



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

News10: New state law requires school boards to have student member

JAMIE DELINE September 6, 2024

ALBANY, N.Y. (NEWS10)—Starting next year, New York State school boards will be required to have a student member, however their role will have some limitations.

“It’s an opportunity to learn on how to participate on a board, how to be in a democracy—people with different ideas and you vote. Even though they don’t vote, they have a voice,” explained Senator Shelley Mayer, Chair of the Senate Education Committee.

Senator Shelley Mayer said this is critical for civic participation and will be beneficial not only to students, but adults.

“They have the opportunity to hear the real experiences of students that are impacted by the decisions they make.

She explained how a student can be chosen.

“It could be the president of the student body, someone picked by the superintendent,” said Mayer. “It could be any one of a number of sort of leadership people in the school community. So it is a position of authority and respect.”

Before this bill was signed into law, students were allowed to be on school boards, it just wasn't mandatory. Back in March, The New York State School Boards Association conducted a poll with district clerks. The association found about a third of districts and BOCES have non-voting student board members.

The Capital Region's Queensbury School District is now one of them.

"We ended up agreeing that our student senate president is elected by the students and we thought that would be a great place to start," explained Kyle Gannon, Superintendent of the Queensbury School District. "So that's what we did. We also talked about because students are so busy, we know they are involved in so many things—which we encourage that here, so we ended up allowing the Vice President as well to be a part of our board of education. So that either way, we could make sure we always have student voice at the table for each board of education meeting."

The Queensbury students will take part in their first board meeting on Monday.

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