

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CT

Policy Committee Meeting
Monday, November 20, 2017
4:30 PM
501 Kings Highway East
Superintendent's Conference Room

Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of October 17, 2017 Minutes.
- III. 1311.1/1311.2 Political Activities in School/On School Property
- IV. Open Discussion/Public Comment
- V. Adjournment

Future Meeting Dates and Times: December 4, 2017 at 4:30 PM

All meetings will be on Mondays, starting at 4:30 unless otherwise noted. See approved calendar.

All meetings will be held at 501 Kings Highway East, Superintendent's Conference Room Unless otherwise noted.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CT

Policy Committee Meeting
Monday, October 2, 2017
4:30 PM
501 Kings Highway East
Superintendent's Conference Room

Minutes

- I. Call to Order 4:31 PM
- II. Approval of September 18 and October 2, 2017 Minutes
 - Approved 3-0
- III. 1311.1/1311.2 Political Activities in School/On School Property
- IV. Open Discussion/Public Comment
- V. Adjournment
6:00 PM Vote of Adjournment

Community Relations

Political Activities of School Employees

District employees shall be entitled to full rights of citizenship, and no political activities of any employee or the lack thereof shall be grounds for any discipline or discrimination with respect to the employment of such employee providing such activities do not interfere with the performance of the employee's duties or the District's business.

Engaging in political activities including but not limited to, soliciting, receiving, collecting, handling, disbursing or accounting for assessments, contributions or other political funds, organizing, selling tickets to, promoting a candidate, soliciting votes in support of or opposition to a candidate, circulating petitions, displaying political pictures, badges, stickers or buttons on District property during assigned hours of employment.

Political Materials as Part of the Instructional Program

- Teachers may use political materials as part of the instructional program, provided the material is germane to the instructional objectives of the course. Any presentation of political materials, or issues, or expression of views, however, must be balanced and fair.
- Teachers shall be responsible for providing students with the opportunity to investigate various sides of the topics presented in their courses, particularly in relation to controversial subjects, within such limits as may be imposed by relevance to the course, the maturity level and intellectual ability of the students, and the time available.

Community Relations

Political Activities in the Schools/On School Board Property

Political Materials as Part of the Instructional Program (continued)

- Teachers shall permit freedom of expression on those topics that are matters of opinion so that students may weigh alternative views and make up their own minds. Students shall be encouraged to examine, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the information available to them before drawing conclusions in order to develop as fully as possible their capacities for rational judgment.
- Teachers shall strive to promote tolerance for the opinions of others and respect for the right of all individuals to hold and express differing opinions.

• A teacher may express his/her opinions in regard to political, social and religious values or issues provided that the total presentation is essentially balanced and fair. He/she shall not use professional interaction with students to further his/her own political aims or views or those of any other individual or group.

• Teachers shall permit freedom of expression on those topics that are matters of opinion so that students may weigh alternative views and make up their own minds. Students shall be encouraged to examine, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the information available to them before drawing conclusions in order to develop as fully as possible their capacities for rational judgment.

• Teachers shall strive to promote tolerance for the opinions of others and respect for the right of all individuals to hold and express differing opinions.

• A teacher may express his/her opinions in regard to political, social and religious values or issues provided that the total presentation is essentially balanced and fair. He/she shall not use professional interaction with students to further his/her own political aims or views or those of any other individual or group.

~~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.

Alternate language to consider:

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.

Community Relations

Political Activities of School Employees

Individual Responsibility in Participating in Political Functions (continued)

- 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.
- 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.

A succinct version of this policy to consider:

District staff members shall not use school time, school property or school resources or equipment for the purpose of furthering the interests of any political party, the campaign of any political candidate or the advocacy of any political issue.

Community Relations

Political Activities of School Employees

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

7-421 Political activities of classified municipal employees.

7-421b Limitation on restriction of political rights of municipal employees.

10-156e Employees of boards of education permitted to serve as elected officials; exception.

