



NEW YORK  
CITY BAR

**COVER NOTE**  
**NEW YORK STATE HIGH SCHOOL**  
**VOTER REGISTRATION GUIDANCE**

**April 12, 2024**

New York State Election Law [§5-507](#) requires high schools and boards of education throughout the State to adopt policies and procedures by July 1, 2024, to promote voter registration by providing students with voter registration and preregistration access, information and assistance during the school year.

In the three documents that follow, the New York City Bar Association, Civic Education Task Force:

1. Answers questions high schools and school boards may have about this law and offers guidance on building and implementing a voter registration program that complies with the law by promoting non-partisan voter registration and preregistration.
2. Provides a Model Voter Registration Policy designed in compliance with the New York Election Law. The policy affords schools flexibility in establishing voter registration procedures and programs such as the Model High School Voter Registration Program included in these materials.
3. Provides a Model High School Voter Registration Program that high schools and boards of education may wish to consider implementing, customizing to their own local circumstances, or otherwise using as a starting point, tool, or guide in framing their own program.

**Contact**

Peter Janovsky, Task Force on Civic Education, Voter Registration Subcommittee Chair | [pjanovsky@mac.com](mailto:pjanovsky@mac.com)

**About the Association**

*The mission of the New York City Bar Association, which was founded in 1870 and has 23,000 members, is to equip and mobilize a diverse legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest in our community, our nation, and throughout the world.*



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**MODEL VOTER REGISTRATION POLICY  
IN ACCORDANCE WITH NY STATE ELECTION LAW §5-507**

Recognizing the importance of voting and civic engagement [*Name of School or District*] supports and encourages student voter registration and pre-registration during the school year. Under New York Election Law, a 16 or 17 year-old who preregisters to vote will automatically be registered to vote upon reaching 18. Students 18 years and over who are qualified, can register to vote.

[*Name of School or District*] promotes student voter registration and preregistration through a program designed to:

- a) Support collaboration with county boards of elections to conduct voter registration and preregistration for students 16 and over;
- b) Provide access to online and paper voter registration and preregistration applications and materials;<sup>1</sup>
- c) Provide assistance to students in completing voter registration and preregistration applications;
- d) Provide students with information about New York State and local requirements for voter registration and preregistration;
- e) Encourage voter registration and preregistration drives at school events that take place prior to voter registration deadlines for federal, state and local elections; and
- f) Inform students of all voting methods, including early voting, voting by mail and election day voting and suggest that students “make a plan to vote.”

The completion and submission of voter registration or pre-registration forms will not be a course requirement or graded assignment for [*Name of School or District*] students.

*Note that this policy is designed for New York high schools and districts to allow compliance with the New York Election Law and to afford significant flexibility in developing and implementing programs and procedures to encourage civic engagement through voter registration and preregistration activities.*

**Contact**

Peter Janovsky, Task Force on Civic Education, Voter Registration Subcommittee Chair | [pjanovsky@mac.com](mailto:pjanovsky@mac.com)

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<sup>1</sup> Note that New York City public schools may provide students with access only to the [NYC Board of Elections Website](#) or paper applications. Other schools also may restrict or prohibit providing access to third party online or app-based voter registration and preregistration resources. Schools should consult with their district legal department or other legal counsel before incorporating this item in their voter registration policy.

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**HIGH SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS<sup>1</sup>**

**April 12, 2024**

**Q. Are New York State schools required to have a voter registration program for students in 2024?**

**A. Yes.** This year, New York Election Law Section 5-507(2) will require all local boards of education, boards of cooperative educational services, charter schools and non-public schools to have policies and procedures to promote student voter registration and preregistration.

**Q. When are schools required to put a program in place?**

**A.** The law's effective date is July 1, 2024; however, schools may wish to adopt a voter registration policy before that date.

