

Policy Name: Classified Personnel Political Activity**Policy Code: 8.17****Date Adopted: R/A 5/21/12**

The individual and personal rights and freedoms of district employees are no less than other citizens who are expected to assume the full responsibilities of citizens living in a democracy. These rights include voting or refraining from voting; discussing the social, political, and economic issues of the day in public meetings; participating actively in the political party of their choice by attending party functions, contributing to the support of the party campaigning in the community for its candidates, serving as an official in the party, and becoming a candidate for public office and holding such office if elected or appointed.

The political activity of a staff member, however, must not compromise his professional integrity. He must not misuse his school position to prevent the academic process in the interests of his own political ambitions or those in a political group.

A school employee will, in sum, be free to act as he desires in the discharge of his political responsibilities unless it can be shown that his behavior is affecting his professional performance in a demonstrably deleterious manner or in violation of Board policies and regulations.

THEREFORE,

1. School employees engaging in political activity will make it clear that they are speaking and acting as individuals and that they do not represent the school district nor the views of the Board.
2. School employees will not engage in political activity on school premises during school hours. Regulations for the use of school buildings or groups are the same for employees as they are for citizens of the district.
3. School employees shall not be eligible to serve on the board of directors of the employing school district.
4. Assemblies, school classes, and materials and equipment shall not be used for partisan political purposes.
5. School employees shall not be prohibited from communicating with an elected public official concerning matters related to the school employee's job.
6. It shall be unlawful for any school employer to discipline, threaten to discipline, to reprimand, either orally or written, or to place any notation in a school employee's personnel file disciplining or reprimanding the employee, or otherwise discriminate against a school employee because the school employee exercised the right to communicate with an elected public official as granted under this policy.
7. A school employer shall not be prohibited from disciplining an employee who has intentionally made untrue allegations to an elected official concerning matters related to the school employee's job.

Legal References:

U.S. Const. amend. I.; U.S. Const. amend. XIV, Sec. 1; *Pickering v. Board of Education*. 88 S. Ct. 1731 (1968); *Elrod v Burns*, 96 S. Ct. 2673, (1976); *Dougherty County, Georgia Board of Education v White*, 47 U.S.L.W. 4001 (U.S. Nov. 28, 1978); Act 346 of 1993