

School Board Policies To Consider That May Be Related to Politics In Schools

The following are excerpts taken from the Gilbert Public School District Governing Board policies. These policies may be related to politics in schools in areas including but not limited to: staff conduct, dress code, social media use, participation in political activities, student communication, promotional materials, school advertising, solicitation and the complaint process. If you believe a school employee has violated a board policy and want to report it, please refer to section KE for the process of making a complaint. To review the full policies, visit

<https://www.boarddocs.com/az/gpsaz/Board.nsf/Public#>

GBEB- Staff Conduct

Employee Ethics-Employees are expected to maintain high ethical standards in the performance of their job duties and in their relationships with other employees, students, and community members. Examples of the standards to which employees are expected to adhere include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Refrain from using school contacts and privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views, or propaganda of any kind. Avoid using position for personal gain through political, social, religious, economic, or other influence.

GBEBA-R Staff Dress Code

All Employees' Appearance Should Reflect The Following: Category 1 Employees: Office Personnel, Teachers, Administrators, Psychologists, Nurses and Health Assistants, Social Workers, Instructional Assistants and Para-Professionals.

- No hats inside the building
- No t-shirts (logo/advertising)

GBEBC- Gifts To And Solicitations By Staff Members

Staff-member solicitation(s) of other employees for any outside profit, nonprofit, or charitable groups, institutions, or organizations must have the approval of the Superintendent or designee in advance. No other solicitations shall be made by or of employees during official duty time.

GBEF- Staff Use Of Social Media And Electronic Devices

The Governing Board expects employees to utilize social media communications and electronic devices in a professional manner at all times. Social media is defined as the use of web-based and mobile technologies to communicate through interactive dialogue. Mobile technologies are any devices that include, but not limited to: transmit sounds, images, texts, messages, videos, or electronic information; electronically records, plays or stores information; or accesses the Internet or private communication or information networks through the use of smartphones and other mobile technologies and subsequent generations of these and related devices.

District employees:

- shall be responsible for the content of their posting on any form of technology
- shall ensure that technologies used to communicate with students and District staff are maintained separately from personal accounts such as Twitter and Facebook
- shall not use District-owned or provided technologies to endorse or promote a product, a cause, political position or candidate
- shall be aware of his/her affiliation with the District and ensure the related content of any posting on District-owned or provided technologies adhere to policies relative to staff conduct with colleagues, community members, parents and students

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination and may constitute a violation of federal or state law in which case appropriate law enforcement shall be notified.

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GBEF-R Staff Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication (Regulation)

The regulations listed below shall be followed to protect reputations of employees, students and parents as well as adhere to State and/or District rules and policies.

Regulations for District/Professional Use

The gilbertschools.net address attached to an employee name/or e-mail implies that the employee is acting on behalf of the District and, as such, is expected to conduct themselves professionally. When using a District email address and/or equipment to participate in any social media forum, employee actions are public and employees will be held fully accountable for any and all activities. Any information shared via email, social networking sites and/or blogs regarding the business of the District, whether using personal or District equipment, is considered public record.

Regulations for Personal Use

The personal use of social media forums creates the risk of affecting the professional career of an employee. To that end, it is vital that the employee conduct themselves in such a way that does not adversely affect their position with the District. Below are recommendations when using social media forums for personal use:

- If an employee identifies themselves as a District employee, the employee should remember that any action may reflect not only on the employee but on the District as well.

Staff/Student Use

- Employees should not communicate with students using personal social media forums except for school business. All electronic communication with students should be conducted through a District managed/approved social media forums. This includes becoming "friends" or allowing students to access the personal page of an employee to communicate.
- Employees will refrain from creating personal social media forums that permit social interaction with students enrolled in the District. This does not include approved professional social media forums that may be used for work-related purposes (homework blogs, school sports teams, etc.).
- Employees shall notify parents of their intention to use approved District social media forums to communicate with students and the intended purpose of such communications. All ethical expectations for appropriate employee/student relationships shall be followed.
- Employees shall refrain from providing their personal email address to students currently enrolled in the District. Employees should only provide their official District email address as a way to communicate with students or parents regarding District and/or school related business.

