

SENATE BILL 161

By Hensley

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
Chapter 2, relative to boards of education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-2-202, is amended by deleting subsection (f) and substituting instead the following:

(f)

(1) Notwithstanding § 49-2-201 or this section to the contrary, each board of education for an LEA that operates at least one (1) high school shall select one (1) junior or senior student to serve as a nonvoting student representative on the board to serve as the voice of the student body.

(2) Nonvoting student representatives must be selected according to the process established by the board pursuant to subdivision (f)(5) and must serve at least one (1) one-year term on the board. Each one-year term coincides with the school year for which the nonvoting student representative is selected.

(3)

(A) Nonvoting student representatives must attend all board meetings; provided, that the student representative shall not attend confidential, nonpublic executive sessions of the board.

(B) If a nonvoting student representative fails to attend more than (2) board meetings during the student's term on the board, then the board shall remove the student from the student's position on the board and

shall select another qualified student to serve as the nonvoting student representative for the remainder of the school year.

(4) Each nonvoting student representative must:

(A) Be a junior or senior in a high school operated by the LEA;

(B) Serve at least one (1) one-year term on the board as a nonvoting student representative, but may serve as a nonvoting student representative for an additional one-year term if the student served as the nonvoting student representative during the student's junior year. A student is not eligible to serve as a nonvoting student representative on the board if the student withdraws, transfers, or graduates from the high school at which the student was enrolled at the time of selection; and

(C) Meet any additional requirements established by the board.

(5) Each board shall adopt a policy authorizing at least one (1) junior or senior student who is enrolled at a high school operated by the respective LEA to serve as a nonvoting student representative on the board in accordance with this subsection (f). The board may establish additional eligibility requirements for students who seek to serve on the board as a nonvoting student representative.

The policy must establish the process for selecting the nonvoting student representative and must ensure students enrolled in one (1) high school operated by the LEA have the same opportunity as students enrolled at another high school operated by the LEA to serve as a nonvoting student representative.

(6) Students serve as nonvoting student members of a board without compensation but may, at the discretion of the board, be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred while engaged in board business.

SECTION 2. For the purpose of developing and adopting the required policy, this act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, this act takes effect July 1, 2025, the public welfare requiring it, and applies to the 2025-2026 school year and each school year thereafter.