



POLICY P.122.GOV

TITLE: ELECTION ACTIVITIES

Date issued: November 2007

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Authorization: Board: 13 November 2007

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide a framework to manage political activity related to municipal, provincial, and federal elections or by-elections and to limit the use of District resources in electoral campaigns.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

- 2.1 **Board** means the Board of Trustees.
- 2.2 **Board Resources** means staff time, fax, telephone, cellphone, laptop, tablet, website, newsletter, email, board or school social media accounts or any Board-issued resources and other information technology devices given to a trustee for their work use as a trustee of the Board.
- 2.3 **Candidate** means any person registered to run in an election as defined below.
- 2.4 **District** means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 2.5 **Election** means any municipal, provincial, or federal election or by-election.
- 2.6 **Incumbent** means any person who has been elected or appointed and currently holds any school board, municipal, provincial, or federal office.

3.0 POLICY

Guiding Principles

- 3.1 The Board believes that election processes are an important part of the democratic process and can provide a rich opportunity for students to learn about the democratic process;

- 3.2 The Board recognizes its responsibility to protect the integrity of the election process by affording all electoral candidates equitable access and opportunity in election related activities in schools or the district;
- 3.3 The Board recognizes that school district resources shall not be used to support the election campaigns of candidates and/or political parties; and
- 3.4 The Board recognizes the importance of maintaining an appropriate separation between political and administrative duties in relation to election activities and decision-making processes.
- 3.5 Schools shall use election periods as learning opportunities for enhancing curriculum delivery wherever appropriate.
 - a) Community service hours for secondary diploma requirements may be accumulated for work on a political campaign if the work occurs outside of regular school hours.
 - b) Schools are encouraged to have students participate in programs such as STUDENT VOTE and/or candidates events for students.
- 3.6 School Councils, in consultation with their school communities, shall determine the need and nature of the meetings that they sponsor with political candidates. Where school councils choose to provide access for candidates, fair and equitable access shall be provided to all candidates.
- 3.7 Staff shall not endorse a candidate or political party while undertaking their duties as an agent or employee of the Board.
- 3.8 Personal information regarding students, parents, and employees will not be provided to any candidates, their staff, or volunteers. Any information that is in the public domain should be provided by means of the regular requests for information.

Candidate Access to OCSDB Schools and School-related Activities

- 3.9 Incumbent school board and provincial or federal elected representatives may visit schools in their own zone or constituency at any time in the course of their regular constituency duties. These types of duties include ceremonial duties (i.e. school openings, award ceremonies) and those activities that an incumbent would be invited to attend outside the election campaign period for a particular purpose. They shall not campaign or conduct themselves in any way that may be perceived as campaigning.
- 3.10 Any campaign candidate who requests access to visit a school will be governed by the following parameters:
 - a) Once an election is called, any candidate, including an incumbent, who requests access to the school during the instructional day, must clearly state the purpose of the visit to the principal;
 - b) Where that purpose is determined by the principal to be campaigning, access shall be denied; and

- c) During the campaign period, any individual candidates who are authorized to visit a school shall not be accompanied by media and shall not use the visit to promote their candidacy.
- 3.11 The principal shall authorize access to schools by election candidates only if the access supplements learning objectives. In this case, fair and equitable access to District facilities shall be granted to all under the following conditions:
- a) No political, partisan activities by individual candidates that are part of an election campaign shall be permitted;
 - b) The use of students or Board delivery services to distribute print or electronic materials that openly lobby for a political party or candidate shall not be permitted;
 - c) Activities that are approved by the principal should respect equal access for all candidates and should provide learning opportunities, such as all candidates' debates; and
 - d) Access to Board facilities beyond the times that would be ordinarily managed by the school shall be subject to Policy P.135.CON Community Use of School Facilities.
 - e) Board materials, equipment, and property shall not be used for political purposes;

Candidate Use of Board Resources

3.12 During the electoral campaign:

- a) The use of District fund or resources for any campaign-related purposes shall not be permitted. This includes any campaign expenditures, the display of campaign-related materials in Board offices, schools, at meetings or events, at OCDSB school-related events and/or use of the Board's email, voicemail, or website services for campaign-related purposes;
- b) The use of the services of District staff while undertaking their duties as an agent or employee of the Board to assist or advise in the preparation, distribution or communication of any election-related material shall not be permitted;
- c) Staff shall not endorse a candidate or political party while undertaking their duties as an agent or employee of the Board;
- d) The use of the Board logo or telephone number, email address or other contact information including any Board branding in any campaign-related material shall not be permitted; and
- e) Incumbent Board members shall ensure that all campaign-related expenses are not charged to an individual Board member allocation or to any Board account.

Election Compliance Audit Committee

3.13 The Board shall establish a Municipal Election Compliance Audit Committee as a statutory committee for the purpose of administering requests for compliance audit in

accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Elections Act. The Terms of Reference for the Committee are attached as Appendix A to Board Procedure PR.599.GOV Municipal Election Compliance Audit Committee.

- 3.14 The Board shall designate the responsibility for the appointment of members to the Municipal Election Compliance Audit Committee to the Director of Education/Secretary to the Board.
- 3.15 The Director shall, on or before October 1st of every municipal election year, advise the Board of the appointments to the Committee.

4.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Municipal Elections Act

Education Act

Board Policy P.014.SCO: School Councils

Board Policy P.046.SCO: School Communications: Distribution of Materials to the Home Via Students

Board Procedure P.536.SCO: School Communications: Distribution of Materials to the Home via Students

Board Policy P.135.CON: Community Use of School Facilities

Board Procedure PR.507.CON: Community Use of School Facilities

Board Procedure PR.599.GOV Municipal Election Compliance Audit Committee