GBI - Staff Participation In Political Activities

The Board recognizes the right of its employees, as citizens, to engage in political activity. However, school time may not be used for political purposes. Staff members who intend to engage in political activities shall be guided by the following:

- No employee shall engage in political activities upon property under the jurisdiction of the Board, unless permission has been granted for that purpose through the "Community Use of School Facilities" policy of the Board.
- Campaigning and other election activities must be done in off-duty hours, when not working in an official capacity for the District, and without the participation of District employees or students acting in the capacity of District or school representatives.
- The use of school district resources, including facilities and equipment, for District sponsored forums or debates are permitted if the District remains impartial and the events are purely informational and provide an equal opportunity to all viewpoints.

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- Invitations to participate in election activities on a given campus, except when extended by groups leasing or using school facilities, shall be extended only when such invitations are extended to all candidates for the office. The rental use of District property by a private person or entity that may lawfully attempt to influence the outcome of an election is permitted if it does not occur at the same time and place as a related District-sponsored forum-debate.
- The use of District equipment, supplies, materials, buildings, or other resources to influence the outcome of any election is not permitted.
- Political circulars or petitions may not be posted or distributed in school.
- The collection of campaign funds and/or the solicitation of campaign workers is prohibited on school property.
- The use of students for writing or addressing material intended to influence the outcome of any election, or the distribution of such materials to or by students, is forbidden.
- Employees of the District may not use the authority of their position to influence the vote or political activities of any subordinate employee.

District employees who hold elective or appointive office are not entitled to time off from their school duties for reasons incident to such offices, except as such time may qualify under the leave policies of the Board. The discussion and study of politics and political issues, when such discussion and study are appropriate to classroom studies, are not precluded under the provisions of this policy. The District may distribute informational reports on a proposed budget override election as provided in A.R.S. 15-481 and on a proposed bond election as provided in A.R.S. 15-491 if those informational reports represent factual information in a neutral manner, except for those arguments allowed under A.R.S. 15-481. Nothing in this policy shall preclude the District from producing and distributing impartial information on elections other than District budget override elections or reporting on official actions of the Governing Board. Pursuant to the Sections 4(f)(4) and 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, informational reports and any other materials of information relating to the electoral process, shall be in the Spanish language, as well as in the English language. This policy shall apply only when an employee is serving as an agent of or working in an official capacity for the District. District employees shall be permitted time as provided in statute, if required, to vote in the primary or general election.

IJNDB-R -- Electronic Information Systems (EIS) Unacceptable Or Unauthorized Use

Internet and World Wide Web: District employees, students, parents, and other authorized community members may have access to the Internet and World Wide Web through the district's wired and wireless infrastructure. The district retains sole discretion in determining unacceptable and unauthorized EIS use. The list below includes, but is not limited to, the types of unacceptable and unauthorized EIS uses.

- Using the system for entertainment, commercial or political lobbying purposes.

An individual search will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that a user has violated district policies, procedures, or the law. The investigation will be reasonable and related to the suspected violation. Files created by district employees on district computers may be accessible under state public records laws.

KD-- Public Information And Communications

The Superintendent has the responsibility of keeping the public informed as to the purpose, goals, methods, and progress of the educational program. Accuracy, reliability, and leadership in this area will develop confidence and understanding, creating better relationships between the District and the community. All school personnel are responsible for good public relations. All written notices, bulletins, newsletters, and matters pertaining to students are to be approved prior to release. Matters that pertain to an individual school are to be approved by the principal prior to release. Matters that pertain to the District are to be submitted for approval to the Superintendent prior to release. Non-school originated material of a commercial, political, or religious nature shall not be released through the students.

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KE-- Public Concerns And Complaints

Whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a board member as an individual, it will be referred to the school administration for study and resolution, if possible. The administration will develop a procedure for courteously receiving complaints and will take steps to make proper replies to complainants. If resolution of a problem cannot be accomplished at the building level, either party may refer the matter to the Superintendent for review. The Board will consider hearing citizen complaints when they have not been resolved by the administration. Matters referred to the Board as a whole must be in writing, should clearly identify the problem, and specifically state the desired action. The Board will not consider or act on complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate administrative level.

