

OYSTER RIVER COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD	Policy Code: GBI
Review to Policy Committee: August 25, 2011 Policy Committee Review: October 13, 2021 & Nov. 18, 2021 School Board First Read: December 1, 2021 School Board Second Read/Adoption: December 15, 2021	Page 1 of 1 Category: Optional

### **STAFF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

The Oyster River School Board recognizes that employees of the school district have certain civic rights. Employees, as citizens, have a right to engage in political activities. Nevertheless, this right to engage in political activities may be reasonably conditioned by the School Board as an employer. This policy defines the types of conduct that are not permitted.

Employees will not advocate their personal political views or engage in political activities defined in this policy during hours of official employment. Employees will not use students in any way to promote their personal political views. Employees will not misrepresent their political views as those of the school division. Examples of activities that are not permitted include:

1. Representing personal political views as those of the school district; employees should always take adequate precautions to distinguish between their personal political views and those of the school district.
2. Interfering with colleague's exercise of political and citizenship rights and responsibilities; and
3. Using school district privileges, school division resources, including but not limited to the District e-mail system or working time to promote political candidates or for partisan political activities.

It is the intent of this policy that political activities be narrowly defined to mean only "partisan political activities." Partisan political activities would include the posting of political circulars or petitions, collection and/or solicitation of campaign funds, solicitations for campaign workers and other activities of a clearly partisan nature, including those activities relating to local, state, or federal elections.

Nothing in this policy is to be construed as precluding discussion of contentious viewpoints, including discrimination, in current events or historical subjects, or conducting mock elections, debates, conventions or similar simulated political activities, where such discussion or activity is primarily intended as part of a larger course of academic instruction.

District employees as public employees have a full right to publicly discuss and give opinions as an individual on their own time on all matters concerning any government entity and its policies. This policy recognizes public employee freedom of expression as set forth in RSA Chapter 98-E and other law and is intended to address only employee speech when the employee is engaging in his or her work as an employee and is speaking in furtherance of the employee's official duties.

Legal Reference:

- RSA 193:40, Prohibition on Teaching Discrimination
- RSA Chapter 98-E Public Employee Freedom of Expression