

# Staff Participation in Political Activities

The School Committee recognizes that employees of the school district come from diverse political and social backgrounds and have the same fundamental civic responsibilities and privileges as other citizens. Among these are campaigning for an elective public office and holding an elective or appointive office. However, the School Committee also recognizes that schools should be a politically neutral space where students are taught how to think, not what to think, on political issues.

In connection with campaigning, an employee shall not: use school district facilities, equipment or supplies; discuss their campaign with school personnel or students during the working day; or use any time during the working day for campaigning purposes. Under no circumstances will students be pressured into campaigning for any staff member.

In addition, school district facilities are not public forums for the display or dissemination of an employee's views on political candidates or issues. While engaged in their official duties, employees shall not participate in political activities. Such activities include:

1. Campaigning for or against any candidate, political party or issue;
2. An employee's using his/her position to attempt to influence students, parents or others to vote for or against any candidate or issue;
3. Contacting students, parents or others for such purposes;
4. An employee's using his/her position to attempt to influence students, parents or others to adopt any view on a political issue.
5. Wearing apparel with political messages or displaying campaign paraphernalia while performing work; or
6. Soliciting for or collecting funds or distributing material in connection with campaigning or support of political issues.
7. Displaying political messages in classrooms or on other parts of school property through any medium, including but not limited to electronic media, stickers, posters, flyers, banners, flags, or other similar materials.

For the purposes of this policy, political issues, messages, and activities are those issues, messages, and activities which relate to the government or public affairs, including economic issues, foreign policy, social issues, or political or social ideologies over which the public is deeply divided.

This policy does not prohibit instruction and study concerning political issues when directly relevant to the curriculum and appropriate to classroom studies given the students' age, class year, and course of study, provided that such instruction is presented in an unbiased fashion.

No District employee shall be disciplined under this policy for expressing or displaying a political message unless such employee was engaged in their official duties, has been notified that such expression or display violates this policy, and has been given an opportunity to voluntarily cease the violation.

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CROSS REF.: IMB, Teaching About Controversial Issues/Controversial Speakers

IMA, Teaching Activities/Presentations