

May I?

We often receive inquiries in the MPE office from members as to what they may or may not do related to advocacy, political campaigns, and other forms of public expression. Please see below for activities educators may and may not engage in:

Advocacy Activities Educators May Engage In

- Educators may communicate on their own personal time with elected officials regarding policy issues or legislation. When contacting an elected official on a particular issue or bill, specifically ask the legislator to vote “Yes” or “No.” Tell them what you want them to do. Be sure to follow up with legislators after a vote.
- Educators may volunteer to work on a political campaign on their own personal time. Volunteer activities may include attending or hosting a town hall meeting for a candidate, distributing campaign materials, contributing to a campaign, or other campaign activities.
- Educators may have political bumper stickers on their cars on school district property.
- Educators may put yard signs on their personal property supporting their preferred candidate(s).
- Educators may make social media posts regarding particular bills or initiatives. Your personal profile picture may reflect your support of or opposition to a candidate.
- Educators may participate in public hearings or town hall meetings as long as they do so on their own time. If such an event is held during the school day, the educator should take leave to attend the event unless they are participating in the event as an official representative of their school or district.
- Educators may attend and participate in rallies at the state capitol during the legislative session, but they must take leave if the rally is held during school hours.
- Educators may write letters to the editor. You may respond to reporters’ requests for comments on an issue, but only in an individual capacity and not as a representative of your school or school district.
- Administrators may provide updates to their staff regarding legislation under consideration at the capitol as it relates to and will impact their school/district practices and operation.
- Respect differences of opinion. Just because someone’s opinion differs from that of your own does not make that person’s opinion less important or wrong. Acknowledge your difference of opinions and reiterate the reason(s) for your position
- Remain professional at all times. Inappropriate language, cursing, and name calling weaken your credibility and do not advance your standing with an elected official.
- Educators should VOTE for candidates based upon their voting record on critical educational issues, rather than based on a candidate’s political affiliation.

Advocacy Activities Educators Should Not Engage In

- Educators may not use school resources (school hours, email, phone, etc.) to contact legislators or other elected officials. Contact should be on your personal time using your personal resources.
- Educators should not use inappropriate language in conversations or social media posts.
- Educators should not wear political campaign clothing to school or school events.
- Educators may not disseminate campaign materials to your co-workers during school hours.
- Educators should not strike or walk out, as state law prohibits teachers’ strikes, concerted work stoppages, and concerted refusals to perform duties. Any certified teacher who does shall be terminated and may not be reemployed as a teacher by any public school district in Mississippi. Do not throw away your professional career by striking; rather, get engaged and elect candidates who support teachers and our public schools.