

ASSEMBLY, No. 5665

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 19, 2026

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman MAUREEN ROWAN

District 2 (Atlantic)

SYNOPSIS

Provides for certain additional responsibilities of student representative on board of education; requires establishment of Student Advisory Council by board of education.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning student representation on boards of education
2 and supplementing P.L.2021, c.446 (C.18A:12-1.3 et al.).
3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*
6

7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. Pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2021, c.446 (C.18A:12-1.3), each
9 board of education of a school district that includes grades nine
10 through 12 is required to include at least one nonvoting student
11 representative selected by the student body.

12 b. The duties of such student representative currently include
13 representing all public high school students within the district and
14 presenting student proposals and concerns to the board for its
15 consideration.

16 c. While the existing statute provides a valuable mechanism for
17 student input, it does not require formal consideration of student
18 proposals, written responses by the board, assessment of student
19 impacts of proposed policies, structured advisory mechanisms, or
20 documentation of the student representative's perspective on the
21 public record.

22 d. It is in the public interest to strengthen opportunities for
23 meaningful student participation in decisions that directly affect
24 students, while preserving the board of education's exclusive
25 authority and responsibility for final decisions.
26 The purpose of this act is to establish clear, accountable procedures
27 that give high school students a meaningful role in matters affecting
28 them, without altering the nonvoting status of the student
29 representative or the final decision-making authority of the board of
30 education.
31

32 2. a. The student representative serving on a board of education
33 pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2021, c.446 (C.18A:12-1.3) shall have
34 the right to submit to the board not more than one formal written
35 student proposal in any calendar month.

36 b. A student proposal may address matters including, but not
37 limited to: student activities; school climate and culture;
38 transportation; cafeteria and food service policies; homework and
39 academic workload policies; mental health resources and supports;
40 technology and digital device policies; and student dress codes.

41 c. Upon receipt of a properly submitted student proposal, the
42 board shall place the proposal on the agenda of a public meeting of
43 the board to be held within 30 days of receipt, or at the next
44 regularly scheduled public meeting if that meeting occurs later than
45 30 days after receipt. The student representative shall be afforded a
46 reasonable opportunity to present the proposal at that meeting.

1 3. a. Within 60 days after the student representative presents a
2 formal student proposal at a public meeting of a board of education
3 pursuant to subsection c. of section 2 of this act, the board shall
4 issue a written public response.

5 b. The response shall state one of the following board actions:

6 (1) approval in the event that the board agrees to implement the
7 proposal, in whole or in part, including the identification of any
8 implementing steps or timelines;

9 (2) referral in the event that the board refers the proposal to a
10 committee of the board, the superintendent, or appropriate school
11 administrator for further study and recommendation, with a
12 specified timeframe for reconsideration of the proposal; or

13 (3) rejection in the event that the board declines to implement the
14 proposal, including a written explanation of the reasons for
15 rejection.

16 c. The written response shall be made part of the public record
17 and shall be posted on the district's website in the same manner as
18 board meeting minutes or agendas.

19
20 4. a. Prior to voting on any proposed policy, regulation, or action
21 that the board determines will have a primary and direct effect on
22 high school students, the board shall prepare and consider a Student
23 Impact Statement.

24 b. The Student Impact Statement shall describe, to the extent
25 reasonably practicable, the anticipated effects of the proposed
26 action on students, which may include effects on transportation,
27 extracurricular activities and athletics, student sleep and well-being,
28 academic workload, access to resources, equity considerations, and
29 any other relevant student-centered factors.

30 c. The student representative serving on a board of education
31 pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2021, c.446 (C.18A:12-1.3) may submit
32 a separate written statement providing the student perspective on
33 the proposed action. Both the board's Student Impact Statement and
34 any statement submitted by the student representative shall be made
35 part of the public record prior to the board's vote.

36
37 5. a. Each board of education of a school district that includes
38 grades nine through 12 shall establish a Student Advisory Council.

39 b. The Student Advisory Council shall consist of:

40 (1) two students from each high school in the district, selected in
41 a manner determined by the superintendent in consultation with the
42 student body, with reasonable efforts to include at least one student
43 from each of the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes
44 when practicable;

45 (2) the district's student representative to the board of education
46 pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2021, c.446 (C.18A:12-1.3); and

47 (3) representatives from student government organizations, as
48 appropriate.