Policy adopted:

rev 1/06

A new version of this policy to consider.

Community Relations

Political Activities of School Employees

The _____ Board of Education recognizes the right of its employees, as citizens, to engage in political activity. However, the Board recognizes that school property and school time are paid for by all the people of the District, and should not be used for partisan political purposes, except as provided for in policies pertaining to the use of school facilities by civic and political organizations.

Prohibited activities include the posting of political circulars or petitions, collection or solicitation of campaign funds, solicitations for campaign workers, the use of students in writing or addressing campaign materials, and the distribution of campaign materials to students on District property or during school time in any manner which would indicate that a school employee is using a position in the school to further personal partisan views on candidates for public office or questions of public property. Teachers and other District employees will not attempt to influence students concerning political party affiliations and will not praise or denigrate any particular political party.

Nothing in this policy will be interpreted as prohibiting teachers from conducting appropriate activities that encourage students to become involved in the political processes of the party of the students' choice or as independents; nor does it prohibit the use of political figures as resource persons in the classrooms.

- (cf. 1140 – Distribution of Materials by Students)
- (cf. 1311.2 – Political Activities in the Schools/On School Board Property)
- (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
7-421 Political activities of classified municipal employees.
7-421b Limitation on restriction of political rights of municipal employees.
9-369b Explanatory text relating to local questions.
10-156e 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:

cps 1/06

Community Relations

Political Activities in the Schools/On School Board Property

The ~~Board of Education~~ District is committed to ensuring each citizen's rights as provided in the Constitution and laws of the State of Connecticut and the Constitution of the United States. However, ~~Board~~ District employees shall be prohibited from the following:

- a. Participating in any political activity while on duty.

~~_____ or (for a more specific listing)~~

~~_____ Engaging in political activities including but not limited to, soliciting, receiving, collecting, handling, disbursing or accounting for assessments, contributions or other political funds, organizing, selling tickets to, promoting a candidate, soliciting votes in support of or opposition to a candidate, circulating petitions, displaying political pictures, badges, stickers or buttons on District property during assigned hours of employment.~~

- b. Using school property to solicit funds for political associations or activities.
- c. Attempting, either directly or indirectly, to coerce political activity or support from any other District employee.
- d. Soliciting or attempting to solicit funds from a District employee on behalf of any candidate, party, or issue while on duty.

~~School Board~~ District employees shall have the right to actively participate in political activities on behalf of any candidate, party, or issue during the time they are not scheduled to be on duty.

Nothing contained in this policy shall be interpreted to prohibit a Board member or District employee from performing any statutory or assigned duty with respect to any issue which directly affects the District or which is placed on a ballot by or at the request of the Board, provided that such assigned duty is consistent with a willing employee's personal political beliefs.

District employees who offer themselves as candidates for public office shall notify the Superintendent immediately upon qualifying for election. They shall file a written statement explaining plans for conducting their campaign so as not to interfere with their job responsibilities.

Community Relations

Political Activities in the Schools/On School Board Property (continued)

- a. Personal leave may be taken for thirty (30) days prior to the election as provided herein.
- b. A successful candidate for an office requiring a part-time responsibility shall report immediately to the Superintendent after the election and thereafter when deemed necessary by the Superintendent or Board to evaluate the compatibility of the dual responsibility.
- c. A Board employee may be granted leave of absence, with loss of full pay, for a specified period of time for the purpose of campaigning or for serving in public office.

~~District employees shall be entitled to full rights of citizenship, and no political activities of any employee or the lack thereof shall be grounds for any discipline or discrimination with respect to the employment of such employee providing such activities do not interfere with the performance of the employee's duties or the District's business.~~

Political Candidates

Debate or Forum: If a class or school-sponsored group plans a political debate or forum during the school day, the Principal/teacher/sponsor shall ensure that all candidates for the same public office or who have differing opinions on a political issue are given equal opportunity to participate.

