

MEMORANDUM

To: Eustace Independent School District Staff
From: Eustace, Superintendent of Schools
Date: August 29, 2018
Subject: LEGAL AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES ON BOND ELECTIONS

The District has a responsibility to inform all voters about the election on November 6, 2018. It is important that the District lead an "information-only" effort with the following guidelines:

1. It is our responsibility to inform the public about the bond measure and to encourage voter registration and participation.
2. While we can provide factual information, public funds (including your time on the job) may not be used in any way to promote or discourage the passage of this bond election. For example:
 - Advocacy or opposition letters, bulletins, emails, etc. cannot be prepared during an employee's workday.
 - Advocacy or opposition letters cannot be printed on school stationery.
 - During work hours, individuals cannot be encouraged to vote yes or no, but they can be encouraged to vote.
 - During work hours, refrain from posting on social media to show support or opposition to the election. Texas law prohibits "ballot selfies" at polling locations.
3. Material that promotes or opposes the bond election must be paid for by individual or citizen advocacy groups.
4. Consider adding a disclaimer to your personal email or social media postings: "Please note this message is personal, rather than official school district business, and was created using personally owned equipment and accounts on my own time."
5. The Texas Ethics Commission also prohibits subtle forms of advocacy. For example:
 - A website graphic with a check mark (✓) on a ballot is improper.
 - Pictures of children in a video describing the bond is improper.
6. When making phone calls, remember:
 - Advocacy or opposition can only be conducted outside an employee's workday.
 - Factual information calls and those encouraging people to exercise their right to vote are not advocacy or opposition calls.

During bond elections, most complaints filed with the Secretary of State's Office involve improper use of school district resources for advocacy campaigns. This use is a direct violation of election laws.

If you have questions regarding these guidelines, please contact (903) 425-5151.

CONTACT PERSON

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