



Board Policy BHC: Board Member Political Activity

Status: DRAFT - 1st
Reading

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Red Lined Version

The DeKalb County Board of Education recognizes that Board members have the right as individuals to engage in political activities, express opinions on political issues, support candidates running for elective public office, and campaign for their own election or reelection as Board members. Board members also have the responsibility to uphold the public trust and to avoid allowing their political activities to interfere or conflict with their service on the Board or with the best interests of the District.

To avoid any such conflict or interference, each Board member **will** ~~shall~~ comply with the terms of this policy. It is the Board's hope that candidates for Board office likewise will comply with this policy.

1. Board members **will** ~~shall~~ take every reasonable step to differentiate between their activities as private individuals and their activities as members of the Board of Education.
2. Board members **will** ~~shall~~ not use school facilities for campaign functions or activities, except to the extent such use is consistent with the Use of School Facilities Policy, Descriptor Code KG, and this policy. Political materials may be displayed and distributed at such functions, provided the materials are removed from the facility when the activity ends.
3. Except as provided in paragraph 2 above, Board members **will** ~~shall~~ not campaign or solicit votes or campaign contributions on their own behalf or on behalf of any other candidate while on District property.
4. Board members **will** ~~shall~~ not use District personnel, equipment, supplies, computer networks, websites, mailing lists, email lists, newsletters, flyers, or other District resources to support, oppose, or attempt to influence voters on a ballot question or candidate, including a Board member's own candidacy, except to the extent such use is consistent with the Use of School Facilities Policy, Descriptor Code KG, and this policy. **However, a Board member may use District resources for campaign-related activities when:**
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(a) such resources are generally available to the competing candidates, public organizations, or to the public, or when such use is incidental and subordinate to the public use or is, as a practical matter, unavoidable, and involves minimal public expense, or if the cost is more than de minimis, the public is reimbursed for the cost of the campaign-related use.

6. Board members **will** ~~shall~~ not provide, or promise to provide, any work-related advantage to an employee of the District in exchange for the employee's support of the Board member's candidacy or any other candidate for elected office.

7. Board members **will** ~~shall~~ not use, or attempt to use, their position as a Board member to pressure any employee or other individual to support the Board member's candidacy or any other candidate for elected office.

8. Board members **will** ~~shall~~ not use any portion of a Board meeting, Board committee meeting, or official Board function to campaign or to solicit votes or campaign contributions on their own behalf or on behalf of any other candidate.

9. Board members **will** ~~shall~~ not solicit or accept, or knowingly allow any member of their immediate family or any business organization in which they are associated to solicit or accept, any political contribution based upon an understanding that the contribution was given or offered for the purpose of influencing that Board member in the discharge of his or her **that Board member's** official duties. This provision does not apply to the solicitation or acceptance of campaign contributions by a Board member who has announced that he or she **the Board member** is a candidate for Board office if the Board member has no knowledge or reason to believe that the campaign contribution, if accepted, was given with the intent to influence the Board member in the discharge of his or her **the Board member's** official duties.

10. Board members may participate in mock elections or other mock political activities that are part of a school's instructional program, provided the activity is not in support of the Board member's own candidacy for elected office.

11. Board members participating in school-sponsored functions that feature candidates for elected office ~~will~~ shall not attempt to have the function structured in such a manner as to provide the Board member an advantage over other candidates.

12. Board members ~~will~~ shall not display political advertisements or campaign materials on their person or apparel while on District property or while engaging in official Board business. Board members may have bumper stickers and other political advertising on their vehicles when parked on District property.

13. This policy ~~will~~ shall be enforced in the manner set out in the Board Member Code of Ethics Policy, Descriptor Code BH, Paragraph F.
