

RE: Political Activities of School Employees**Approved:**

School district employees are encouraged to assume the obligations of full political citizenship. 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.

Political activities must be confined to the hours away from school and employees may not be released from their regular duties and hours for political activity. In the classroom, teachers must put aside their personal and partisan political beliefs, and activities and constantly strive to give a balanced presentation of issues. Further, employees shall engage in no political activities on school premises during school hours.

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.

Subject to the above limitations, Board employees may take part in the management, affairs, or campaign of any political party.

A Board employee may run for elective municipal or state office and continue in the employment of the Board.

Employees who hold elective public office may be granted released time for the performance of official duties related thereto provided such released time:

1. Does not affect the ability of the employee to meet job requirements;, and
2. There is no cost factor in excess of budgeted expenses during staff absences to the Bloomfield Public Schools for granting such released time.

The granting of released time for this purpose shall be determined by the Superintendent or designee. This decision shall be final and not appealable.

At the Superintendent or designee's discretion, in collaboration with the employee's supervisor, a flexible or alternate work schedule can be approved to accommodate time for the performance of official duties. A flexible/alternate work schedule is not considered an entitlement, or a benefit, and is neither a universal employee right nor a universal employee benefit.

A flexible work schedule for elected officials is not appropriate for all employees and positions, nor all employees in the same or similar jobs, and shall be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Superintendent and designees. In the case where a role is not eligible for a flexible or alternate schedule, the employee could still access release time if the release time does not affect the ability of the employee to meet job requirements and when there is no cost to the district.

Employees approved for a flexible/alternate work schedule must comply with all District policies and administrative regulations/procedures including contracts and work schedules, and meet all evaluation performance standards.

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.

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