



Advocacy & Elections

Guidance for Educators

Ark. Code Ann. § 7-1-103: It shall be unlawful for any public servant to devote any time or labor during usual office hours toward the campaign of any other candidate for office or for the nomination to any office, or to circulate an initiative or referendum petition or to solicit signatures, or to use any office or room furnished at public expense to distribute any campaign materials. It shall be unlawful for any campaign banners, campaign signs, or other campaign literature to be placed on any vehicles belonging to the State or any municipality, county, or school district in the state.

Ark. Code Ann. § 21-1-207: No employee of the state, a county, a municipality, a school district, or any other political subdivision of this state shall be deprived of his or her right to run as a candidate for an elective office or to express his or her opinion as a citizen on political subjects, unless as necessary to meet the requirements of federal law as pertains to employees.

DO'S & DON'TS OF ADVOCACY

DO

- Do use personal time and resources to advocate for/against candidates, or ballot questions.
- Do engage in political activity outside of work hours to the extent that it does not affect the performance of your work duties or adversely affect important working relationships.
- Do discuss political issues or campaigns that directly benefit your school with others on your personal time. Know the issues, be informed.
- Do send personal e-mails and/or letters from home, using your own computer, paper, and postage. Be respectful.
- Do donate personal resources to a campaign.
- Do place a campaign bumper sticker on a personal vehicle.
- Do follow local policies regarding the sharing of informational materials that do not advocate for or against a candidate or ballot measure.
- Do exercise your civic privilege of campaigning for an elective public office. Notify your superintendent in writing at the earliest possible moment of the office which you intend to seek and whether or not you wish to continue employment if elected. School districts may not grant paid leave for the purpose of permitting the employee to engage in public service or related activities.
- Do invite legislators to visit your school and attend/speak at events such as recognition ceremonies and back-to-school breakfast for teachers. Show them the great instruction and innovative programs in your school/district.

DON'T

- Don't use school resources (including property, time, or funds) for election-related purposes.
- Don't engage in political activities on school grounds or during work hours.
- Don't use students for preparation or dissemination of campaign materials.
- Don't distribute political materials on school property or send home information with students supporting or opposing a candidate for office or ballot measure.
- Don't distribute or otherwise seek signatures on petitions of any kind on school property.
- Don't post political materials on school property.
- Don't discuss political matters with students, in the classroom, in other than circumstances appropriate to the curriculum frameworks and objectives of the class.
- Don't use school phones and e-mail to support or oppose a candidate for office or ballot question.
- Don't post on social media to advocate for/against candidates or ballot measures while on contract time; follow your school's social media policy.
- Don't permit supporters to utilize school property during the school day or during school activities to campaign or solicit signatures for a petition.

School Districts May:

- Teach about the lawmaking and election process.
- Conduct voter registration drives.
- Encourage students to debate and discuss election issues at appropriate time and place.
- Host and/or facilitate candidate or issue forums on school property.
- Provide information to employees and district forums about potential impacts of a ballot measure. Information must be factual and must not advocate for/against a ballot measure or candidate.
- Spend money to encourage people to vote and remind them of election dates (i.e. post election dates on school marquee, send voter reminder messages through social media, school message systems, etc.)