more.

Southeast joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2024.

Demographic information:
- 56% female
- 47% first-generation
- 42% over age 21
- 38% Pell eligible/low-income
- 16.8% students of color
- 6% veterans
- 4% single parents
- 3% with disabilities
- All students are considered commuter students as Southeast does not provide on-campus housing.

Since Southeast has primarily been a technical college and changed its mission within the past ten years to include liberal arts and sciences, and transfer pathways, there are not a lot of programs or classes that cover civic learning and democratic engagement. Our courses in history, humanities, sociology, and political science do cover these topic areas to various degrees within the curriculum. Besides a small connection within our academic programs, there have been other internal barriers as well that have prevented our college from having large voter engagement. The Student Life area has been staffed to various degrees over the years with no more than 1-2 staff members and administrators working with student engagement. And with declining enrollment after the pandemic, which is now rebounding, budget sources have been prioritized in other areas. We have mainly relied on the leadership and initiatives of LeadMN to assist. External barriers include being spread between two campuses an hour apart

in two different counties as well as a significant online program student population. Staff must split their time between both campuses and be knowledgeable about resources and programs available in separate communities.

Southeast has authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) through 2033 and will receive campus voting data in the future from Tufts University.

Below are the results from the 2020 NSLVE campus report. Further detailed data can be found at this link: https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:d01132dc-2b9e-33cc-87fd-582c31e5642d

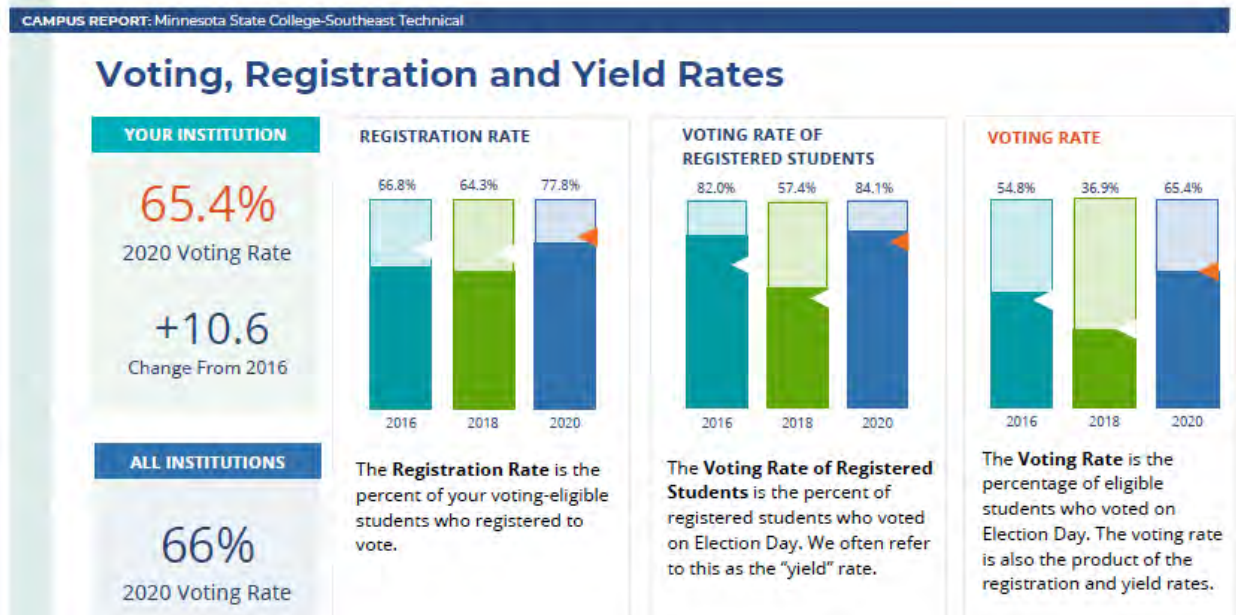**Figure 1. Overall campus student voting rate**