1 c. The Student Advisory Council shall meet at least once every
2 two months during the school year. Its functions shall include
3 discussing proposed board policies that may affect students,
4 collecting and synthesizing student concerns, voting on
5 recommendations, and transmitting formal recommendations to the
6 board of education and the student representative.

7 d. The board shall establish reasonable procedures for the
8 operation of the Student Advisory Council, consistent with this
9 section.

10
11 6. a. On any matter that the board determines will have a primary
12 and direct effect on high school students, the student representative
13 shall be entitled to submit a written recommendation to the board
14 prior to a final vote being taken by the board.

15 b. The written recommendation shall not be counted as a vote
16 and shall not be applied toward any required majority or quorum of
17 the board.

18 c. The written recommendation of the student representative
19 shall be recorded in the official minutes of the board meeting and
20 shall become part of the public record. The minutes shall clearly
21 indicate the board's final decision and the student representative's
22 written recommendation separately.

23
24 7. Nothing in this act shall be construed to:

25 a. confer voting rights upon the student representative serving on
26 a board of education pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2021, c.446
27 (C.18A:12-1.3);

28 b. diminish or transfer any authority, power, or responsibility
29 vested in the board of education under Title 18A of the New Jersey
30 Statutes or any other law;

31 c. require the disclosure of confidential information or permit the
32 student representative to participate in discussions from which the
33 student representative is excluded pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2021,
34 c.446 (C.18A:12-1.3); or

35 d. apply to boards of trustees of charter schools or any nonvoting
36 student representative serving on a board of trustees of a charter
37 school pursuant to section 2 of P.L.2021, c.446 (C.18A:36A-11.3).

38
39 8. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply in
40 the first full school year following the date of enactment.

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42
43 STATEMENT

44
45 This bill gives the student representative serving on a board of
46 education the right to submit to the board not more than one formal
47 written student proposal in any calendar month. Upon receipt of a
48 properly submitted student proposal, the board will place the

1 proposal on the agenda of a public meeting of the board to be held
2 within 30 days of receipt, or at the next regularly scheduled public
3 meeting if that meeting occurs later than 30 days after receipt. The
4 student representative will be afforded a reasonable opportunity to
5 present the proposal at that meeting.

6 The bill further requires that, within 60 days after the student
7 representative presents a formal student proposal at a public
8 meeting of a board, the board will issue a written public response
9 indicating approval, referral, or rejection of the proposal.

10 The bill provides that, prior to voting on any proposed policy,
11 regulation, or action that the board determines will have a primary
12 and direct effect on high school students, the board will prepare and
13 consider a Student Impact Statement. The Student Impact
14 Statement will describe, to the extent reasonably practicable, the
15 anticipated effects of the proposed action on students. Additionally,
16 the bill provides that the student representative serving on a board
17 may submit a separate written statement providing the student
18 perspective on the proposed action. Both the board's Student Impact
19 Statement and any statement submitted by the student representative
20 will be made part of the public record prior to the board's vote.

21 The bill directs each board of education of a school district that
22 includes grades nine through 12 to establish a Student Advisory
23 Council. The bill details the council's membership and duties.

24 The bill provides that on any matter that the board determines
25 will have a primary and direct effect on high school students, the
26 student representative will be entitled to submit a written
27 recommendation to the board prior to a final vote being taken by the
28 board. The written recommendation will not be counted as a vote
29 and will not be applied toward any required majority or quorum of
30 the board. The written recommendation of the student
31 representative will be recorded in the official minutes of the board
32 meeting and will become part of the public record.

33 The bill clarifies that nothing in its provisions are to be construed
34 to:

- 35 • confer voting rights upon the student representative serving
36 on a board of education;
- 37 • diminish or transfer any authority, power, or responsibility
38 vested in the board of education under the New Jersey
39 school laws;
- 40 • require the disclosure of confidential information or permit
41 the student representative to participate in discussions from
42 which the student representative is excluded; or
- 43 • apply to boards of trustees of charter schools or any
44 nonvoting student representative serving on a board of
45 trustees of a charter school pursuant to current law.