

You Can Do Political Organizing at School

Is it okay to wear a political button at school? What can I post on our Association bulletin board in the faculty lounge? Can we hold a meeting to discuss political issues after school? What about signature gathering? Here is a short guide to help you look at the many ways you can do political organizing at school.

Communicating with members about anything political is a right that should be guaranteed by your collective bargaining agreement. You can normally do it during off-duty times before and after work, and during your duty-free lunch. For certificated employees, on-duty time is determined by their building schedule. Preparation time for certificated employees is *not* duty-free time. For classified employees, on-duty time means working hours. Breaks and duty-free lunch are *not* on-duty times.

****DO:**

- Do distribute hand-to-hand, during non-work hours, Association newsletters containing articles of a political or legislative nature or other political materials, or post such materials on Association bulletin boards.
- Do ask members to sign up to volunteer time in support of candidate, initiative or levy campaigns, provided you do so during off-duty times.
- Do discuss and distribute political or legislative materials, including initiative petitions, at Association meetings if they are held on off-duty times.
- Do wear campaign buttons, and display bumper stickers or signs in your cars. Those signs and buttons must be removed on election days only if your school is a polling place.
- Do use school mailboxes or e-mail to distribute information regarding levy, bond or initiative campaigns or legislative information only if school mailboxes and/or e-mail may be used for other personal communications **and** if your school district does not have an express policy prohibiting use of mailboxes for political purposes.
- Do discuss candidates, levies, initiatives or legislative issues during off-duty times.
- Do collect employees' home e-mail addresses and send e-mail from home to home e-mail addresses regarding candidate, levy, bond or initiative campaigns or legislative information.

****** This information is prepared by WEA attorneys and represents WEA's interpretation of the law. Despite many attempts to clarify through the courts in order to protect members' First Amendment rights, the PDC believes you may not use mailboxes or e-mail to distribute any candidate, levy, initiative or legislative information. WEA does not agree with the PDC's interpretation. The PDC may seek enforcement action against individuals if a complaint is filed. If you follow the recommendations as set out in this document, the WEA will represent and defend you in order to preserve your First Amendment rights.

DO NOT:

- Do not place candidate-related or WEA-PAC materials in a school mailbox. Do not use school e-mail for candidate-related or WEA-PAC communications.
- Do not use school phones or computers to call voters on behalf of a candidate, initiative or levy campaign.
- Do not post political materials on your Association bulletin board unless it is located in the faculty lounge.
- Do not use work time or computers to campaign on behalf of a candidate, initiative or levy. Do not invite a candidate to speak to members during on-duty times. Political or legislative materials should be hand-delivered to members outside of work time.
- Do not use school mailboxes or e-mail to distribute legislative information or information regarding levy, bond or initiative campaigns if you may not use the mailboxes or e-mail for other personal communications.
- Do not use school facilities, such as stationery, paper, postage, telephones, fax/copy machines or school vehicles while working on a political campaign. The school district may allow the use of its rooms for political meetings on the same terms and conditions as for non-political meetings.