Figure 2. Voting rate compared to national average of similar institution type
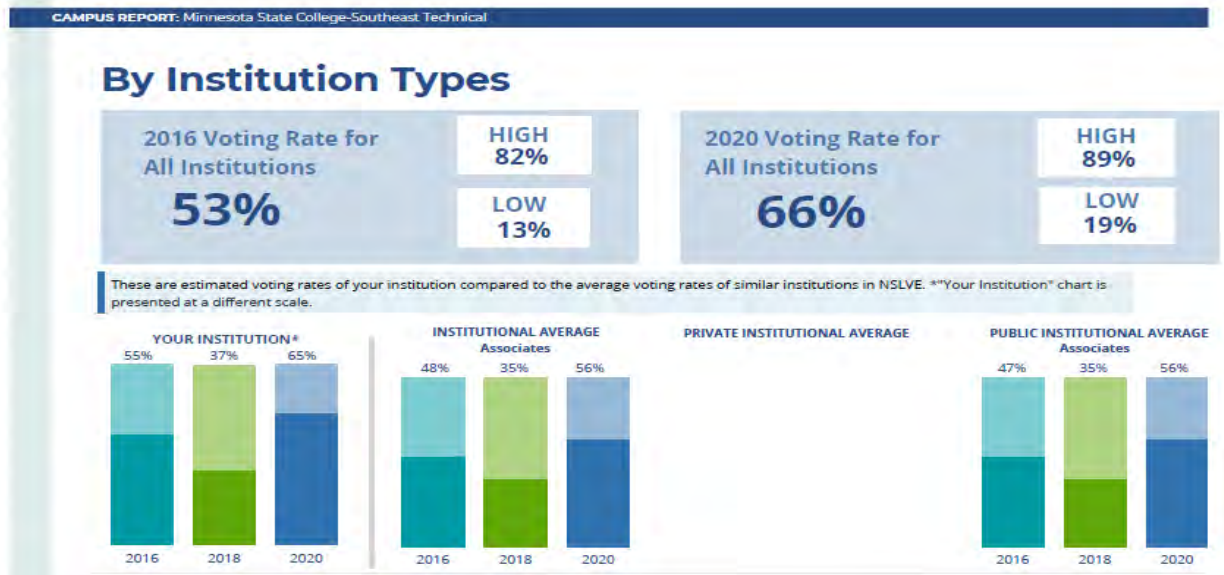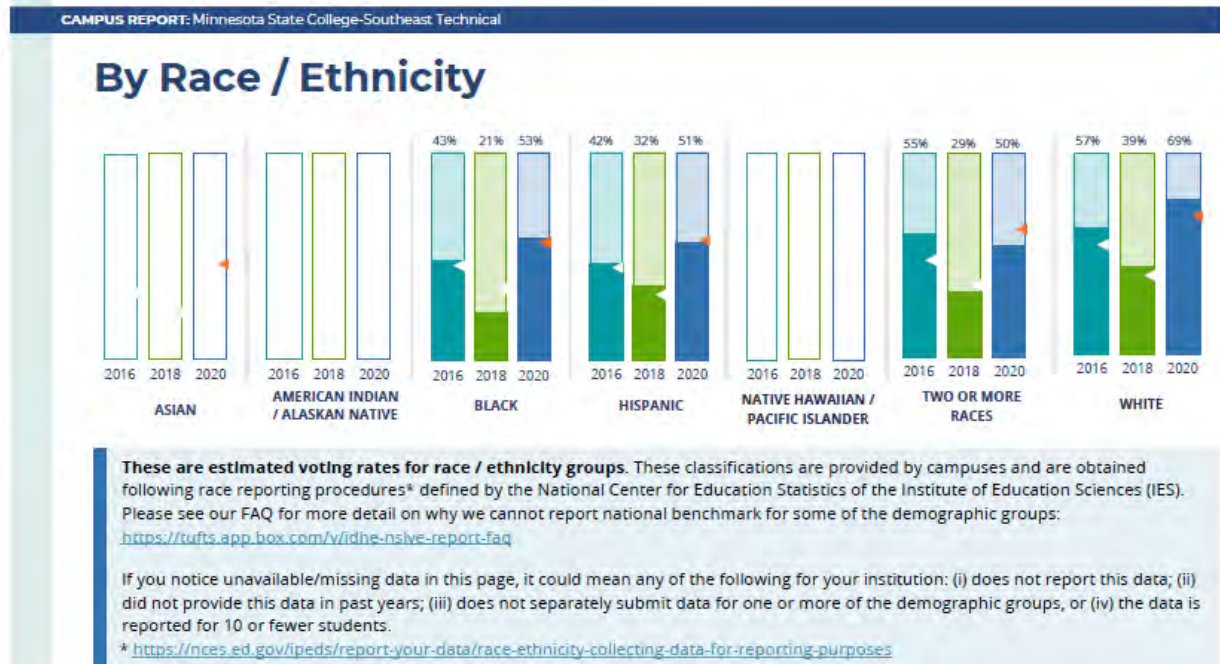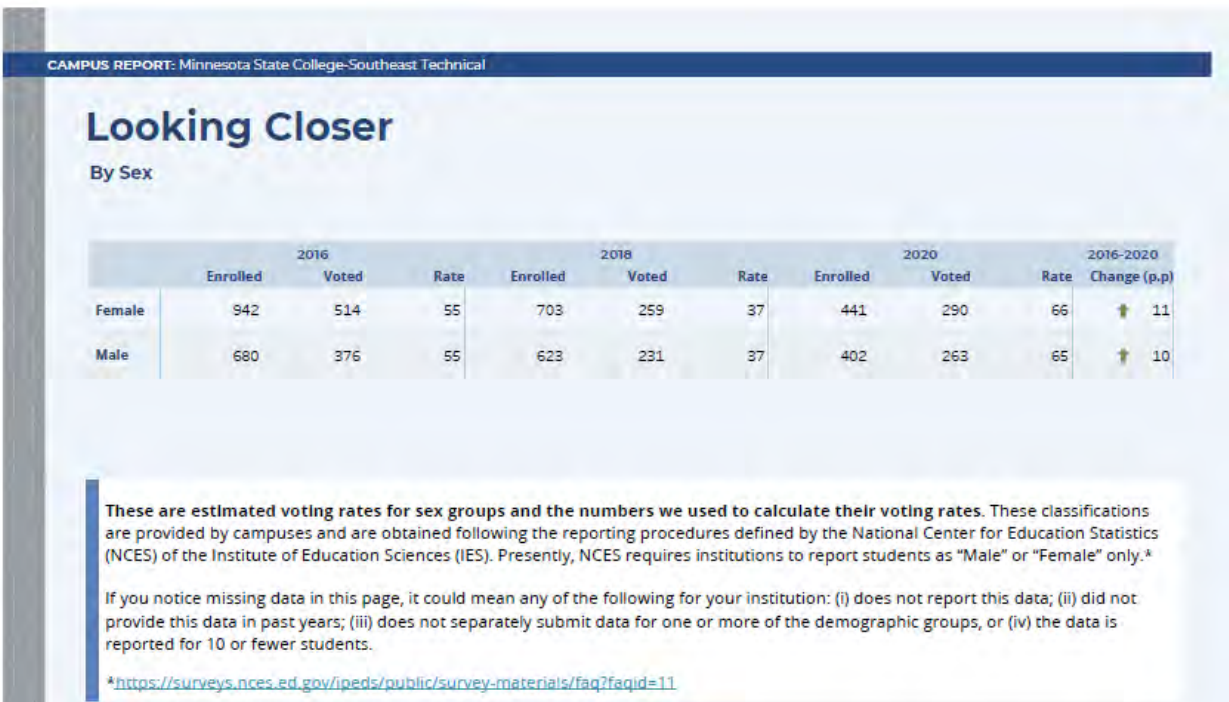
Figure 3. Campus voting rate by race/ethnicity

