

1.21 POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS/ACTIVITIES – STUDENTS/EMPLOYEES

I. PURPOSES

The purpose of this policy is to recognize the participation of students and employees in political issues. Further, the purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the participation of students and employees in political campaigns, partisan or non-partisan election activities, and the distribution of political or partisan materials.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A.** The school district will maintain neutrality as to all political campaigns and issues. The school district will not expend public funds or resources to advocate for candidates or for only one side of a controversial question. However, the school district may expend reasonable amounts to apprise voters in the school district of facts pertinent to an election, or education-related bills.
- B.** The school district recognizes the rights of students and employees to participate in political campaigns and political issues, elections, and public service and the right of students to pursue an education conducted in a suitable academic environment free from disruption.
- C.** To protect First Amendment rights, while at the same time preserving the integrity of the education objectives and responsibilities of the school district, the school board adopts the following guidelines.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A.** “Non-school-sponsored material”, “unofficial material” or “political material” includes, but are not limited to, all materials or objects intended for distribution, except school newspapers, employee newsletters, literary magazines, yearbooks, and other publications funded and/or sponsored or authorized by the school. Examples of non-school-sponsored material include, but are not limited to, leaflets, brochures, buttons, badges, flags, fliers, petitions, posters, handbills, booklets, advertisements, sample ballots, display or audio or visual presentations and underground newspapers, that pertain to a political candidate or political issue, whether written by students or employees.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Political Activities of Employees in General

- 1.** Employees of the school district, while acting in the capacity of a school district employee, shall not engage in any political activity during the school day, during work hours, or at school activities, to include conversations with intent to persuade, distributing or displaying political materials, or wearing any garment or apparel that is considered political or partisan in nature.
- 2.** School district employees shall be free to engage in political activities outside of the school day, work hours, or school activities and to campaign and run for political office. Employees shall not allow such political activities to interfere with the proper performance of their school duties and shall not use school time, supplies, or equipment in these activities.
- 3.** A school district employee or official shall not use his or her official authority or influence to compel a person to take part in a political activity to pay or promise to pay a political contribution, or apply for membership in or become a member in a political organization. Employees, while acting in the capacity of a school district employee, shall refrain from any conduct that is intended to be or that reasonably could be perceived as endorsing or opposing specific political issues or political candidates.
- 4.** Teachers or other school district employees may not use or recruit students during the school day, during work hours, or at school activities for either distribution of political materials or other political activities.

(Policy 1.21 Adopted: 4-25-2022)