

**From:** [Cohn, Gary](#)  
**To:** [EPS.MailList](#)  
**Subject:** Use of District Resources to Assist a Campaign for Election or to Promote or Oppose any Ballot Proposition is Prohibited  
**Date:** Monday, October 20, 2014 7:49:59 AM  
**Attachments:** [image003.png](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Good morning! As ballots arrive in homes and the November election draws near, there is understandable interest in the outcome of local and state elections and ballot measures. We each have the right to support candidates of our choosing and to take positions on election issues ... on our own time and using our personal resources.

At the same time, we have clear responsibilities and legal obligations as public employees to abide by state law and Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) guidelines. These laws and guidelines prohibit public employees from using paid time or publicly-funded facilities, equipment, and supplies to influence the outcome of any election.

Late last week a parent brought to my attention a situation in which some students engaged in a school-sponsored activity were asked to campaign for a political candidate. This should never happen. I commenced an investigation that is currently underway.

PDC guidelines are clear about the restrictions on each of us during campaigns. I am taking this opportunity to remind you of them. The PDC prohibits the use of ANY taxpayer-funded facilities, equipment, and supplies or staff time to support or oppose any candidate or ballot measure, including:

- **District email or electronic bulletin board systems.** District email is archived for two years. Any email sent by staff at any time on the district email system is a public record. District or school bulletin board systems, websites, or blogs are also paid for with taxpayer dollars and thus must not be used in political campaigns.
- **District computers, printers or copiers.** We must not use district equipment or supplies to copy or print any materials that advocate for or against an election issue or candidate.
- **District mail and telephone system.** State law prohibits public employees from using internal mail systems and telephone systems in support of or opposition to any election issue or candidate.
- **Staff time.** Public employees may not engage in campaign activities during their paid time.
- **Students.** Staff may not assign projects to students that require creating or distributing materials to influence an election's outcome.
- **District supplies.** Supplies includes paper, pens, tape, staples, notebooks – actually, anything that is purchased by the school or district. Because these are funded with public dollars, we cannot use them to influence an election.
- **School buildings.** Meetings that favor a candidate or one side of an election issue cannot take place in schools without the approval of the Community Services Department, which will arrange for rental space on a nondiscriminatory, equal access basis.

PDC rules are designed to protect the public from inappropriate use of public dollars to influence elections. The rules allow for sanctions and consequences to individuals and to supervisors of

individuals who are found to have violated PDC regulations.

If you have questions about the PDC rules, please email [Mary Waggoner](#) or call her at extension 4049.



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