

POLITICAL ACTIVITY ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

1. The Governing Board is committed to ensuring each citizen's rights as provided in the Constitution and laws of the State of Florida and the Constitution of the United States. However, Academy employees shall be prohibited from the following:
 - a. Participating in any political activity while on duty.
 - b. Attempting, either directly or indirectly, to coerce political activity or support from any Academy employee.
 - c. Soliciting or attempting to solicit funds from a School employee on behalf of any candidate or party, or issue while on duty
2. Academy employees shall have the right to actively participate in political activities on behalf of any candidate, party, or issue during the time they are not scheduled to be on duty.
3. Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to prohibit a Governing Board member or employee from performing any statutory or assigned duty with respect to any issue which directly affects the Palm Beach School District school system or South Tech Charter Academy, Inc. or which is placed on a ballot by or at the request of the Governing Board.
4. Academy employees who offer themselves as candidates for public office shall notify the Academy President or Management Company Representative immediately upon qualifying for election. They shall file a written statement explaining plans for conducting their campaign so as not to interfere with their job responsibilities.
 - a. Personal leave may be taken for thirty (30) days prior to the election as provided herein.
 - b. Such candidate shall adhere strictly to §104.31 FS, regarding political activity on the part of public officials and employees including teachers.
 - c. A successful candidate for an office requiring a part-time responsibility shall report immediately to the President or Management Company Representative after the election and thereafter when deemed necessary by the President or Management Company Representative or Governing Board to evaluate the compatibility of the dual responsibility.
 - d. A school employee may be granted leave of absence, with loss of full pay, for a specified period of time for the purpose of campaigning or for serving in public office.
5. Political Candidates
 - a. Debates or Forum. If a class or school-sponsored group plans a political debate or forum during the school day, the President or Management Company Representative/teacher/sponsor shall ensure that all candidates for the same public office or who have differing opinions on an issue are given an equal opportunity to participate.
 - b. Appearances. If a political candidate asks to visit a school, the visit must take place before or after the day or lunchtime. If a candidate is invited to speak to a class or other school-related activity during school hours, the requirements for debates or forums are applicable and other candidates for the public office should be invited to visit at the same time or be provided with an equivalent opportunity.
 - c. Every partisan organization or political committee is required to file the names and addresses of its appointed officers, its contributions and expenditures with the Board of Election Supervisors, in accordance with state fair elections practices.

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- d. Nothing in this policy shall preclude or prevent incumbent elected public officials from appearances on School property upon invitation of a Board member or the President or Management Company Representative.

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6. School groups may not participate in events that fall into these classifications:

- a. Public appearances to promote the political candidacy of any person or the furtherance of any partisan political interest.
- b. Appearances that create an undue amount of interference with the regular school program or that cause an excessive amount of student absences for rehearsal or preparation.

7. Use or Distribution of Political Materials during School Hours

- a. General Requirements. No one may distribute political material that is unconstitutional or illegal, that violates state fair election practices, or in the opinion of the President or Management Company Representative poses the potential to disrupt the educational environment.

Campaign materials must contain an authority line that identifies the name and address of the person, candidate, treasurer, chairman or campaign manager who is responsible for the campaign materials.

- b. Manner, Place and Time of Distribution. Persons may distribute political materials on school property provided they consult in advance with the President or Management Company Representative on the manner, time, and place of distribution.
 - 1. Manner: Emphasis will be placed on making materials available to interested persons, rather than having a blanket distribution. Distribution options include:
 - a. A display of materials
 - b. Handouts
 - c. Designated bulletin boards or wall spaces
 - d. School mailboxes
 - 2. Place: Except when related to an instructional program of a voluntary forum or seminar held by students, political materials may not be distributed in classrooms, the media center, or other instructional spaces during the school day. Location options include:
 - a. Building sidewalks and entrance foyers
 - b. Cafeteria or lunch room
 - c. Designated hallways
 - d. Student government rooms or spaces
 - 3. Time: Except when the distribution is related to the instructional program, political materials may not be distributed during class time. Time options to be considered are:
 - a. Before the beginning of the school day
 - b. During lunch periods
 - c. During scheduled activity or flex periods (by students only)
 - d. At the end of the school day
- c. School mailboxes. Political materials may be placed by a candidate, or his/her representative, in individual mailboxes provided for school staff if the distribution is made before or after school hours at a time that the Principal has determined will be the least disruptive to office and school activities. School employees may not distribute political materials during their work hours.

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- d. Interschool (Pony) Mail. Interschool or intra-school mail systems may not be used may not be used to distribute political materials.

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- e. School Employees. Any distribution of political materials or political activity except as part of the instructional program is prohibited during working hours. Distribution includes "PROFS" or e-mail messages.
- f. As part of an Instructional Program. Teachers may use political materials as part of the instructional program, provided the material is germane to course objectives. Any presentation of political materials, or issues, or expression of views, however, must be balanced and fair.

Teachers shall be responsible for providing students with the opportunity to investigate various sides of the topics presented in their courses, particularly in relation to controversial subjects, within such limits as may be imposed by relevance to the course, the maturity level and intellectual ability of the students, and time available.

Teachers shall permit freedom of expression on those topics that are matters of opinion so that students may weigh alternative views and make up their own minds. Students shall be encouraged to examine, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the information available to them before drawing conclusions in order to develop as fully as possible their capacities for rational judgment.

Teachers shall strive to promote tolerance for the opinions of others and the respect of all individuals to hold and express differing opinions.

A teacher may express his/her opinions in regard to political, social, or religious values or issues provided that the total presentation is essentially balanced and fair. He/she shall not use professional contacts with students to further his/her own political aims or views or those of any other individual or group.

Authority: FS 230.22
Implemented: FS 104.31; 231.001; 231.39; 231.085
Reference: Palm Beach School District Policy 2.59
History: New: 8/19/2004; Revised: 7/07/2005; 3/11/2010