



Dignitary Visitor Guidance

Last revised August 2025

INTRODUCTION:

The Providence Public School District welcomes visits from dignitaries and elected officials at its schools. A dignitary visit must follow district protocol which includes:

- District administrators must be notified by contacting your Transformation Officer.
- District administrators must provide verbal or written approval prior to a confirmed visit.
- The Superintendent should be invited any time that there is a dignitary visit. This can be done by emailing the Superintendent and their respective executive assistant.

Visits can be of multiple natures from visiting a school to reading to a class or to tour a new program or recognize a teacher. Regardless of the reason, **all visits** require that the District offices be notified.

Below are some Do's and Don'ts for Public School Leaders:

- A visit from a dignitary must be an informational visit and not part of a political campaign.
 - The District does not permit political or campaign activity on school grounds. School administrators should inquire if a visit is of a political or an informational nature. A campaign visit could include sitting elected officials who are running for reelection or prospective candidates.
- Requests to use your school for filming a video or photo need to be vetted.
 - In an election year, schools may receive requests from candidates for political office seeking to film campaign advertisements on school grounds, or seeking to conduct some type of campaign activity at the school. **This is not allowed on school property**. By permitting a campaign video or photo shoot on school premises, you are indirectly endorsing a candidate.
- On school grounds, a District employees must not support or oppose a candidate for nomination or election to public office or the recall of a public officer or supporting or opposing a ballot measure, question or proposition including any bond, budget or override election and supporting or opposing the circulation of a petition for the recall of a public officer or a petition for a ballot measure, question or proposition in a manner that is not impartial or neutral.
- Rental and use of a public facility by a private person or entity that may lawfully attempt to influence the outcome of an election is permitted if it does not occur at the same time and place as a government-sponsored forum or debate.
- The use of school property is prohibited from being used to influence an election including equipment, paper, copiers, buildings, computers, etc

- School districts are prohibited from expending funds for membership in an organization that attempts influence the outcome of an election
- Students cannot be given campaign material intended to influence an election or material intended to influence the outcome of legislation.
- Individual board members or school employees, not on “duty time” may exercise their free speech rights and be involved in campaigns

Below are some commonly asked questions about campaign requests to use school property, and how building administrators should respond.

Q: What do I do if a campaign or candidate calls my school requesting to visit to speak with students or staff?

A: Thank them for their call and request the following:

- The nature of their visit.
- The date and time for their visit. Due to the nature of school testing and class schedules, we recommend you ask if this date is flexible?
- Their preferred audience for example the whole school, a classroom, staff.
- Are there any deadlines we should be aware of?
- Best contact name, email and phone number.

Record all of this information and let them know you will get back to them as soon as possible. Then inform your immediate supervisor of their request.

Q: What if a sitting elected official asks to visit a school while they are running for reelection?

A: Elected officials may be permitted to visit schools in their official capacity only. This means that they will not conduct campaign activity, display campaign materials, or use any images of their visit in campaign advertisements. Please refer the elected official’s team to the District’s Chief of Communications, Suzanne Ouellette, at suzanne.ouellette@ppsd.org or 401.456.9100 x12117.

Q: What do I do if a campaign or candidate calls my school with a request to film a political advertisement on school grounds?

A: They do not have permission to film on school grounds. Please refer the campaign to the District’s them to the Communications office, at communications@ppsd.org or 401.456.9100.

Q: What if a campaign or candidate shows up at my school with a request to film on school grounds?

A: Inform them that they do not have permission to film on school grounds, and immediately contact the District's Chief of Communications, Suzanne Ouellette, at suzanne.ouellette@ppsd.org or 401.456.9100 x12117.

Q: Are campaigns allowed to film the exterior of the school?

A: As long as a person is filming from a public space where there is no expectation of privacy, such as a public sidewalk, it is legal to record video of the exterior of a school building. However, administrators can and should remind the person that anyone under 18 years of age may not be filmed without permission from a parent or guardian. Administrators can contact the District's Chief of Communications, Suzanne Ouellette, at suzanne.ouellette@ppsd.org or 401.456.9100 x12117 for support.

Q: What if a campaign or candidate asks to hold a campaign event or display signage at the school?

A: They do not have permission to do so. Please refer the campaign to the District's Chief of Communications, Suzanne Ouellette, at suzanne.ouellette@ppsd.org or 401.456.9100 x12117.

Q: What if a candidate asks to speak at a school event?

A: Please do not provide a yes/no answer immediately. There could be circumstances where this may be allowed if the candidate is not actively campaigning. Please refer the campaign to the District's Chief of Communications, Suzanne Ouellette, at suzanne.ouellette@ppsd.org or 401.456.9100 x12117.

Q: What if a candidate asks to attend a school event, but not campaign at the event?

A: Candidates are members of the public and may attend any event on school grounds that is open to the public. However, they may not conduct campaign activity or display campaign materials while on school property.

Q: What if a community group or sitting elected official wants to host a community meeting at a school?

A: Please do not provide a yes/no answer immediately. There could be circumstances where this may be allowed. Please refer the campaign to the District's Chief of Communications, Suzanne Ouellette, at suzanne.ouellette@ppsd.org or 401.456.9100 x12117.