**Q. Is voter registration in schools based on student ages?**

**A. Yes.** The law applies to students age 16, 17 and 18 or older.

- Students 16 and 17 may pre-register under New York Law, which means that they will be automatically registered to vote at 18 without further action.
- Students 18 years of age and older may register to vote.
- Voter registration is only available to U.S. citizens.
- Although not eligible to register, non-citizens have the opportunity to learn about the process as part of their civic education.

**Q. What does the New York Election Law require?**

**A.** New York Election Law requires a school's voter registration policy to promote student voter registration and include procedures to:

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by the New York City Bar Association, Civic Education Task Force.

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- Provide access to voter registration and preregistration applications during the school year;
- Provide assistance to students with filing voter registration and preregistration applications; and
- Inform students of the state requirements for voter registration and preregistration

**Q. What should our school do to prepare?**

**A.** To start, schools should prepare a voter registration program that complies with the law and best suits their particular circumstances. The New York City Bar Association has prepared a model *High School Voter Registration Program* which a school may adopt as is, or with changes suited to the school’s particular structure and rules. **Or**, a school may create a customized voter registration program using the guidance in these FAQs.

**Q. What are important elements of a successful High School Voter Registration Program?**

**A. Voter registration programs should:**

- Be run by an interested teacher or administrator appointed as the voter registration program coordinator and accountable to the principal.
- Provide opportunities for students, faculty, parents, and administrators to be involved in running voter registration drives and, where appropriate, give students active roles.
- Include adequate funding.
- Include a list of resources for voter registration and preregistration training and information (including resources for students who are on their way to becoming eligible to vote). Suggested resources include:

**Government**

- [Vote.Gov: Register to Vote in New York](#)
- [New York State Board of Elections: Voter Registration \(including online registration\)](#)
- [New York City Board of Elections: Voter Registration Guide](#)
- [Attorney General Voter Information Page](#)
- [VOTE: An Instructional Guide to Elections 2024](#)

**Non-Partisan Organizations**

- [Fair Elections: New York Guide to Voter Registration Drives](#)
- [League of Women Voters, NYC Voter Registration Training Guide](#)
- [Rock the Vote](#)
- [The Civics Center](#)
- [Vote.org: New York: Election Tools, Deadlines, Dates, Rules, and Links](#)
- [When we all vote](#)
- [Turnup.us](#)

- Schedule voter registration drives during the school year at least two weeks prior to registration deadlines [set forth here](#), using state, city or locally designated Voter Registration Days or Weeks, or in conjunction with school events such as graduation ceremonies.
- Be integrated into school civic engagement programs including school assemblies and social studies, civics or government classes.
- Be designed in a way that shows respect and consideration for students who are not eligible to vote based on citizenship requirements.
- Inform students of all voting methods, including early voting, voting by mail and election day voting and suggest that students “make a plan to vote.”
- Notify students about voter registration drives through the school’s website or social media available to all students, school announcements, assemblies, home rooms, civic/social studies classes or at information tables set up in school.
- Provide students with access to online and paper voter registration and preregistration applications and help them file the applications.<sup>2</sup>
- Be nonpartisan, noncommercial and voluntary and respectful of differences.

**Q. What cannot legally be part of a Voter Registration Program?**

**A. Voter registration programs may not:**

- Require any student to register or pre-register to vote in New York.
- Make voter registration or preregistration, or the completion of any related forms, a course requirement or graded assignment.

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**Contact**

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<sup>2</sup> Note that New York City public schools may provide students with access only to the [NYC Board of Elections Website](#) or paper applications. Other schools also may restrict or prohibit providing access to third party online or app-based voter registration and preregistration resources. Schools should consult with their district legal department or other legal counsel before incorporating this item in their voter registration policy.