KE-R --Public Concerns And Complaints (Regulation)

- If a member of the community has a complaint, the following procedures are intended to assist in its resolution: If the matter relates to a student, and it is appropriate, talk with the student's teacher. If the matter remains unresolved, talk with the building administrator.
- If resolution of a problem cannot be accomplished at the building level, either party may refer the matter to the Superintendent for review.
- When a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a board member as an individual, it will be referred to the school administration for study and resolution, if possible.
- The Board as a whole will consider hearing citizen complaints when they have not been resolved by the administration.
- The Board as a whole, or individually, will not consider or act on complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate administrative level.
- Matters referred to the Board as a whole must be in writing, should clearly identify the problem, and should specifically state the desired action.

KEB-R --Public Concerns / Complaints About Personnel (Regulation)

A member of the public may have a concern or complaint about a faculty member, staff member, or administrator. After having met personally with the employee or the supervisor of said employee, he/she may file a formal complaint using the procedure outlined below:

Step 1 The complainant should complete a Complaint Form (See Exhibit KEB-EA) or provide a typed document containing all of the requested information.

Step 2 The complainant should submit the form to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Gilbert Unified School District, 140 South Gilbert Road, Gilbert, AZ 85296.

Step 3 After reviewing the complaint, the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources may:

schedule a meeting between the complainant, the employee and the employee's supervisor; or assign an appropriate administrator to meet or otherwise communicate with the complainant and to help ensure that the complainant's concerns/complaints are completely understood by the District and to collect any other relevant information from the complainant.

Step 4 The assigned administrator will conduct whatever follow-up activity or investigation as may be necessary to address the complainant's concerns/complaints including, but not necessarily limited to, obtaining information and input from the individual who is the subject of the complaint.

Step 5 After completing the investigation, the assigned administrator may offer the complainant the opportunity to meet to discuss the assigned administrator's findings and conclusions and also provide a written response to the

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complaint; or the assigned administrator may provide only a written response to the complaint. This step should typically be completed within 15 working days (working days are all days Monday through Friday except Federal and School District holidays) from the date the complaint was submitted.

Step 6 If the complainant is not satisfied with the assigned administrator's response, the complainant may submit a written request to have the Superintendent review the matter, utilizing form KEB-EB. The request should be submitted to the Superintendent within ten working days of the date of the assigned administrator's written response to the complaint.

The Superintendent may offer the complainant the opportunity to meet to discuss the matter, or may simply review all material relating to the matter and prepare a written reply to the complainant. This step should typically be completed within 15 working days of the date the request for review is submitted. The superintendent may ask an out of district person to investigate the complaint. If this occurs the investigation may take longer than 15 days. This step will typically be the final step in the complaint process, unless the Superintendent determines that the Governing Board should hear the complaint.

If the Superintendent is the subject of the complaint, the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources shall be the assigned administrator in charge of investigating the complaint. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, the assigned administrator will follow the appropriate procedures to determine if the Governing Board wishes to consider the matter.

KHA --Public Solicitations In Schools

The District shall strive to safeguard the students and their parents from money-raising plans of outside organizations, commercial enterprises, and individuals. This policy shall apply particularly to ticket sales and sales of articles or services except those directly sponsored by school authorities or school organizations. Solicitation of employees and/or students by any outside profit, nonprofit, or charitable groups, institutions, or organizations must have the approval of the Superintendent's designee in advance.

KHB --Advertising In Schools

Advertising Standards

Unless otherwise prohibited by law, nothing herein shall be construed to prevent the District or a District school from the sale of advertising space in accordance with A.R.S. 15-342.27(a) subject to the following conditions:

- Advertisements shall not promote any particular political interest, candidate, party or ballot measure.
- Advertisements shall not be contrary to the best interests of the District or its students, or which might result in public criticism of the District or its advertising program, or which promote a political, religious or other issue-oriented viewpoint.

KHC --Distribution Of Promotional Materials

The Gilbert Public Schools Governing Board believes the mission of the District is to educate its students. The relationship between Gilbert Public Schools and community organizations that support our students is very valuable, and the District wishes to cooperate with those organizations. However, because of the District's mandate to educate students and to treat all community and other outside organizations in a consistent manner, Gilbert Public Schools' students will not receive, for classroom distribution, written information pertaining to the activities of these organizations. GPS will allow these community and outside organizations to display/distribute their information in a kiosk located in the office of each school, and/or provide an electronic copy of their flyer to be posted on our District website, as long as this information meets the policy guidelines. Gilbert Public Schools neither endorses nor sponsors the organizations or activities promoted in these materials.

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