

STAFF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

RSU 2 believes in the principles of democracy and respects the rights of its employees to participate in the democratic process. These rights include discussing the social, political and economic issues of the day in public venues; participating actively in the political party of their choice; becoming a candidate for public office; and campaigning in the community for candidates and in support of political issues.

While the Board respects these rights and encourages its employees to engage in political activities as private citizens, we believe that campaigning and other political activities of individual staff members should not compromise the instructional program or disrupt the operations of our schools.

This policy provides guidance for staff participation in political activities and communicates these expectations to parents, students and the community. For the purpose of this policy the terms “staff” and “employee” include substitutes, coaches, advisors, and other stipended positions.

School employees shall not engage in partisan political activities while carrying out their work responsibilities during the school day, while performing work for the school unit outside of the school day on school premises, or while performing work for the school unit at any other location.

“Partisan political activities” include:

- A. Campaigning for or against any candidate, political party, or ballot issue;
- B. Employee use of position to attempt to influence students, parents or others to vote for or against any candidate or ballot issue;
- C. Contacting students, parents or others for such purposes;
- D. Wearing apparel with partisan messages or displaying campaign paraphernalia while performing work; or
- E. Soliciting for or collecting funds or distributing material in connection with campaigning or support of political issues.

When engaging in conversations with students outside of classes or school activities, employees should be mindful of the potential effect of their position, authority and influence when stating personal opinions about candidates and political issues.

No school employees shall use the school unit’s resources (e.g., including but not limited to school unit-owned laptops and other electronic devices, school unit networks, copiers, scanners, or mail service) to promote political candidates or parties or to encourage a vote for or against an issue.

No school unit employees shall use the school unit’s name or logo to promote their candidacy for political office, or to promote other candidates or political positions, or represent their view as those of the school unit or this Board.

Nothing in this policy shall prevent an employee from engaging in political activities on school premises when such activities are conducted in accordance with the school unit's facilities use policy.

Nothing in this policy shall preclude the discussion of political or controversial issues or current events or exposure of mature students to candidates as guest speakers provided that such is done in compliance with the Board's policy on the teaching of controversial issues (IMB).

Nothing in this policy should be construed as precluding mock elections, debates, conventions or other simulated political activities, where the activity is intended as an educational experience.

Nothing in this policy shall prevent the Board from providing information or expressing its position or views on any political issue affecting the schools or from directing or authorizing the Superintendent to use school unit resources to accomplish this purpose. The Board will not use its influence or school unit resources to promote any particular political party or to promote or discourage the election of any particular candidate.

Cross Reference: GBI – Staff Gifts and Solicitations
GCSA – Staff Computer and Internet Use
IMB – Teaching About Controversial/Sensitive Issues
KF – Community Use of School Facilities
KHC – Distribution of Non-school/Community Materials

First Reading: 11/5/20
Second Reading: 12/3/2020