## HIGH SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION PROGRAM

*This document provides New York high schools and school boards with a model high school voter registration program that they may wish to consider implementing, customizing to their own local circumstances or otherwise using as a starting point, tool, or guide in framing their own program.*

**Our School will provide students with voter registration and preregistration access, assistance and information through the Voter Registration Program described below.**

- **Access** - Provide students age 16 and older with access to New York voter registration and preregistration applications.
- **Assistance** - Assist students to file voter registration applications with the New York State Board of Elections.
- **Information** - Inform students of New York State and local requirements for voter registration and preregistration.

### VOTER REGISTRATION PROGRAM

1. **WHAT** is the purpose of our Voter Registration Program?

- Inform students of the opportunities in New York to register and preregister to vote;
- Inform students of New York State and local voter registration requirements, including age, residency and citizenship requirements;
- Assist students to complete and file online or paper New York voter registration forms;<sup>1</sup>
- Inform students of the ways to vote in New York including, early voting, voting by mail and election day voting, and encourage students to “make a plan to vote”; and
- Identify other ways to promote, enable and maximize student voter registration and encourage civic engagement for students who are not eligible to register or preregister to vote.

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2. **WHO** runs our School's Voter Registration Program?

The Voter Registration Program is run by our Voter Registration Coordinator with the assistance of student, teacher and parent volunteers who make up our Registration Committee.

- *[Optional, as needed]* Funding for the Registration Committee will come from student activities budgets or other school funds approved by *[insert title of appropriate school official]*.
- Our Voter Registration Coordinator is an interested faculty member or school administrator appointed by our school *[insert title of appropriate school official]* at the beginning of the school year.
- Whenever possible, students will play an active role in running the Registration Committee, subject to the supervision and guidance of the Voter Registration Coordinator.

Registration Committee Responsibilities

- The Registration Committee will organize, schedule, and carry out school voter registration efforts.
- Each year, the Registration Committee will report to the *[insert title of appropriate school official]* on the schools' voter registration activities including information about voter registration drives and the number of students who registered and preregistered to vote during the school year.
- Our School may share its annual registration program report with other New York schools and boards of education and collaborate with other schools to implement successful strategies in our voter registration activities.

3. **HOW** will our Registration Committee access resources and guidance for our Voter Registration Program?

The Registration Committee will use voter registration training resources prepared by New York state, city and local governments, non-profit election groups and other reliable resources to create and update the Voter Registration Program (including resources for students who are on their way to becoming eligible to vote). Publicly available training and information resources include:

**Government**

- [Vote.Gov: Register to Vote in New York](#)
- [New York State Board of Elections: Voter Registration \(including online registration\)](#)
- [New York City Board of Elections: Voter Registration Guide](#)
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- [The Civics Center](#)

- [Vote.org: New York: Election Tools, Deadlines, Dates, Rules, and Links](#)
- [When we all vote](#)
- [Turnup.us](#)

The Registration Committee may partner with school boards, state boards of election, and other schools in developing and running the school's Voter Registration Program.

4. **WHEN** will voter registration drives and education programs happen?

The Registration Committee will schedule voter registration drives at least two weeks prior to voter registration deadlines for local, state and national elections. Voter registration deadlines for local, state and federal elections are [set forth here](#). Voter registration drives and registration information programs will be held on:

- Dates designated as “Voter Registration Day” or “Voter Registration Week” by New York State or any city or county within the state; or
- Dates that take advantage of student attendance at school activities such as graduation-related activities, sports events, or scheduled school-wide assemblies.

All students age 16 and older will be notified in advance of voter registration education programs and drives via: email, text and other social media; announcements in classes; assemblies; posters; graphics; and stickers. Announcements and registration programs will be designed to reach all eligible students as well as students who are on their way to becoming eligible to vote.

5. **WHERE** will voter registration drives and education programs take place?

- Social studies, government, or civics classes;
- Homeroom classes or advisory periods;
- Tables or registration opportunities in cafeterias and/or other public location; or
- Voter registration assemblies

Voter registration drives will be designed and implemented in a way that shows respect and consideration for students who are not eligible to vote based on citizenship requirements.

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