

# Navigating Election 2024

**This fall our national election will take center stage in the country's conversation. Shawnee Mission continues to be committed to inclusive classrooms; this extends to political topics/discussions. With these things in mind, Shawnee Mission will strive to keep the focus on learning in our classrooms. To achieve this goal, we've provided you with some guidance around the topic of voting and the election process.**

## Educator Tip #1

### Align Your Instruction to the District Curriculum

All instruction should align with both the [Kansas State Standards](#) and [Shawnee Mission curriculum](#). Supplemental activities/units on elections should not be done unless part of the regular curriculum for that class.

## Educator Tip #2

### For the Curricular Topics of Voting/Elections, Use District-Approved or District-Provided Resources

Any instruction on the voting or election process, as part of your District curriculum, should use District-provided and District-approved resources. Teachers are discouraged from using other sources and resources with students when instructing on voting/elections. Pre-approval from the administrator should be sought before implementing any non-District-provided/approved resources.

If your course/grade level includes curricular topics that involve voting and/or the American election process and you are seeking websites for your learning activities, you are asked to use the [Kansas Secretary of State's voter information](#) page and/or [Johnson County Election Office's Voting & Election](#) website for information. **These are the only two District-approved websites for voter information.**

## Educator Tip #3

### Avoid Political Advocacy in the Workplace

It is important to review and understand the expectations of all Shawnee Mission employees as stated in our Board policies. Board of Education Policy GAHB states,

*It is the policy of the district that **students are entitled to a learning environment free from political indoctrination and unwanted partisan politics.** To that end, no district employee shall use, in any way, the*

*classrooms, schools, or pupils for the purposes of solicitation, promotion, election or defeat of any candidate for public office or for any ballot question. Examples of prohibited use include the display of political posters, distribution of political literature and wearing political or campaign buttons in schools or at school activities when the employee is on duty. Prohibited use shall not include the distribution or display of campaign literature or other political material for legitimate curricular purposes.*

In accordance with Board Policy IFA (Classroom Displays), teachers may not post or display materials in their classroom that promote or convey a political, religious, or personal message. Materials displayed in and around a classroom should be grade-level appropriate and align with the subject-matter being taught.

Remember that if you have any SMSD-associated or professional social media accounts, there should not be any comments, posts, likes, or images that promote a political view. If you have any questions about your responsibilities in this area, please reach out to your building administrator.

## **Educator Tip #4**

### **Create and Maintain an Inclusive Classroom**

Shawnee Mission is committed to inclusive classrooms; this extends to political topics/discussions. It is in the best interest of learning to keep political opinions private. Nonetheless, there may be times when students engage in discussion in class or informally. We'd encourage you to proactively give thought to how you may respond in a way that respects all views your students may hold. Here are some possible responses to consider if students raise a political point/opinion or inquire about your political leanings:

- "That is an interesting point. For the purpose of our time and lesson objectives today I think we are going to pivot back to our original question/topic/etc."
- "Election season is a time we get to hear a lot of perspectives on this topic / objective, etc. I encourage you to have further conversations with friends or family members to hear the perspective of other individuals."
- "It's important to respect that everyone has different opinions. I'm going to bring us back to our objective(s) for the day so we can progress through this lesson. Thank you for the conversation."

**Thank you for your continued focus on student learning. With these four actions, we will continue to be able to deliver an amazing educational experience for all Shawnee Mission students.**