

## GBI - STAFF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND ADVOCACY

The Pembroke School Committee recognizes that employees of the school district come from diverse political and social backgrounds and have the same fundamental civic responsibilities and privileges as other citizens. Among these are campaigning for an elective public office and holding an elective or appointive office. However, the School Committee also recognizes that schools should be a politically neutral space where students are taught how to think, not what to think, on political, partisan, and social policy issues. We firmly believe that all administrators and staff members within the district hold positions of authority over the student body, thereby exerting significant influence. Consequently, they bear substantial responsibility.

In connection with campaigning, an employee shall not: use school district facilities, equipment or supplies; discuss their campaign with school personnel or students during the working day; or use any time during the working day for campaigning purposes. Under no circumstances will students be pressured into campaigning for any staff member.

In addition, school district facilities are not public forums for the display or dissemination of an employee's views on political candidates or political, partisan, or social policy issues. During the working day and while on school district property, employees shall not advocate to students concerning any political candidate or political, partisan, or social policy issue nor engage in political, partisan, or social policy electioneering or campaigning. This prohibition includes advocacy through, but is not limited to, the use of pamphlets, stickers, pins, buttons, insignias, flags, banners, posters, signs, photographs, or other similar materials.

For purposes of this policy, "social policy issues" means topics of national, state, or local interest over which the public is deeply divided and are often intensely personal or important to adherents, which are the source of conflicting opinions on the grounds of what is perceived as morally correct or incorrect, or which are the subject of intense partisan advocacy or debate.

This policy does not prohibit:

1. Instruction and study concerning partisan, political, or social policy issues when directly relevant to the curriculum and appropriate to classroom studies given the students' age, class year, and course of study, provided that such instruction is presented in an unbiased fashion and presents an even-handed treatment of all sides of the topic in question.
2. The display of the flag of the United States of America or the flag of any of the fifty states or of any United States military branch, or any flag representing the town or the school district.
3. Students who lead and/or attend after-school clubs who would like to exhibit advocacy associated with their club (including social, political, partisan, or religious). Administration shall

designate approved common areas for such displays. Requests for such displays must be submitted in writing by a student to the school principal/administration and be approved by the school committee. A file of the written request with the name of the student requesting will be kept by administration.

4. Students who wear clothes, jewelry, pins, or flags of a nature that displays their political, partisan, or social policy advocacy, as long as it's not inciteful, vulgar or disruptive to the learning environment.

5. Staff who would like to wear jewelry or pins that represent a part of their own personal identity or culture, as long as it is not done to advocate for any particular group and does not cause disruption to the learning environment in any way.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [55; 71:44; 268A:23](#)

CROSS REF.: IMB, Teaching About Controversial Issues/Controversial Speakers

REPLACES Policy 3.30

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