

## PUBLIC RESOURCES AND POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

### Guidelines and FAQs

---

School district boards and employees must follow California state guidelines on the use of public resources in the context of political campaigns - including activities during work hours, use of materials, equipment, facilities and communications channels such as e-mail, newsletters or websites. The rule of thumb is "[on your own time, on your own dime!](#)" Here is a brief overview of some of the rules:

---

#### **Q: What political activities are prohibited?**

A: "No school district funds, services, supplies or equipment shall be used for the purpose of urging the support or defeat of any ballot measure or candidate" (*Cal. Ed. Code §7054*). For example:

- School district employees may not use school supplies, equipment or facilities, including photocopying, making signs, or posting signs on school district property to advocate for a candidate or ballot position;
- School district employees may not distribute flyers at school sites to students, parents, or other non-employees. This includes placing flyers in a classroom or other public school district spaces;
- School district employees may not use an employee email address (*@berkeley.net*) or the District email system to endorse particular candidates or urge passage or defeat of ballot measures. A state College professor was sued by a conservative anti-tax group because he emailed students urging them to vote yes on Prop 30 for school funding.

#### **Q: What political activities are permitted?**

A: During school time, parent-teacher conferences, open houses, etc., the focus should remain on student learning within the context of the school curriculum. However:

- School district employees may engage in political activity as private citizens, and recommend how to vote to others, as long as the activity does not involve the use of public resources. When doing so, board members and employees should make it clear they are acting on their own behalf and on their own time;
- School district employees may volunteer on a campaign on off-duty hours. They may distribute campaign literature as long as they do so off school / district property. School district employees may discuss endorsements and ballot measures with each other during non-duty hours (before or after school, on break time) and may post union-produced materials on union bulletin boards;
- School district employees may provide information about a ballot measure if..."the information provided constitutes a fair and impartial presentation of relevant facts to aid the electorate in reaching an informed judgment regarding the bond issue or ballot measure." (*Cal. Ed Code § 7054*);
- A school district may host a public forum on candidates and/or ballot issues, as long as the forum is made available to all sides on an equitable basis. (*Cal. Ed Code § 7058*)

---

For further details:

[California School Board Association Fact Sheet](#), as well as [California Ed Code \(sections § 7050-7058. FAQ regarding School Districts and District Employees \(K-12\)](#) from School and College Legal Services of California