



Use of Board Resources During an Election Campaign

Board Received: April 23, 2018 Review Date: April of an election year

Context

It is the responsibility of the Grand Erie District School Board to ensure that in compliance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Election Finances Act, 1990, and the Canada Elections Act, 2000, public funds are not used for any election-related purposes, including the promotion of or opposition to the candidacy of a person for elected office.

The Board believes that all trustees, candidates for any elected position and staff members, as representatives of the Grand Erie District School Board, are entrusted with the responsibility for appropriately using Board resources at all times including during election campaign periods. This supports accountable stewardship of Board resources and contributes to confidence in public education.

Application

Board resources provided or available to trustees are for the exclusive purpose of carrying out their official duties as an elected official of the Grand Erie District School Board.

The use of Board resources for partisan activities or to campaign for any political office is not permitted.

Campaign Periods

The Grand Erie District School Board has identified the following parameters with regard to campaign periods.

- (a) The municipal election campaign period shall begin on May 1 until Voting Day in a regular municipal election year. This period applies to everyone, regardless of whether nomination papers have been filed.
- (b) For a provincial election, the campaign period begins the day an individual is declared as a candidate and lasts until Voting Day. At a minimum, this period shall last from the date the Writ of Election is signed by the Lieutenant Governor until Voting Day.
- (c) For a federal election, the campaign period begins when an individual is declared as a candidate and lasts until Voting Day. At a minimum, this period shall last from the date the Governor General dissolves Parliament to Voting Day.
- (d) The campaign period for any by-election is determined by the appropriate legislation including the Municipal Elections Act, Election Act the Canada Elections Act.

Use of Staff Resources

Staff resources may not be used for partisan activities or campaigning. This includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) preparing or disseminating materials, including, but not limited to newsletters, school newsletters, pamphlets, buttons, information tables, business cards, flyers, social media, speeches/greetings, brochures, websites, photos or videos,
- (b) scheduling and providing support at meetings or events with Board staff, students or other groups,
- (c) preparing speaking remarks or correspondence related to any campaign or which may be perceived to be partisan,
- (d) supplying personal information about students, parents, community members or staff members for the purposes of campaigning,
- (e) consolidating information available publicly, and
- (f) discussing or providing political or campaign advice.

During the Campaign

- Trustees will not use their school board-issued resources for any campaign-related purposes. This includes displaying election-related materials in Board offices, board meetings, board events or school-related events.
- Trustees will not distribute or use the Board logo or Board telephone number or other contact information, including any Board branding in any campaign-related material.
- Trustees must ensure that all campaign-related material is funded by the trustee in their capacity as a candidate.
- Trustees will not use the Board's email system to distribute election-related electronic messages and will not use the board's voicemail system to record election-related messages.
- Trustees will use their personal information technology resources to create and use social media accounts created for campaign purposes. These are to be separate and distinct from any accounts used by the candidate in their position as a trustee.
- Trustees will not distribute (print, electronic or other method) any election-related materials via students or parents/guardians.

Other Activities during the Campaign Period

School Visits – by Trustees

- Trustees who are seeking re-election may continue to perform their duties which may include their continued participation in local events held in schools while they serve their term of office. Trustees should not participate in activities at school events that could be perceived as campaigning.

School Visits – by Candidates

- Requests for visits by candidates, for the purposes of campaigning, are not considered appropriate. *All Candidates Meetings* are encouraged and may occur on school property. These are sometimes arranged by school councils and community groups and usually held at night during non-school hours.

School-Related Events

- Candidates are not permitted to campaign at school-related events intended for the students and parents/guardians of that school. Current trustees may continue to attend and participate in school-related activities but shall not campaign or conduct themselves in any way that may be perceived as campaigning.

Campaign Involvement – Student

- Students are encouraged to participate in curriculum-based activities (Civics) and democratic awareness programs such as Student Vote. Secondary students may choose to earn their Community Involvement Hours by participating in a legitimate election campaign. It is strongly recommended that students not volunteer for a candidate seeking election for their local school board. Any campaign or election activities must be done outside of school hours and not on school property.

Reference Documents:

- Bylaw 28 – Trustee Code of Ethics
- *Municipal Elections Act*
- *Education Act*