

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 10, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Trustee G. Gibeault, Planning and Policy Committee
Trustee S. Hansen, Planning and Policy Committee
Trustee J. Melnychuk, Planning and Policy Committee

SUBJECT: Board Policy JJA.BP – Electioneering

RESOURCE

STAFF: Anne Sherwood

RECOMMENDATION

1. That revised policy JJA.BP – Electioneering (Appendix I) be approved.
2. That current policy JJA.BP – Electioneering be rescinded.

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The proposed changes to policy JJA.BP – Electioneering (Appendix I) are indicated by strike-out and the shading of new wording.

The prohibition against individuals electioneering in or through schools has not been changed. A school is an institution of learning and has a degree of credibility and authority within a community. The distribution of materials within or through a school to parents implies a tacit endorsement by the school and district. As well, teachers and students are captive audiences in a school and the learning environment should not be disrupted by the solicitation for support of an individual candidate or party.

The proposed revisions with respect to school board elections are intended to articulate the board's support and criteria for promoting public awareness about school board elections, yet remove the board from direct involvement in any public awareness campaign by giving responsibility to the superintendent of schools for implementation.

For many years, the board of trustees has supported the promotion of school board elections. The board believes that a locally elected board is integral to public education. To that end, the administration has striven to increase voter awareness about school board elections, encourage and assist those eligible to vote to be informed about candidates and exercise their right to vote in school board elections. We have promoted school board elections through the City of Edmonton election communications, through media contacts, by sponsoring and advertising all candidate forums in each ward, and providing notices of the school board

election in school newsletters and in the City-wide distribution of the Class Calendar. We have also sought the support of our Key Communicator Program in hosting all-candidate forums. The administration has been mindful of maintaining Edmonton Public School Board's integrity and reputation –there is a delicate balance between promoting awareness of school board elections and being seen to promote incumbent trustees. Great care has been taken to treat all candidates fairly and equally. The administration will continue to explore other appropriate means of communicating about school board elections and the candidates in each ward.

AS:mmf

APPENDIX I - Revised Board Policy JJA.BP – Electioneering

CODE: JJA.BP
TOPIC: Electioneering

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10-09-1996
ISSUE DATE: 27-09-1996
REVIEW DATE: 09-2001

1. The board prohibits campaigning in Edmonton Public Schools by individual candidates or parties for municipal, school board, provincial or federal elections except that:
 - a. school may organize all-candidate forums for educational purposes; and
 - b. school space may be rented after school hours by a candidate or party on a commercial use basis.
 2. The board prohibits the posting or distribution of campaign materials associated with elections on lands, or within buildings owned by the Edmonton Public School Board except that campaign materials may be:
 - a. posted and distributed in that portion of a school rented for a campaign meeting or being used for an all-candidate forum, however, all political materials must be removed from school premises at the end of any such meeting;
 - b. used as classroom teaching aids on condition for support for an individual candidate or political party is not solicited; and
 - c. posted and distributed regarding school board elections as directed by the board of trustees superintendent of schools and in accordance with item 3 a. and b. below.
 3.
 - a. The board of trustees believes that a locally elected school board is integral to public education. To that end the district shall play an active role in disseminating information to the electorate about school board elections and the candidates running for each of the nine school trustee wards.
 - b. Any materials posted or distributed by the district regarding candidates for school board elections must treat all candidates equally. The materials may not solicit or imply support for any individual candidate or slate of candidates.
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Proposed Revision Board Policy