CAMPUS REPORT: Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical

By Race / Ethnicity

	ASIAN	AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKAN NATIVE	BLACK	HISPANIC	NATIVE HAWAIIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER	TWO OR MORE RACES	WHITE
2016			43%	42%		55%	57%
2018			21%	32%		29%	39%
2020			53%	51%		50%	69%

These are estimated voting rates for race / ethnicity groups. These classifications are provided by campuses and are obtained following race reporting procedures* defined by the National Center for Education Statistics of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). Please see our FAQ for more detail on why we cannot report national benchmark for some of the demographic groups: https://tufts.app.box.com/v/idhe-nslve-report-faq

If you notice unavailable/missing data in this page, it could mean any of the following for your institution: (i) does not report this data; (ii) did not provide this data in past years; (iii) does not separately submit data for one or more of the demographic groups, or (iv) the data is reported for 10 or fewer students.
* https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/report-your-data/race-ethnicity-collecting-data-for-reporting-purposes

Figure 4. Campus voting rate by age group

CAMPUS REPORT: Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical

By Age Group

	2016	2018	2020
18-21	53%	37%	68%
22-24	47%	27%	61%
25-29	52%	32%	60%
30-39	54%	40%	61%
40-49	70%	45%	74%
50+	73%	70%	82%

Voting is habit-forming and young voters will usually continue as voters in subsequent elections. Also, young voters are more likely to be contacted by campaigns and are visible, and therefore significant, to elected officials. While in the past, we have seen voting rates increase across age groups, in recent cycles, the most significant increases have been among first-time and the youngest voters. Some colleges serve primarily young students, traditionally viewed as students in the 18-21 or 22-24 categories here. Others have much higher numbers of enrolled older undergraduate or graduate students.

