

## **POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY OR USING SCHOOL SYSTEM MODES OF COMMUNICATION**

New Hanover County Schools recognizes, as one of its educational goals, the advancement of student knowledge and appreciation of various social, cultural and political occurrences in society. However, except as allowed by this policy, no student or other person shall be subjected to partisan political activities on School System property or using School System modes of communication, which are (i), conducted by or on behalf of political candidates or political organizations, or (ii) conducted by School System employees, contractors, volunteers or visitors.

Candidates for political office may be invited to speak to students at school or at school sponsored events only if they are resource speakers for a classroom activity that is a legitimate part of the regular instructional program and prior approval has been granted by the Principal and Superintendent or designee. If a political candidate is permitted to speak, equal opportunity shall be afforded to other candidates for the same office.

No person shall, on School System property or using School System modes of communication, display, distribute or broadcast, any political or campaign related sign, banner, sticker, brochure or other material or information, through any medium, or engage in any political or campaign related activities or electioneering, except as may be allowed under Policies 9415 Distribution of Materials to Students, 8540 Distribution of Materials by Students or allowed by this policy.

Political and campaign related signs and other information may be displayed, distributed or broadcast on School System property in the following situations:

- (1) Political and campaign signs and banners may be placed at official voting sites on Election Day. Such signs and banners must comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, including those of the New Hanover County Board of Elections, the City of Wilmington, New Hanover County, other municipalities within New Hanover County and the State of North Carolina. Such signs and banners must comply with all applicable governmental restrictions including restrictions on size and may only be placed within 50 feet of the paved entranceway to the voting sites or within 50 feet of the outer perimeter of the area designated by the New Hanover County Board of Elections as free of electioneering. However, no such sign or banner may be placed in or attached to any building, fence, structure, tree or landscape feature, may not interfere with any walkway, driveway or parking space, may not interfere with any educational activity at the school, may not have any moving or lighted parts and may not make any sounds.
- (2) Political and campaign buttons, pins, brochures, leaflets and similar items may be distributed on Election Days at official voting sites in the same areas where

political signs and banners are allowed in subparagraph (1) above.

- (3) Political and campaign related materials and information may be displayed or broadcast to students by teachers in schools as part of a classroom activity that is a legitimate part of the approved instructional program when prior approval has been granted by the Principal. In such cases, reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that there is equity between political candidates and political viewpoints.
- (4) Individuals, including candidates for political office, other than School System employees, may wear T-shirts, buttons, pins or stickers carrying political or campaign messages on their persons or personal effects while on School System property. All individuals, including School System employees, may have political or campaign related bumper stickers on their personal vehicles while on School System property. Such persons must have a legitimate purpose for being on School System property other than solely for conveying the messages contained on their persons, effects or vehicles.
- (5) Individuals or groups may display, distribute or broadcast political or campaign signs, brochures and other materials and information inside School System buildings, during non-school hours, in areas being used by such persons or groups pursuant to the Community Use of School Property Policy and Facilities Policy, 4500.
- (6) Approved student clubs may display, distribute or broadcast political and campaign related signs, brochures and other materials or information in areas used by such clubs for their meetings during approved meeting times.
- (7) At regularly scheduled monthly meetings of the New Hanover County Board of Education, individuals and groups may hold political and campaign related signs and distribute political and campaign related leaflets and other information of a political or campaign nature, within 100 feet of the main entrance of the building where the meeting is held, as long as they do not block the entrance, cause a public safety hazard or interfere with ingress or egress to and from the building or create a nuisance, and as long as such materials concern issues germane to the policies, practices and functions of the Board or the New Hanover County Schools or pertain to elections of School Board Members. Also, at such regular monthly meetings, individuals may wear buttons, stickers or pins of a political or campaign nature on their persons or personal effects while in the Board meeting room, during the meeting.

Parents and volunteers who provide instructional, supervisory or administrative assistance to teachers or administrators shall be treated as if they were employees for purposes of this policy, while they are acting in such instructional, supervisory or administrative roles.

As used in this policy, the term “School System property” includes property owned, leased or rented by the School System.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy, no sign, banner, button, sticker, shirt, brochure, leaflet or other conveyance of information shall be allowed under this policy which is lewd, obscene, defamatory, pornographic, advocates illegal activities, depicts nudity, contains profanity, is sexual in nature, is likely to incite violence or to create a substantial interference with the School System’s educational activities, which with respect to students violates the Student Dress Code Policy 8520, or which is in violation of applicable laws, rules, regulations or ordinances.

Any person or entity that is denied a request to display, distribute or broadcast any sign or other material or information on School System property, pursuant to this policy, may appeal such decision using the same appeal procedure as set forth in Policy 9415, except that, in cases where the decision to deny the activity was not made by a principal, the initial appeal shall be to the Superintendent or designee.

Adopted: 05/07/91

Revised: 08/03/10

New Hanover County Public School, Wilmington, North Carolina