

## **Community Relations**

### **Staff Participation in Community Activities**

The Board of Education encourages staff members to become active participants in the activities of the community in which they live so long as these activities do not interfere with their responsibilities as school district employees. This involvement provides a community with better understanding of educational programs and gains support of better education for every student. Such activity, however, is not required for initial or continued employment or advancement.



## **Community Relations**

### **Political Activities of School Employees**

School employees are encouraged to assume full responsibilities as citizens of a democracy.

### **Performance of Civic Duties by Employees**

Employees should perform their civic duties commensurate with democratic ideals. These duties may include:

1. Voting and taking an interest in current social, political, and economic issues.
2. Exercising democratic rights and responsibilities shared with other citizens. These rights and privileges may include:
  - A. Electioneering for candidates.
  - B. Accepting positions in political campaigns.
  - C. Holding an office in a political party organization.
  - D. Serving as a delegate to political party conventions.

### **Individual Responsibility in Participating in Political Functions**

Employees engaging in political activities shall:

1. Realize their obligation to their work as educators.
2. Help others understand that employee opinions and actions are expressed as individuals and not as representatives of the educational institution.
3. Engage in no political activities on school premises during school hours.

The following guidelines will be followed regarding employee participation in political and union activity:

- All employees shall be encouraged to exercise their constitutional rights as citizens, but they shall not involve their schools and students in personal political campaigns.
- Campaign literature, including but not limited to electronic mail, supporting one or more candidates shall not be distributed within schools or on school buses, by students,

teachers or others; nor shall campaign posters be displayed at or within the schools. Campaign literature shall be used solely for educational purposes.

## Community Relations

### Political Activities of School Employees

#### Individual Responsibility in Participating in Political Functions (continued)

- Employees shall not poll their students to determine how their parents are voting on any issue, and shall not attempt to indoctrinate students with personal political and social philosophy; however, employees are not prohibited from political activity after hours of official employment. Any discussions during break time shall be confined to an area out of the hearing distance of students.
- Employees may not use school property for personal political use.
- Employees' attendance at, or participation at, political or union activities during work time shall not take place without prior written approval of the Superintendent or designee.

The following situations are exempt from the prohibitions of this policy:

- The discussion and study of politics and political issues, when such discussion and study are appropriate to classroom studies, such as history, civics, current events, and political science.
- The conduct of student elections and campaigning connected therewith.
- The conduct of professional staff member representative elections.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to impose a burden on the constitutionally protected speech of a staff member or student.

Problems concerning the political activity of an employee shall be reported to the Superintendent or designee who shall follow-up and take appropriate action.

Legal Reference:      Connecticut General Statutes  
                                 7421 Political activities of classified municipal employees.  
                                 7421b Limitation on restriction of political rights of municipal employees.  
                                 10156e Employees of boards of education permitted to  
                                 serve as elected officials; exception.



## Community Relations

### Political Activities in the Schools

The Board of Education strongly supports the concepts of representative government and elected office. The Board encourages District employees to exercise their right to vote, and the Board expresses its admiration for those who seek and obtain public office. Further, the Board recognizes that the public schools are tax-supported and should be accessible to the community. The Board, however, does believe that the educational process should be clearly separate from the political activities associated with campaigns for public office.

Therefore, political activities in the schools during school hours shall be restricted to those of an educational nature that are beneficial to students as part of their program of study. The Board shall promulgate regulations in conjunction with this policy governing the following:

- Access to school system information
- Display and distribution of political literature
- Employee political activities
- Participation by student groups
- Use of school facilities
- Use of district resources
- Conduct of candidates

(cf. 1140 – Distribution of Materials by Students)

(cf. 1311.1 – Political Activities of School Employees)

(cf. 1330/3515 – Community Use of School Facilities)

(cf. 3543.13 – Mail and Delivery)

(cf. 4118.21 – Academic Freedom)

(cf. 6144 – Controversial Issues)

(cf. 6153.2 – Student Participation in Election Process)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

7421 Political activities of classified municipal employees.

7421b Limitation on restriction of political rights of municipal employees.

9369b Explanatory text relating to local questions.

10156e Employees of boards of education permitted to serve as elected officials; exception

10-239 Use of school facilities for other purposes

31-51q Liability of employer for discipline or discharge of employee on account of employee's exercise of certain constitutional rights.

