

LETTER TO GPS PRINCIPALS

August 10, 2018

Dear GPS Principals

Today you likely noticed several employees at your school wearing vests. So did we. We were made aware of Red For Ed's plan and efforts to encourage educators to wear vests to school on Fridays beginning today to show their support of the Invest In Education Act.

On behalf of Educate Gilbert, you may recall that last week we sent a memo reminding you of the state statutes and district policies that prohibit political activities on school campuses. This includes wearing any attire that may influence the outcome of elections. We believe that the vests displayed today in our schools is a violation of ARS 15-511 and several district policies.

Arizona Educators United (AEU) publicly promoted the wearing of vests to symbolize support of the Invest In Education ballot proposition. Starting early this morning, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were flooded with pictures of employees showing off their vests prominently on our school campuses. In some of these photos employees were even wearing Invest In Ed and Red For Ed pins. Every photo was clearly tied to the cause and were mostly posted in AEU, Invest In Ed and Red For Ed social media groups.

Showing support for a ballot proposition on school grounds is a violation of ARS 15-511. Between the pre-promotion of the event and the feedback witnessed today, we feel there is ample evidence connecting the vests to Invest In Ed and a clear intent on behalf of the participating employees to communicate a political message on school grounds. The vests captured the attention of some parents who asked employees why they were wearing them. It prompted responses from some that they were in support of Invest In Ed which is a clear violation of ARS 15-511. The display of vests was also a distraction from the school's educational program. Some of the vests worn were construction type vests which is not an appearance that reflects their position and could be considered a violation of school dress code policy. Many photos shared online today were posted during school hours and district policy states that employees are responsible for the content of their posting on any form of technology through any form of communication. The policy also states that campaigning and other election activities must be done during off-duty hours when not working in an official district capacity or using district provided technology or equipment.

We have already consulted with the Attorney General's office to make them aware of this situation and discuss our options to file individual complaints for violation of ARS 15-511 if this activity continues. We have also shared this memo with Superintendent Shane McCord and the Gilbert District Governing Board. We have asked them to send out a memo reminding employees of the laws/policies regarding politics in our schools and that it is not in the best interest of the students or the district's education mission to push these limits.

We are committed to keeping our schools nonpartisan for the benefit of the students. Today's activities show that employees will go to any length to try and communicate political messages

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in our schools and we will not tolerate it. We find it hard to believe that our school administrators are oblivious to these efforts including the continued push to wear red on Wednesdays and are disappointed nothing has been done to stop it.

We hope that you will be proactive to ensure that your school and employees maintain a professional nonpartisan environment that is focused on student instruction. In the meantime, we will continue to monitor our schools and alert you with any concerns in hopes to resolve them before having to take any further action. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Educate Gilbert

Working together to enhance education in our town

<http://www.EducateGilbert.com>

Educate Gilbert is a grassroots group of parents, educators, business owners and residents of Gilbert who are vested in the quality and enhancement of local education. The group supports competitive pay for staff, district financial transparency, responsible school choice, nonpartisan schools, parent involvement and enhanced school security. For more information visit www.EducateGilbert.com.