

## Governor Phil Murphy

# Press Pool Coverage: Governor Murphy Visits Hoboken High School, Highlights Legislation Allowing 16 and 17-Year-Olds to Vote in Local School Board Elections

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### PRINT

The bell rang at 2:15 p.m. and Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics students started filing into the classroom at Hoboken High School. The students knew special guests were coming but didn't know who would be attending their ninth period class.

AP Government and Politics teacher Steve D'Bernado welcomed students into the room from the doorway, directing them to put their cell phone in a lock box reading "Phone HOME" and find their nametag on a desk. The teacher arranged the desks in six groups of five.

"Who's coming in?" students asked as the second bell rang signaling the start of the class.

The students opened Google Classroom on their laptops and began speaking to the students in their group.

At 2:19 Assemblymember Cleopatra Tucker (D-Essex), state Sen. Raj Mukherji (D-Hudson) and Gov. Phil Murphy walked into the classroom, drawing students' attention.

"Ladies and gentlemen we have a special guest. We have our New Jersey state Governor Phil Murphy," D'Bernado said, prompting applause from the students.

"Everybody good?" Murphy asked, before being assigned to group number five along with four

  
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students.

“I was born to be in group number five,” he said.

Tucker and Mukherji also joined groups of four students to complete the activity.

“Eyeballs up here. Here’s what you need to do,” the teacher said, giving instructions for the day’s activity.

The class recently finished the first unit of their curriculum, which included learning about natural rights, federalism and popular sovereignty. On Tuesday afternoon they completed a “multiple choice round robin challenge” on the reflections of the unit’s ideals in the country today.

The students and elected officials walked around the room in groups of four or five answering multiple choice questions posted in large paper on the classroom walls. Groups had four minutes to answer each question, which is more than the one minute and 30 seconds students have on the AP exam.

D’Bernado told students to try to get at least four out of six questions right, which is equivalent to “excelling” on the College Board scoring guide. He instructed students to answer each question silently and then share their answers with the group to collaborate and come to a consensus.

Murphy worked with a team of four students, which he called the “super team.” His group got five out of six questions correct, which D’Bernado said is equivalent to “mastery.”

After the exercise, the teacher asked students to rate how they felt about the exercise on a scale of one to five, with one being hard and five being easy. The students mostly held up four and five fingers.

“We’re not done yet. We still have a modern-day example of how these ideals of democracy still run through our system and our lives today. I would love to bring our state Governor Phil Murphy up here to talk about it,” D’Bernado said.

Murphy thanked D’Bernado, Mukherji, Tucker and the students for being at the event, giving a special shoutout to the “super team.”

“We’re here for a very specific reason – other than I just had a complete ball and I’m sure my colleagues did as well – and that is, we are espousing voting rights for 16- and 17-year-olds,” Murphy said. “Raj and Cleo are sponsoring a bill that would allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in school board elections, because those are elections that most directly impact you all as students.”

Murphy said Newark is leading the country by preparing to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in

school board elections in April.

“We, the three of us and our colleagues, would like to make that state law. Not just allowing Newark to do what they’re doing, and God bless Newark for doing it, but every community, Hoboken, and every other in the state to be able to do that, not just be able to do it, in fact to be mandated to do it,” Murphy said.

He said New Jersey would be the first state in the nation to let 16- and 17-year-olds vote in school board elections statewide if the legislation becomes law.

“It’s the first step for 16- and 17-year-olds participating into the broader participation in ultimately all of our elections,” Murphy said.

He added that he was impressed by the quality and talent of the students he met, calling the class “extraordinary.”

Hannah Gross, NJ Spotlight News

#### **VIDEO**

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/px98lz84o5v3k20b8bljj/ADEflyMzAVf1aKsgCGaOazQ?rlkey=p8258gzhw5c4l7x9cuwf7k23w&st=ysevev80&dl=0>  
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WABC 7

#### **PHOTO**

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