



Suggestions for Implementing N.J. Stat. Ann. § 18A:36-27 “The High School Voter Registration Law”

“The board of education of each school district . . . shall provide a voter registration form and material describing the role of a citizen and the importance of voting to each eligible high school pupil This material shall be nonpartisan”

Recommendations from the Office of the Public Advocate:

- ❖ Conduct a voter registration drive in conjunction with at least one class period which emphasizes the importance of voting every year.
- ❖ Choose required senior classes for distributing voter registration information or alternatively, a homeroom-type setting.
- ❖ Consider conducting the registration drive and instruction in May or early June, to reach the greatest number of students. An additional drive conducted in September or October is also encouraged to take advantage of increased public interest in elections.
- ❖ Obtain voter registration forms on the Division of Elections’ website or from county officials in order to reduce schools’ reproduction costs.
- ❖ Encourage the teaching of basic information about elections. Suggested topics include: *different political offices; when elections are scheduled; what a sample ballot looks like; a voting machine’s basic layout; municipality polling place maps so students know where to vote; election officials’ contact information so students can learn directly from officials; and how prospective college attendees can cast an absentee ballot or re-register to vote at their college.*
- ❖ Distribute information and registration forms in a classroom setting, which is a more effective venue for instructing pupils and collecting voter registration forms than a mass assembly.
- ❖ Appoint a staff member associated with social studies or civic education, who can oversee the voter registration process in each school or school district. Registration forms can be collected by the registration drive organizer, and delivered to the County Board of Elections. Organizers should be aware of the registration deadline & submit forms in a timely manner.
- ❖ Keep in mind during registration and education efforts that some students are not U.S. citizens and their citizenship status may not be known to their fellow students. In this case, consider distributing registration forms and instructing noncitizen students to leave the forms blank. Then, collect all forms at once, filtering out the blank forms before delivering them to the Board of Elections.
- ❖ Remember that a student has the right to choose whether he or she wants to register to vote. Schools cannot reward students who choose to register, or punish/burden students who choose not to register. N.J. STAT. ANN. § 19:34-1.1(a)(1), -25(g).

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