*Keyishian v. Board of Regents* 395 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/9/81)

Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. ss 4071-4074

Policy adopted: May 7, 2014

NORTH HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
North Haven, Connecticut





## **Community Relations**

### **Political Activities in the Schools**

#### **A. Purpose**

To provide guidelines to candidates, candidate representatives, Board employees and students related to the conduct of political activities as it may involve District schools and school activities.

#### **B. Access to School System Information**

Any candidate or other Connecticut citizen may have access to school records and information pursuant to the provisions of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act.

Requests for information from candidates or their representatives related to political campaigns and issues regarding the District should be directed to the Office of the Superintendent. To ensure impartial cooperation with candidates in elections for the Board of Education, responses to campaign requests will be shared with all announced candidates.

#### **C. Display and Distribution of Political Literature**

Display and distribution of political materials in the schools during school hours shall be restricted to those of an educational nature and as part of the educational program. Teachers, who elect to use such materials for instructional purposes, shall present them in an impartial and objective manner that is relevant to the course content and appropriate to the knowledge and maturity of the students. Existing District procedures permit the distribution in schools of materials related to parks and recreation, scouting and other non-profit or service organizations. Consistent with these procedures, political campaign materials or materials that support or oppose political candidates, parties or issues shall not be sent home from school with students. Also such literature shall not be distributed during school hours or on a school bus by students, Board employees or others. Campaign-related posters or signs may not be displayed at or within schools.

Candidates, or their representatives, desiring to distribute campaign or political materials to those attending school-related activities occurring after school hours must do so outside the building or other school facility. The distribution of political literature at events or meetings that are not school-related may be subject to the conditions governing Community Use of School Facilities.

Candidates or their representatives, who do not comply with these limits on the distribution of campaign or political materials after being so informed, will be requested by a building administrator to leave school property. If the candidate or their representative does not comply with this request to leave, the building administrator will warn the individual(s) that they are trespassing and will notify the police.



## **Community Relations**

### **Political Activities in the Schools**

#### **C. Display and Distribution of Political Literature (continued)**

Schools will not accept political advertisements in co-curricular publications (example: school newspaper as part of Journalism class). As with other advertisements, paid political advertisements may be placed in school publications unrelated to the curriculum, subject to the review and approval of the Principal (example: programs for athletic events).

During the times that polls are open and schools are serving as polling locations, Connecticut election laws will govern any associated political activity, including the distribution of political literature or posting of political signs.

#### **D. Employee Political Activities**

Employees are encouraged to exercise their constitutional rights as citizens, but they shall not involve their schools in political activities. Employees shall not participate in campaign activities during hours of official employment; however, employees may participate in political activity after hours of official employment.

Employees shall not poll students on the political opinions of their parents and shall not attempt to indoctrinate students or other employees with their personal political views. Student mock elections are permitted when conducted as part of the educational program.

No employee shall be expected or required to participate in any campaign or to support any candidate as a condition of employment.

#### **E. Participation by Student Groups**

School-sponsored student groups shall not participate in partisan political activities.

#### **F. Use of School Facilities for Political Activities**

When space is available, candidates may use school facilities during non-school hours subject to Board policy pertaining to Community Use of School Facilities and the associated regulations.

#### **G. Use of Other District Resources**

Any use of the District's website for political activities is prohibited. Use of any other resources for political activities, including but not limited to copiers, computers or facsimile machines, is prohibited.



## Community Relations

### Political Activities in the Schools (continued)

#### H. Conduct of Candidates

Candidates for election, or their representatives, shall not use District resources, District personnel (except those employees who may voluntarily participate during non-duty hours), District events at which they are official participants, District stationery, or the District logo in support of their campaigns.

Candidates, or their representatives, may not access students or employees during school hours for campaign purposes. With the prior review and approval of the Principal, candidates may be invited to address specific classes or groups on specific topics related to the curriculum and educational program. The Principal's review shall ensure all candidates are treated impartially and objectively.

(cf. 1140 – Distribution of Materials by Students)  
 (cf. 1311.1 – Political Activities of School Employees)  
 (cf. 1330/3515 – Community Use of School Facilities)  
 (cf. 3543.13 – Mail and Delivery)  
 (cf. 4118.21 – Academic Freedom)  
 (cf. 6144 – Controversial Issues)  
 (cf. 6153.2 – Student Participation in Election Process)

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