



Book	Policy Manual
Section	300 Employees
Title	Political, Sociopolitical, and Other Related Communications
Code	321
Status	First Reading
Legal	1. 24 P.S. 510
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Purpose

Curriculum, classroom decor, and classroom instruction are desired to create an atmosphere where all students, regardless of their beliefs about politics, beliefs about sociopolitical issues, beliefs about sexual orientation, beliefs about gender identity, or beliefs about religion, are valued and supported.

Guidelines

Out of respect for the fact that personal beliefs about such topics are often deeply personal and of great importance to many members of the school community and their families, staff members should not use their position or classroom decor to advocate for their personal beliefs on such issues to students. Taking sides on these important issues in the classroom can easily be misunderstood, risks needlessly alienating key members of our school community, and ultimately demonstrates disrespect for the diverse beliefs of our community.

The Board recognizes and encourages the right of administrative, professional and support employees, as citizens, to engage in political activity, sociopolitical advocacy, sexual orientation advocacy, gender identity advocacy, and religious advocacy. However, district time, resources, property, or equipment, paid for by taxpayers, may not be used for such purposes by district employees when performing assigned duties.

Employees shall not engage in political or sociopolitical activities during assigned work hours on property under the jurisdiction of the Board, except as otherwise permitted for employee representative election.

Classroom symbolism and decor

The board recognizes stickers, signs, flags, and other decor can communicate multiple and sometimes conflicting messages. A sticker, sign, or flag hung by a teacher may be intended to show support for inclusion of particular students. But it can simultaneously communicate that other teachers who do not affix such symbols in their classroom do not support inclusion for all their students. All teachers are expected to demonstrate love, compassion, and support for all of their students, and they should not be questioned or criticized for the decision to fly or not to fly various flags, or otherwise include other decor in the classroom. It may communicate that students who do not agree with certain positions are unwelcome.

Because such decisions have led to contention and misunderstanding—and out of respect for the entire, diverse school community—decor related to political, sociopolitical, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religious beliefs in the classroom other than as described below, is prohibited.

The following situations are exempt from the provisions of this policy:

1. Wearing jewelry, consistent with the professional dress code (Policy 325), that symbolically represents an individual's personal beliefs.
2. Display of personal family pictures.
3. Display of the flag of the United States, Pennsylvania, or military branch
4. Flags or other decor used as part of a temporary unit of study within the approved curriculum.

Curriculum and Instruction

The following situations are exempt from the provisions of this policy:

1. Discussion and study of politics and sociopolitical issues, religious issues, or sexual orientation and gender identity issues when applicable to the curriculum and appropriate to classroom studies. When applicable, such topics will be presented in a balanced and factual manner that does not trend to indoctrinate to a particular point of view and that is appropriate for the age and maturity level of the students engaged in the discussion.
2. Conduct of student elections and connected campaigning.
3. It is not considered advocacy of personal beliefs for a teacher to briefly answer a student's questions about politics, sociopolitical issues, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion. However, employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not attempt to coerce students to a particular viewpoint.