Figure 5. Campus voting rate by sex

Southeast participates in the following initiatives to support the development and implementation of our nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts on campus:

- ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
- National Voter Registration Day Community Partner
- Ask Every Student
- Students Learn Students Vote (SLSV)
- TurboVote access for students to find their voter registration information
- League of Women Voters events/trainings on how to register voters, how to vote in MN, and voter forums with local candidates
- Student Senate voter registration tabling events

The Minnesota Legislature passed legislation in 2023 to ensure additional accountability measures be in place at Minnesota colleges and universities. These requirements include:

- Designation of a campus vote coordinator
- Provide voter registration forms to students each semester including during orientations (in-person and online)
- Communicating with students who resident in MN, ND, SD, IA or WI as early as possible in the fall semester the instructions on how students can register to vote, residency requirements, absentee voting, etc.
- Consultation with Student Senate on voter registration and voter engagement plans
- Accessible webpage on the college website with voter and election information
- Submission of annual campus voter engagement report/plan
- Written agreement with county election officials/auditor to provide student lists for those who reside in the cities of each campus.

In addition to these requirements for colleges and universities, Minnesota has the following election laws:

- **Voter Registration:** Open to U.S. citizens age 18 or older on Election Day (16- and 17-year-olds can pre-register), must be a resident of Minnesota for 20 days, not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction, and not under a court order that revokes the right to vote. Pre-registration must be complete 21 day prior to the election. Automatic voter registration allows eligible Minnesotans to register to vote or update voter registration when they apply for or renew their MN driver's license, instruction permit or State ID card.
- **Voter ID:** If registration is current and active, voters do not need to bring an ID to vote. If voters need to register, update their registration, or have not voted in 4+ years, they will need to show proof of residence before they vote.
- **Vote by Mail/Absentee Ballots:** Registered voters can request an absentee ballot and return then by election day via mail or in person. Smaller precincts with 400 or fewer voters by vote by mail in lieu of an election polling place.

Important Minnesota 2024 Election Dates & Deadlines

- June 28 – August 12: Vote by mail or in person for Primary Elections
- By July 23: Register in advance for Primary Election Day
- August 13: Primary Election Day
- September 17: National Voter Registration Day (civic holiday)
- Sept. 20 – Nov. 4: Vote by mail or in person for General Elections
- Oct. 7-11: National Voter Education Week (civic holiday)
- By Oct. 15: Register in advance for General Elections
- Oct. 29: Vote Early Day (civic holiday)
- Nov. 4: Election Hero Day (civic holiday)
- Nov. 5: General Elections

Goals:

Southeast's nonpartisan democratic engagement goals are:

Short Term Goals (2024): Since this is our first edition of our Action Plan, our main focus this year will be to increase access to educational and voting materials, establish the plan, and build the coalition. We will plan to host events on Civic Holidays and coordinate closely with the Student Senates to facilitate these events. We will also hopefully have a chance to meet as a coalition.

Long Term Goals (2-4 years in the future): With a more comprehensive understanding of the coalition's capacity, the work will have continuity and an established action plan with outlined responsibilities. For future election cycles, it is our goal to strengthen our relationships and networks with local community and national organizations. Local election officials and those who have knowledge of related topics would be an invaluable resource for Southeast, as they can provide insight and possibly present in a workshop or panel session for staff and students. Each year will give us a better understanding of the landscape and needs of our students, so taking the time to assess and analyze data we collect will allow us to better meet those needs.

- **Voter Turnout:** Increase student voter turnout rate from 65.4% in 2020 to 75% in 2024 and 80% in 2026. As we had an increase of 10.6 % from 2016, we think a goal of 10% this year is reasonable although we will reassess each election year as that may not be realistic each cycle.
- **Voter Registration:** Increase voter registration rate from 77.8% in 2020 to 85% in 2024, maintaining a steady increase of 11% from 2016. We will reassess this goal as this increase is not realistic every cycle.
- **Participation Gaps:** Address participation gaps in NSLVE data and aim to work with student leaders to determine how to impact change in those groups who had lower turnout rates.
- **Programmatic Goals:**
  - Grow our coalition to include more voices and representation from around the college and communities.
  - Integrate voter registration into more events and touchpoints.
  - Create and utilize a student ambassador program to share voting resources and information.
  - Network and develop relationships with local election officials in both communities.
  - Have our college president sign the [ALL IN Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation](#) by December 2024.
- **Metrics & Evaluation:**
  - Track attendance at events and registrations collected.
  - Establish who will collect and analyze the data.

