

The Board recognizes the right of its employees, as citizens, to engage in political activity. The Board also recognizes that school property and school time should not be used for political purposes except as provided for in policies pertaining to the use of school buildings by civic and political organizations.

Nothing in this policy should be interpreted as prohibiting employees from conducting appropriate activities which encourage students to become involved in the political processes of the party of the student's choice or as independents, nor does it prohibit the use of political figures as resource persons in the classroom.

SCHOOL TIME

School time shall be defined as the time employees are required to be on school grounds during the school day and includes:

- the specified time before school begins
- the specified time after school is dismissed
- the specified time immediately prior to and after school-sponsored events the specified time immediately prior to and after extra-curricular activities

CANDIDACY FOR POLITICAL OFFICE

An employee who intends to campaign for an elective public office shall, at the earliest possible moment, notify the school board in writing of the office which he intends to seek, together with his decision as to whether he wishes to continue his employment and under what terms and conditions. The essential element to be determined by the Board is whether the activities proposed by the employee are compatible with the time requirements for fulfilling his responsibilities to the district. The board shall not require an employee seeking public office to resign or take a leave of absence.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

All employees shall be encouraged to exercise their constitutional rights as citizens, but they shall not involve their schools in political campaigns.

Campaign literature supporting one or more candidates shall not be distributed within the schools or on school buses by pupils, teachers, or others, nor shall campaign posters be displayed on school owned property.

Customary community political activities may be expected on election days at schools when schools are used as polling places.

Employees shall not poll their pupils to determine how their parents are voting on any issue, and shall not attempt to indoctrinate pupils with personal political and social philosophy; however, employees are not prohibited from political activity after hours of official employment.

SPECIFIC PROHIBITIONS

Activities specifically prohibited during school time include, but are not limited to:

- The circulation of political posters, petitions or other campaign material; The collection or solicitation of funds in support of a candidate's campaign; The solicitation for campaign workers;
- The writing or addressing of campaign material and distribution of campaign materials on school property;
- Any activity that indicates that an employee is using his or her position to further personal views on candidates for office;
- The intimidating, harassing or coercing an employee relative to a political race or issue;
- The use of school system facilities, equipment or supplies;
- A candidate talking to school personnel during school time regarding the candidate's campaign.

VIOLATIONS

Violations of this policy shall be reported and discussed in a conference between the employee and the superintendent. In the event the political activity is associated with the person seeking the office of county superintendent of education, violations of the policy shall be reported in writing to the president of the school board.

If the superintendent finds the complaint to be factual, he shall issue a written reprimand to the employee(s) involved. This reprimand shall become a part of the employee's personnel file. Depending on the severity of the violation, the result may be non-renewal of an employee's contract or dismissal.

If the school board investigates a complaint against the superintendent of education and finds the complaint to be factual, it shall direct the school board president to issue a written reprimand to the employee(s) involved. This reprimand shall become a part of the employee's personnel file. Continuous violation of this policy may result in additional disciplinary action.]

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

School employees may participate in political activities, including the promotion of a school bond issue, as long as their participation in such activities is limited to the hours when they are not involved in their work- related duties. A school may not require employees to actively campaign for promotion of a bond issue. (Horne, 2-25-00) (#175 (2000-0085))

A school employee may participate in political efforts as long as it is not during working hours. It is within the discretion of the school board to determine the use of the school property for public meetings and gatherings. A municipality may expend public funds to inform the public regarding a school bond issue but it may not use public funds to attempt to influence the outcome. (Cole, 3-21-94) (#175) (94-0128)

CROSS REF.: Policies BA – Goals and Objectives of the School Board