

POLITICAL ADVOCACY

The Governing Board recognizes the importance of its responsibility to advocate actively fiscal and public policy that supports the district's schools and the children in the community. To the extent possible, the Board shall be proactive in defining the district's advocacy agenda based on the needs of the district and the direction set forth in the district's vision and goals.

The Board's responsibility as an advocate for the district may include lobbying at the local, state and national levels.

In its advocacy role, the Board may identify issues that will affect its schools and the children in its community, establish goals and priorities for legislative advocacy, solicit community input and adopt legislative positions.

Communication

Legislative Issues

The Board may provide fair and impartial information about legislative issues affecting schools and children and shall inform the community about its legislative advocacy activities. However, the Board shall not use public resources or a Board meeting as a forum to urge the public to lobby the legislature on behalf of the district.

Board members individually can promote a cause and encourage the public to contact their legislators, but not on district time, using district resources, and/or as an elected body in a public Board meeting.

As necessary, the Superintendent or designee may draft legislative proposals which serve the district's interests.

Bond Ballot Measure

The Superintendent or designee may use district resources to provide students, parents/guardians and community members with fair and impartial information related to ballot measures, including information about the impact of ballot measures on the district.

Upon request, Board members and district administrators may appear at any time before a citizens' group to explain why the Board called for an election on a bond measure and to answer questions.

If the presentation occurs during working hours, the district representative shall not urge a citizens' group to vote for or against the bond measure.

For informational purposes, the Superintendent or designee may conduct a poll related to a ballot issue. Such a poll shall not advocate a particular position on the issue.

Coalition Building

Because local governments also make decisions which impact the district's schools and may collaborate with the district on advocacy issues, the Board and the Superintendent or designee shall work to establish ongoing relationship with City and regional officials and agencies and inform them of the potential effect of local issues on schools.

In order to strengthen legislative advocacy efforts, the district may work with other school districts, organizations, and coalitions and may join associations whose representatives lobby on behalf of their members.

Ballot Measures

The Board may study the potential effect of ballot measures on the district's schools. Any Board discussion of the effect of such measures shall include an opportunity for Board members, staff and members of the public to speak on all sides of the issue. Following such study, the Board may adopt positions in support of or in opposition to ballot measures of importance to education.

The Board's positions shall be publicized only through normal district procedures for reporting Board actions and in a manner that does not attempt to influence voters.

Restrictions

No district funds, services, supplies or equipment shall be used to urge the support or defeat of any ballot measure or candidate, including any candidate for election to the Board.

District resources shall not be used to disseminate campaign literature or to purchase advertisements, bumper stickers, posters or similar promotional items that advocate an election result.

Legal Advocacy

The Board recognizes that some issues are more appropriately addressed judicially rather than legislatively. When a legal issue is likely to set a state or national precedent, the district may join with other districts or parties in order to challenge the issue through litigations or other appropriate means.

Disclaimer

This policy addresses political activities conducted by the Governing Board or district staff on behalf of the district. It does not apply to individuals acting on their own time at their own expense or on their own authority. Individuals have board rights under the First Amendment to speak out on public issues, establish and participate in political action committees or engage in other political activities as private citizens.

Revised: March 14, 2007
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