

MEMORANDUM

To: All Staff Members, Buckholts Independent School District

From: Dr. Remy Godfrey, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Legal and Ethical Guidelines on Bond Elections

The Board of Trustees have acted to call a Bond Election. Now that the Bond Election has been called, the District has a responsibility to inform all voters about the Election. It is important that the District lead an “information-only” effort with the following guidelines:

1. It is our responsibility to inform the public about each bond measure and to encourage voter registration and participation.
 - The District may prepare informational materials that contain pertinent facts regarding the Election. These materials will be reviewed by the District’s counsel and may be shared whether or not District resources are used in their preparation or distribution.
2. By contrast, District resources (including your time on the job) must not be used in any way to advocate--that is, to either promote or discourage--the passage of this bond proposal. This means that:
 - Advocacy letters, emails, etc. cannot be prepared during an employee’s workday.
 - School-owned copy machines, printers, e-mail addresses, school district letterhead/logos, e-mail servers or any other school district property may not be used to either advocate for or against the bond proposal.
 - During work hours, individuals can be encouraged to vote, but they cannot be encouraged to vote either “yes” or “no”.
 - During work hours, do not advocate for or against the bond on social media. Also, note that Texas law prohibits “ballot selfies” at polling locations.
3. Material that advocates must be paid for by individuals or citizen advocacy groups. Such individuals/groups will be responsible for ensuring compliance with statutes related to political advertising.
4. If you do wish to advocate on your own time, consider adding a disclaimer to your personal emails/social media postings: “Please note this message is personal, rather than official school district business, and was created using personally owned equipment and accounts on my own time.”

A violation of ethics rules by a school district employee can result in an ethics complaint against the employee and/or the District. The most common type of ethics complaint filed involves improper use of school district resources for advocacy campaigns. If you have any questions at all about the Bond Election, particularly about whether a particular communication concerning the Election is acceptable, please do not hesitate to contact me.