Strategy:

Southeast will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.
- Utilization of Civic Holidays such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day, and Election Hero Day.
- Work side-by-side with both campus Student Senate leaders on tabling and civic holiday events. Review the NSLVE data and action plan with the Senates and any other interested constituents at the college.
- Voter registration information and tabling during College Kick-off Days, Welcome Week, and other campus events.
- Partner with the local League of Women Voter chapters to assist with voter registration efforts, training opportunities, How to Vote in MN educational sessions, and local candidate forums.
- Partner and utilize any voter engagement efforts sponsored by LeadMN.
- If approved, offer information for faculty to share with students on D2L, our online learning management system.
- Create various marketing tools to promote voter registration and voting information (i.e., posters, digital signage, etc.)
- Investigate creating a work study position to assist with voter engagement efforts

The following strategies are required by MN State Board Policy 2.3.1.1—Student Voter Registration:
- Transmit a message of referral to a centralized voter registration website or platform that provides voter registration forms. Each campus shall identify one person to be the

"Campus Vote Coordinator" to ensure compliance with this procedure. The Coordinator's contact information must be posted on the institution's website.

- Consult with their campus student association to determine the most effective means of distributing voter registration forms, supporting election day registration of students, and how to promote "get out the vote" activities.
- Provide students attending on-campus orientation with a physical voter registration form or access to the online form.
- Provide students attending on online orientation with a link to the Minnesota Secretary of State's website or other centralized voter registration website or platform that provides voter registration forms.
- Communicate with students who reside in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, or Wisconsin as early as possible in the fall semester the instructions for how students may register to vote, making information available regarding State registration deadlines, residency requirements, and absentee voting, as applicable.
- Communicate a reminder after the voter registration deadline has passed on how they can register to vote on Election Day.
- Ensure that all physical Minnesota voter registration forms received from students at the campus are submitted in a timely manner to the Minnesota Secretary of State or county elections office.

The following strategies are required by the State of Minnesota Legislature as of 2023:
- Require postsecondary education institutions to enter into an agreement with their county to share residential housing lists at least 60 days prior to an election. This list also includes all students who live within the city or cities where the campus is situated.
  - An updated list must also be sent to the county 20 days in advance of the election.
- Require postsecondary education institutions to provide voter registration information and resources to students at least twice a year in fall and spring. In state election years, this information must be provided 15 days prior to the preregistration deadline for the state general election.
- Require postsecondary education institutions to designate a staff person as a campus vote coordinator, create a voter engagement plan, and maintain a webpage providing voting information for students.
- Require postsecondary education institutions submit a report by November 30 of each year to the Office of the Secretary of State on their implementation of these statutory provisions. This shall include the voter engagement plan and when and how voter registration forms were distributed to students. The report may also include information about methods the institution identified that were effective in increasing student registrations.

Evaluation:

We seek to evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts to increase voter turnout and civic engagement on campus. Assessment and evaluation may live in the Student Life Program of the Student Success Division with assistance from the Institutional Effectiveness Committee for further analysis of our results and data collected.

NSLVE Data: Southeast has authorized the National Student of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) through 2033, and we will use our campus voting data to help with the

evaluation of our action plan and nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts. As 2024 is the first year of our action plan, we will look to the results of the next NSLVE report to assess our goals and outcomes of voter registration, turnout, and engagement.

Metrics Beyond NSLVE Data:
We will look to collect data via methods such as:
- Attendance at events
- Number of pledges to vote
- Voter registrations collected at events

Data Collection: Overall, we have been looking to increase the assessment of our programs, events and activities. The Student Life Program and Student Senates will be collecting a large part of the data as the organizers and staff of the events hosted on campus.

Ideas for data collection include: a counting clicker, sign-in sheet, pledge card collections, voter registration forms. We would likely store this data in our own spreadsheets hosted on a Microsoft Teams site. This data would be collected and organized to inform and contribute to future action plans and future coalitions.

Southeast does not currently participate in additional evaluations like CSSE or the Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement.

Reporting:

This action plan will be shared internally and externally. The campus action plan and NSLVE reposts will be shared on and made available to administration and all students on the Voting Information and Resources page on the Minnesota State College Southeast website under Student Life (website currently under revision). Information will also be passed along to the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office to satisfy state statute requirements.

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/minnesota-state-college-southeast/ .

Minnesota State College Southeast has given ALL IN permission to publish our past NSLVE reports, which can also be found on our campus page above.