GBIA - Staff Participation in Political Activities

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The Board 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, the Board believes that campaigning and other political activities of individual staff members should not compromise the instructional program or disrupt the operations of the schools.

In adopting this policy, it is the intent of the Board to provide guidance for staff participation in political activities and communicate these expectations to parents, students and the community.

School employees shall not engage in political activities while carrying out their work responsibilities during the school day, while performing work for MSAD #35 outside of the school day on school premises, or while performing work for MSAD #35 at any other location.

“Political activities” include:

A. Campaigning for or against any candidate, political party or issue;

B. An employee’s using his/her position to attempt to influence students, parents or others to vote for or against any candidate or issue;

C. Contacting students, parents or others for such purposes;

D. Wearing apparel with political 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 in regard to candidates and political issues.

No school employee shall use MSAD #35’s resources (e.g., including but not limited to MSAD #35-owned laptops and other electronic devices, MSAD #35 networks, copiers, scanners, or mail service) to promote political candidates or parties or to encourage a vote for or against an issue.

No MSAD #35 employee shall use MSAD #35’s name or logo to promote his/her candidacy for political office, or to promote other candidates or political positions, or represent his/her view as those of MSAD #35 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 MSAD #35’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) and policy on guest speakers in schools (IMC).

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 MSAD #35 resources to accomplish this purpose. The Board will not use its influence or MSAD #35 resources to promote any particular political party or to promote or discourage the election of any particular candidate.

Cross References: GCSA – Staff Computer and Internet Use

IMB – Teaching About Controversial/Sensitive Issues

IMC – Guest Speakers in Schools

KF – Community Use of School Facilities

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