



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

MSN: New Law Will Put A Student On Every School Board In NY

JOE LOMBARDI September 17, 2024

There will soon be a student on every school board in New York.

A new law requiring all state boards of education to have at least one student member will take effect on July 1, 2025.

The students will attend public meetings, but not executive sessions, and won't be allowed to vote.

Gov. Kathy Hochul signed the bill on Thursday, Sept. 5.

It will also remove the current law requirement that a student member seat be authorized by referendum of the voters of the district.

The bill would also remove the requirement that a student member be a senior at the school and instead require only that the student member have attended the high school for at least one year before selection to the board.

The bill was proposed by State Sen. Shelley Mayer of Westchester.

"School boards shape the educational experiences of students, but they do not always include the voices of the students they serve," Mayer said. "This legislation will give students new opportunities to engage with their school community and build habits of civic

engagement that will serve them throughout their lives.

"Ex-officio board members will learn the power of their own voices, and the importance of listening to and engaging respectfully with those who may have a different point of view, while bringing valuable and unique perspective to board decision making."

New York State United Teachers President Melinda Person also gave a thumbs up to the new measure.

"Educators know our students have valuable insight that should be included as we strive to best support our public schools," Person said. "Bringing them into the school board process will show students their voices matter, and it will show officials and district leaders how their actions are perceived by our kids.

"Most importantly, involving students in local governance processes now will empower them with the skills and habits to strengthen their communities through civic engagement in the future."

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