SCHOOL MILLAGE
ELECTION ETHICS

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Use of public funds to support or oppose ballot measure.

It is *unlawful* for a public servant or a governmental body* to expend or permit the expenditure of public funds to support or oppose a ballot measure.

*Includes school districts*
ARK. CODE ANN. § 7-1-111(c).

Use of public funds to support or oppose ballot measure.

This section does not:

(1) Limit the freedom of speech of a public servant or government body, including without limitation verbal expressions of views supporting or opposing a ballot measure;

(2) Prohibit a governmental body from expressing an opinion on a ballot measure through the passage of a resolution or proclamation;

(3) Prohibit the incidental use of state resources by a public servant, including without limitation travel costs, when speaking at an event in which a ballot measure is discussed if the subject matter of the speaking engagement is within the scope of the official duties and responsibilities of the public servant; or

(4) Prohibit the dissemination of public information at a speaking engagement and the incidental use of state resources in the analysis and preparation of that public information if the subject matter of the public information is within the scope of the official duties and responsibilities of the public servant.
FSPS Policy GBG.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

All persons connected with the Fort Smith Public Schools will have the right and will be encouraged to become fully informed of proposed legislative matters and to participate in political activities national, state, and local to the same extent as other citizens. This will include such political activities as electioneering for candidates, accepting positions in political campaigns, holding office in political party organizations, or running for political office.
FSPS Policy GBG.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

- Any participation in political activities by personnel of the Fort Smith Public Schools will be during off-duty time.
- Leaves of absence for political activity for the purpose of being a candidate for political office or holding public office when such leaves will not adversely affect the program of the School District will be granted. Leaves of absence will be granted in accordance with established policy.
- On election day teachers as private citizens have the right to distribute political campaign materials during off-duty time in accordance with law.
- During the teaching day with students, political activities and displays of any type are prohibited. Off-duty time will be defined as that time prior to 8:00 a.m. and after 3:30 p.m. each contract day.
- A suitable section of the bulletin board in the teachers’ lounge may be utilized for posting notices of meetings and activities of teachers. Individual teachers’ school mailboxes may be used for the distribution of notices of meetings, activities, or newsletters.
FSPS Policy GBG.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

The following activities are specifically prohibited on property under the jurisdiction of the Fort Smith Public Schools:

A. Posting of political circulars or petitions on bulletin boards;
B. The distribution to school employees, whether by placing in their school mailboxes or otherwise, of political circulars or petitions not sent through the United States mail;
C. The collection of and/or solicitation of funds for political use;
D. Solicitation for campaign workers; and
E. The use of students for writing or addressing political materials or the distribution of such materials to students.
FSPS Policy GBG.

**POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF CERTIFIED PERSONNEL**

In addition, school equipment (including computers, tablets, or similar devices) or school email may not be used to participate in a political campaign or to engage in political activities. This prohibition includes using school equipment or school email to respond to a political message received on a school email address or to forward the message to others.
FSPS Policy GBG.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

Elections to determine membership of the Board of Education will be considered to be political within the meaning of the preceding rules. Nothing in these rules will prevent:

A. The dissemination of information concerning school tax and/or bond elections;

B. The dissemination of information to school personnel regarding enacted or proposed legislation, policies, or regulations at the local, state, or federal level.

C. The discussion and study of politics and political issues in the classroom when such discussion and study are appropriate to classroom studies such as history, current events, and political science. During such discussion, teachers must be especially careful that a non-biased presentation is conducted and that their own views and personal beliefs are in no way allowed to influence the subject matter of the discussion.
What are the Ethical Guidelines for Distributing Election Information?

Adapted from “Ethical Guidelines” by DLR Group
Ethical Guidelines for Participation in a Referendum

Two Types of Committees:
  • “Vote Yes” Committee
    ▪ PTO
    ▪ Patrons
    ▪ Board Members
    ▪ Political Action Committees
  • District Employees
    ▪ All Teachers and Staff
    ▪ Building Administrators
    ▪ Superintendent and Central Office Employees
Ethical Guidelines for Participation in a Referendum

The “Vote Yes” Committee may:

- Hold informational meetings in district facilities after business hours.
  - Rental of facility is required.
  - Ideally, do not use a district facility in order to avoid a perception of impropriety or competing use.
- Distribute factual information produced by the school district.
- Post signs and distribute materials encouraging “Yes” votes off district facility grounds.
- Speak about/promote/advocate for the referendum during official business meetings.
Ethical Guidelines for Participation in a Referendum

The “Vote Yes” Committee may NOT:

- Use school district resources (paper, copy machines, etc.) to produce materials that encourage a “Yes” or “No” vote.
- Present a pro-referendum message at meetings held during the day in district facilities.
- Post pro-referendum signs/posters/stickers or other materials on district grounds.
Ethical Guidelines for Participation in a Referendum

District Employees may:

- Advocate for the referendum after work hours, but it is strongly advised to limit comments to “information” only.
- Via invitation, attend community meetings/organizations about the referendum scope and facts.
- Encourage patrons to vote.
- Create and distribute non-advertorial referendum information with tax dollars.
  - Must be factual and present all facts.
  - Can be distributed in schools and via students.
Ethical Guidelines for Participation in a Referendum

District Employees may NOT:

- Wear campaign buttons while at work.
- Distribute campaign materials while at work, with the exception of district-produced factual info.
- Promote or discuss the referendum with students in class unless it is a part of the curriculum and relevant. Even then, it must be neutral and non-advertorial.
- Promote the referendum to a citizen or group during normal business hours or while “on the clock”.

Ethical Guidelines for Participation in a Referendum

District Employee Directives:

DO . . .

- Be courteous, considerate, and positive.
- Be very knowledgeable about the bond issue scope and schedule.
- Be open and honest.
- Always forward patron questions that you can’t answer to the proper district employee.
- Use district owned materials and equipment to help inform patrons and students about the bond issue—only facts.
Ethical Guidelines for Participation in a Referendum

District Employee Directives:

DO NOT . . .

- Argue or debate with anyone. You are only to inform.
- Ask students or parents how they intend to vote.
- Use threats or scare tactics.
- Require a student to perform any bond informational services for academic reward.
- Use district owned materials and equipment to help create information to persuade patrons to vote in a particular manner.
The Principal as Building Millage Campaign Leader
Building Millage Campaign Leaders

One Goal:

Eliminate Voter Apathy
Building Millage Campaign Leaders

- Post weekly marquee messages (provided).
- Hang posters and display kiosks (provided).
- Distribute weekly Tuesday folder / backpack handouts (provided).
- Report positive and negative comments.
- Serve as Informational Czars.
- Provide tours of building, if asked.
Building Millage Campaign Leaders

- Train office staff.
- Include the phrase, “Find Fort Smith Public Schools on FaceBook” in newsletters, e-mail signatures, and other written announcements.
- Contact [INSERT] to schedule faculty informational meeting.
- Schedule at least one informational parent meeting (on-site or off-site, early morning or early evening), advertise the meeting, and ask for assistance if needed.
QUESTIONS?
THANK YOU!
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