Appearances: ~~Elected politicians and p~~Political candidates are not allowed to appear at a school unless they are invited to visit or speak to a class or other school-related activity during school hours. However, they are entitled to the same rights of all citizens to visit the schools. The requirements for debates or forums are applicable and other candidates for the public office should be invited to visit at the same time or be provided an equivalent opportunity.

Nothing in this policy shall preclude or prevent incumbent elected public officials from appearances on District property upon the invitation of ~~a Board member,~~ the Superintendent, the Superintendent's designee or Principal provided that it is within their official capacity and not a campaign activity.

School Group Participation in Political Events

School groups may not participate in events that fall into these classifications:

- a. ~~Public appearances to promote the political candidacy of any person or the furtherance of any partisan political interest.~~

Community Relations

Political Activities in the Schools/On School Board Property

School Group Participation in Political Events (continued)

- b. Appearances that create an undue amount of interference with the regular school program or that cause an excessive amount of students' absences for rehearsal or preparation.
- c. The school Principal shall refer any case where a possible conflict may exist to the Superintendent for approval or disapproval.

Use or Distribution of Political Materials During School Hours or on School Grounds

Interschool Mail: Any interschool or intraschool mail system may not be used to distribute any political materials to schools. A regular newsletter of an employee organization that is normally distributed by the District's/school's mail system will not be considered political material if it simply contains news of a political nature taken by the organization. However, a publication from, or newsletter primarily containing news or discussion about, any political action committee is considered political material and may not be distributed through the pony mail.

Political Materials: Any distribution of political materials, except as part of the instructional program or student government, or political activity during working hours (including e-mail messages) is prohibited, except as allowed under this policy.

Student Elections: Students may post or distribute student-government election materials in an appropriate time, place, and manner, as determined by the Principal, so as to avoid any disruption to the learning environment.

~~Political Materials as Part of the Instructional Program~~

- ~~• Teachers may use political materials as part of the instructional program, provided the material is germane to the instructional objectives of the course. Any presentation of political materials, or issues, or expression of views, however, must be balanced and fair.~~
- ~~• Teachers shall be responsible for providing students with the opportunity to investigate various sides of the topics presented in their courses, particularly in relation to controversial subjects, within such limits as may be imposed by relevance to the course, the maturity level and intellectual ability of the students, and the time available.~~

Community Relations

Political Activities in the Schools/On School Board Property

Political Materials as Part of the Instructional Program (continued)

- ~~• Teachers shall permit freedom of expression on those topics that are matters of opinion so that students may weigh alternative views and make up their own minds. Students shall be encouraged to examine, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the information available to them before drawing conclusions in order to develop as fully as possible their capacities for rational judgment.~~
- ~~• Teachers shall strive to promote tolerance for the opinions of others and respect for the right of all individuals to hold and express differing opinions.~~
- ~~• A teacher may express his/her opinions in regard to political, social and religious values or issues provided that the total presentation is essentially balanced and fair. He/she shall not use professional interaction with students to further his/her own political aims or views or those of any other individual or group.~~

(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
7-421 Political activities of classified municipal employees.
7-421b Limitation on restriction of political rights of municipal employees.
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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:

cps 1/06

P1311.2

A succinct version of this policy pertaining to this issue.

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

- _____ 7-421 Political activities of classified municipal employees.
- _____ 7-421b Limitation on restriction of political rights of municipal employees.
- _____ 9-369b Explanatory text relating to local questions.
- _____ 10-156e 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:

eps 1/06

R1311.2(a)

A sample regulation to consider/modify.

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.

R1311.2(b)

Community Relations

Political Activities in the Schools

~~C. — Display and Distribution of Political Literature~~ (continued)

~~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.~~

~~— 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.~~

R1311.2(c)

Community Relations

Political Activities in the Schools (continued)

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.~~

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)~~

~~Legal Reference: — Connecticut General Statutes~~

~~7-421 Political activities of classified municipal employees
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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 4071-4~~

~~Regulation approved:~~

~~eps-1/06~~