

8/2/18

Dear GPS Principals,

This letter is being sent to all Gilbert School District Principals on behalf of Educate Gilbert. We are a group of parents, educators, business owners and residents of Gilbert who have a vested interest in education in our community.

We addressed Superintendent McCord and School Board Members on July 31 emphasizing the importance of having no politics in our schools as we enter into a new school year and highly contentious political season. We reminded them of the state laws and school policies that prevent political propaganda on school campuses, political efforts by school employees and the use of school resources in any political efforts.

In our efforts to keep our schools nonpartisan, we feel it is our duty to remind all school administrators of these laws and policies. Our goal is to prevent any conflicts from arising, limit any potentially adverse environments between teachers and parents, deter any future school disruptions and most importantly --- protect our students and their right to an education.

Last year after the walkout Superintendent McCord issued a memo asking employees not to wear Red For Ed shirts because it was a distraction and violation of dress code policy and potentially ARS 15-511 (the use of school resources or employees to influence elections). There was question as to whether or not Red For Ed was tied to a political effort. This summer Red For Ed supporters collected signatures for the Invest In Education Act which is poised to be a proposition on the November ballot. We believe that this clearly demonstrates that Red For Ed, which involves largely teachers and staff, is tied to a political cause and therefore the prohibitions of ARS 15-511 do apply.

We have launched a No Politics In Our Schools Campaign to educate parents, teachers and others on these laws and policies, what to watch out for and how to report violations. A list of activities that may be potential violations is attached for your reference. Any violations that occur on your campus will be reported to you and may be escalated to the Attorney General and the Arizona Department of Education.

We hope that you will work with us to ensure that your school and employees maintain a professional nonpartisan environment that is focused on student instruction. If you have any questions on the campaign or our efforts please visit [www.EducateGilbert.com](http://www.EducateGilbert.com). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
*Educate Gilbert*

Any questions or comments can be submitted through our website at [www.EducateGilbert.com](http://www.EducateGilbert.com).

ARS 15-511 prohibits any person acting on behalf of a school district or a person who aids another person acting on behalf of a school district from influencing the outcomes of elections. This includes the support or opposition of a ballot measure. The following activities/efforts may be in violation of ARS 15-511 or other school policies and may be reported. These activities apply to Red For Ed, Invest In Ed, Save Our Schools or any group tied to a political cause as well as any political efforts advertising a specific candidate or ballot position.

- **ATTIRE**-T-shirts or any other wearable items (wristbands, pins, stickers, etc.) that promote any political efforts may be prohibited. Dress code policy states that employees are not permitted to wear t-shirts with logos or advertising (exception of manufacturer logos and approved school spirit shirts). Employees may try to wear red on Wednesdays again. While they are not prevented from wearing a solid color, if done in such solidarity that it becomes excessive it may be perceived as a disruption to the school environment.
- **PERSONAL PROPERTY**- Any personal property stored or brought on school property that advertises a political effort and is in plain view of students/employees may be prohibited. Employees personal vehicles parked on school grounds may have political materials like bumper stickers but if it becomes excessive it can be perceived as a disruption to the school environment.
- **TECHNOLOGY/SOCIAL MEDIA**-Employee's gilbertschools.net email address may not be used in any political efforts. Employees may not use school provided technology or devices to endorse or promote a cause, political position or candidate. The posting of political propaganda on any school sponsored website or social media forum is prohibited. This may also extend to any organization or group that is recognized, endorsed or sponsored by the school such as PTSO's. Most of these organizations have bylaws with language that they shall not directly or indirectly participate in any political campaign and may jeopardize their 501(c)(3) status if doing so.
- **SCHOOL FACILITIES**- School grounds may not be used in any political efforts which may include walk-ins or using any school as a meeting site. If organized walk-ins allow individuals or groups to have a time or audience on school property it may be considered that the school is opening up a forum for that to occur.
- **CIRCULARS ONSITE**-Political propaganda may not be distributed or posted on school grounds including in classrooms, employee break rooms, etc.
- **STUDENTS**- Teachers may not engage students in discussions about or give assignments regarding political efforts that may influence the outcome of any election.
- **EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT**-Employees are prohibited from engaging in or recruiting others for political efforts on school grounds. The collection of campaign funds and/or the solicitation of campaign workers is prohibited on school property.
- **EMPLOYEE DISCRIMINATION**-Any employee or administrator who uses their position to engage, recruit or promote any political efforts or to discriminate against any employee who is not part of these efforts may be considered a violation.
- **PARENT/STUDENT DISCRIMINATION**-Any parent who feels that they or their child is being treated differently because of their lack of support of any political efforts may be considered a violation. This includes any behavior they are subject to at school or in relation to any school sponsored club, organization or event.
- **SCHOOL RESOURCES**- Employees are prohibited from using school resources in political efforts including the expenditure of monies, accounts, credit, facilities, vehicles, postage, telecommunications, computer hardware and software, web pages, personnel, equipment, materials, buildings or any other thing of value of the school.

School policies that are also associated with these include: GBEB- Staff Conduct, GBEB-R Staff Dress Code, GBEB-C- Gifts To And Solicitations By Staff Members, GBEB-F- Staff Use Of Social Media And Electronic Devices, GBI - Staff Participation In Political Activities, IJNDB-R -- Electronic Information Systems (EIS) Unacceptable Or Unauthorized Use, KD-- Public Information And Communications, KE-- Public Concerns And Complaints, KEB-R --Public Concerns / Complaints About Personnel (Regulation), KHA -- Public Solicitations In Schools, KHB --Advertising In Schools, KHC --Distribution Of Promotional Materials.