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**TO:** BOCES District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Public Schools  
Charter School Leaders  
Non-public School Administrators

**FROM:** Dr. Santosha Oliver, Assistant Commissioner *Santosha Oliver*

**SUBJECT:** Requirement to Adopt Policy Promoting Student Voter Registration

On September 20, 2023, Governor Kathy Hochul signed into law [an amendment to section §5-507 of the Election Law](#) to require all public school districts, boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES), charter schools, and non-public schools to adopt policies that promote student voter registration and pre-registration. This law reflects New York's commitment to fostering civic engagement by ensuring that students have the necessary resources and knowledge to participate in the democratic process before they graduate.

Effective for the 2024-2025 school year, this law requires local boards of education, BOCES, charter schools and non-public schools to adopt policies to promote student voter registration and pre-registration, including procedures for providing access to voter registration and pre-registration applications during the school year and assistance with filing such applications and informing students of the state requirements for voter registration and pre-registration.

Schools must develop and implement a voter registration plan that provides students with access to voter registration and pre-registration applications throughout the school year. They must also assist in completing and submitting these applications to ensure accessibility and effectiveness. Collaboration with county boards of elections is strongly encouraged to support voter registration drives and educational programming. Schools may also partner with election officials or civic organizations to host nonpartisan voter education sessions and promote awareness of the importance of civic participation. In compliance with Election Law §5-507(2), all schools must establish a written voter registration policy and communicate it to students, families, and staff. Implementation must begin in the 2024-2025 school year, and schools are encouraged to integrate these efforts into existing civic education initiatives to enhance their impact.

Beyond registration logistics, schools must educate students on New York State's voter registration and pre-registration requirements, including age, residency, and deadlines. This information should be incorporated into government, civics, and social studies curricula where applicable. However, while schools must provide these opportunities, student participation in voter registration activities must remain voluntary. Completion and submission of voter registration or pre-registration forms cannot be a graded assignment or a requirement for course completion.

New York State is committed to preparing students to be engaged, informed, and active citizens in our democracy. [Section §5-507 of the Election Law](#) aligns with broader civic education initiatives, such as the Seal of Civic Readiness, which encourages students to develop civic knowledge, participation, and engagement as part of their educational experience. Ensuring that all students, regardless of background, have access to voter registration resources reinforces the state's commitment to equity, civic empowerment, and the strengthening of democratic participation.

For additional guidance on voter registration, please contact the [New York State Board of Elections](#).

Resources to support schools in civic education instruction can be found on the Office of Standards and Instruction's [Civic Readiness Initiative webpage](#).

For questions regarding this memorandum or civics education, please contact the Office of Standards and Instruction at [P12StandardsInstruction@nysed.gov](mailto:P12StandardsInstruction@nysed.gov) or 518-474-5922.