

STAFF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Code **GBI** Issued **3/05**

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for staff participation in political activities.

Employee candidacy

The board recognizes that district employees have the same fundamental civic responsibilities and privileges as other citizens. Among these are campaigning for an elective public office or holding an elective or appointive public office, so long as neither activity conflicts with the employee's duties in the district.

At the earliest possible moment, an employee who wishes to offer for an elective or appointive position on a governing board or agency should verify in writing to the superintendent or his/her designee that such position will not conflict with state or federal law and/or regulations concerning the employee's right to serve, i.e., dual office holding, conflict of interest, etc. The employee must also notify the superintendent in writing of the position sought and the employee's intention as to the possibility of continued employment and the conditions of that employment.

In connection with campaigning and/or holding public office an employee may not use district facilities, equipment or supplies; discuss his/her campaign with district personnel, students, parents or citizens during work hours; or use any time during normal work hours for campaigning purposes, either through his/her own activities or through the activities of a supporter/colleague.

Political activities in schools

The board firmly believes in the democratic process and its principles. Additionally, the board feels the exposure of mature students to persons of political prominence and/or current events is an important part of education. However, the board opposes those actions that transform the schools into arenas for political activity, including advocating any political party or any candidate for public office.

Therefore, the board directs that no one may distribute or post cards, fliers, pamphlets, brochures, signs, pins, badges or any other political paraphernalia espousing any political party or candidate at any time on district property. No one may collect or solicit funds for political use or solicit for campaign workers on school district property. No one can use the district communication systems, including e-mail or voice mail, to promote or solicit.

Further, no employee will, during the school day, on district property or at a school-sponsored event, influence or attempt to influence any student, teacher, parent or other person to vote for or against any candidate. During the school day, on district property or at a school-sponsored event, no employee will contact any student, teacher, parent or other person for the purpose of espousing any candidate or political party or use any district property for the purpose of espousing any candidate or political party.

No school publication will advertise or accept for advertisement any material promoting any political party or any candidate for public office.

Nothing in this policy is to be construed as precluding mock elections, debates, conventions or other simulated political activities where the activity is primarily intended as an educational experience.

Adopted 8/13/91; Revised 3/8/05

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Legal references:

A. U. S. Code:

1. Hatch Act may apply to employees paid with Federal funds or working in activities supported by Federal funds. To obtain scope of coverage and permissible activities, contact General Counsel, U.S. Civil Service Commission, Washington, D. C. or Atlanta Regional Office (Reference - S. C. Attorney General's Opinion, 1973-74, No. 3749, p. 117).

B. S. C. Code, 1976, as amended:

1. Section 2-1-120 - A South Carolina teacher elected to the General Assembly is exempted from requirements of recertification and retains his/her teaching certificate while serving in the legislature.
2. Section 8-13-10, et. seq. - Ethics, conduct, campaign practices and disclosures.