

# MICHIGAN CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACT DO'S AND DON'TS

## DO'S

- School district employees may engage in campaign activities that support candidates and ballot proposals on their own time (not when acting on behalf of the district as part of employment) and as long as school district funds, facilities and other resources, including district emails and social media accounts, are not used.
- Anyone may recommend individuals for appointment to a campaign committee, but the school district should not make any appointments.
- Campaign committee members and volunteers may attend school district meetings regarding the election and make public comments as members of the audience at those meetings to advocate and pass out literature.
- Information disseminated by the school district must be factual and objective. Factual and objective information may be displayed in school district buildings other than on election day where a building serves as a precinct location.
- The school district may allow a campaign committee to use its facilities, but only on the same terms as it would allow any other nonprofit or other citizens or community group to use school district facilities, and the campaign committee must reimburse the school district for any costs incurred by the school district which would not otherwise have been incurred.
- The school district may produce or disseminate debates, interviews or commentary regarding an election if it's done in the regular course of broadcasting or publications (e.g., the normal, routine publication schedule of the broadcast or publication).
- The Board of Education may adopt resolutions stating a position on ballot proposals relating to school district purposes or funding.
- Members of the Board of Education and superintendent are public officials and may engage in advocacy on ballot proposals which relate to school district purposes or funding, provided that, except as described above, school district resources are not used to disseminate those views.
- The school district must maintain objectivity. Steer clear of subjective words and phrasing in informational materials including "needs," modifiers such as "essential" or "critical," or projections of consequences of passage or failure or impact of projects.

## DON'TS

- The school district may not give or loan paper, pencils, computers, duplicating equipment, printing supplies, postage and sundry items to a campaign committee or candidate.
- The use of any school district facilities, including emails, phones, or social media accounts, by a campaign committee for the purpose of contacting voters or promoting a yes vote is prohibited.
- Faculty offices, lounges, school district bulletin boards, and other areas within the school district building may not be used to disseminate literature supporting a candidate even if printed by an outside organization, and a campaign committee may not send campaign literature home with students.
- The school district's website and social media pages and accounts may not provide Internet links to campaign sites, organizations, commentary or editorials.
- District officials and employees should not add taglines relating to the proposal or the election to their district emails.
- Campaign literature may not be displayed in school district buildings.
- A school district official is prohibited from using school district resources or social media accounts to send a mass email, mass mailing or other communication that expressly advocates for a candidate or ballot proposal.
- Unions and associations may not use school district resources (including mailboxes) to communicate with their members about election campaign matters.
- Do not suggest that the debt millage rate will be a fixed number. It will not. The rate will fluctuate with changes in the tax base.

## IDENTIFYING INFORMATION REQUIREMENT

*Information disseminated by a school district within 60 days before the general election or within 30 days before the primary election where a ballot question appears must contain certain identifying information if the communication is targeted to the relevant electorate. The identifying information included on the communication should generally be in the following form: "Paid for by ABC School District, 123 Anytown Avenue, Anytown, Michigan." The identifying information included on printed material must be in a place and in a print clearly visible and readable by an observer. Prerecorded telephone messages (robocalls) should also include the school district's telephone number.*