



Chico Unified School District

1163 East Seventh Street, Chico, CA 95928-5999
(530) 891-3000

Board Policy:

#1160

Section: 1000 Community Relations

Page 1 of 3

POLITICAL PROCESSES

The Board of Education has a responsibility to actively advocate fiscal and public policy that supports the district's schools and the children in the community. To the extent possible, the Board shall be proactive in defining the district's advocacy agenda based on the needs of the district and community. The Board's advocacy efforts shall be conducted in accordance with legal requirements.

(cf. 0000 - Vision)

(cf. 0200 - Goals for the School District)

(cf. 9000 - Role of the Board)

(cf. 9010 - Public Statements)

Ballot Measures/Candidates

No district funds, services, supplies or equipment shall be used to urge the support or defeat of any ballot measure or candidate, including any candidate for election to the Board. (Education Code 7054)

The Board may discuss and study the potential effect of proposed or qualified ballot measures on the district's schools at an open and agendized Board meeting. Any Board discussion of the effect of such measures shall include an opportunity for Board members, staff and members of the public to speak on all sides of the issue. At that meeting, the Board may adopt a position or resolution in support of or in opposition to a ballot measure. The language in any resolution adopted by the Board shall not urge the public to take any action regarding the measure.

(cf. 9320 - Meetings and Notices)

The Board's position on a ballot measure, including any resolution, shall be publicized only through normal district procedures and consistent with regular district practice for reporting Board actions. Such publicity shall be for informational purposes and shall not attempt to influence voters.

The Superintendent or designee may use district resources to provide students, parents/guardians and community members with fair and impartial information related to ballot measures, including information about the impact of ballot measures on the district. (Education Code 7054)

(cf. 1100 - Communication with the Public)

In preparing or distributing such informational material, the Superintendent or designee shall analyze the material to help ensure that it is an appropriate informational activity, provides a fair analysis of the issues, and does not advocate passage or defeat of a measure or candidate.

District resources, including email or computer systems, shall not be used to disseminate campaign literature. In addition, district resources shall not be used to purchase advertisements, bumper stickers, posters or similar promotional items that advocate an election result or urge voters to take any action in support of or in opposition to a measure.

(cf. 1325 - Advertising and Promotion)

Political activity related to district bond measures shall, in addition to the above, be subject to the following conditions:

1. The Superintendent or designee may research, draft and prepare a bond measure or other initiative for the ballot, but shall not use district resources to influence voters or otherwise campaign for the measure.



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Page 2 of 3

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2. Upon request, Board members and district administrators may appear at any time before a citizens' group to explain why the Board called for an election on a bond measure and to answer questions. (Education Code 7054.1)

If the presentation occurs during working hours, the district representative shall not urge a citizens' group to vote for or against the bond measure.

3. The Board or any individual Board member may file a written argument for the ballot that is either for or against any school measure. (Elections Code 9501)

Legislation

The Board's responsibility as an advocate for the district may include lobbying and outreach at the state, national, and local levels. The Board and the Superintendent or designee shall work to establish and maintain ongoing relationships with elected officials, community leaders, and the media in order to communicate district positions and concerns.

(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)
(cf. 7131 - Relations with Local Agencies)

The Board may identify issues that will affect its schools and the children in its community, establish goals and priorities for legislative advocacy, solicit community input and adopt legislative positions.

In order to strengthen legislative advocacy efforts, the district may work with organizations and coalitions and may join associations whose representatives lobby on behalf of their members in accordance with Government Code 53060.5.

The district may provide fair and impartial information about legislative issues affecting schools and children and shall inform the community about its advocacy activities. However, informational materials about legislation shall not urge the public to lobby the legislature, Governor, or state agencies on behalf of the district.

As necessary, the Superintendent or designee may draft legislative proposals which serve the district's interests.

Legal Advocacy

The Board recognizes that some issues are more appropriately addressed judicially rather than legislatively. When a legal issue is likely to set a state or national precedent, the district may join with other districts or parties in order to resolve the issue through litigation or other appropriate means.

(cf. 9124 - Attorney)

Political Forums

Forums on political issues may be held in district facilities as long as the forum is made available to all sides of the issue on an equitable basis. (Education Code 7058)

(cf. 1330 - Use of School Facilities)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

7054 Use of district property

7054.1 Requested appearance

7055 Local rules

7056 Soliciting or receiving political funds

7058 Use of forum

35160 Authority of governing boards

Policy Adopted: November 7, 2007; November 16, 2011



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Page 3 of 3

35172 Promotional activities

GOVERNMENT CODE

50023 Attending legislature to support or oppose legislation

53060.5 Attendance at legislative body; expenses

54953.5 Right to record proceedings

54953.6 Broadcasts of proceedings

81000-91015 Political Reform Act

COURT DECISIONS

Stanson v. Mott, (1976) 17 Cal. 3d 206

Miller v. Miller, (1978) 87 Cal.App.3d 762

League of Women Voters v. Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee, (1988) 203 Cal.App.3d 529, 250 Cal. Rptr. 161, rev.den.

Choice-in-Education League et al v. Los Angeles Unified School District, (1993) 17 Cal.App.4th 415

Yes on Measure A v. City of Lake Forest, (1997) 60 Cal.App.4th 620

Scherer v. Buchanan, First Appellate District, Civil No. A076648

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

73 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 255 (1990)

Management Resources:

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

Advice letter #7837, March 18, 1996 (use of public funds to publicize board positions)

FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION

FPPC No. 93/345 (1996)

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

Political Activities of School Districts: Legal Issues, 1998

Maximizing School Board Leadership: Community Leadership, 1996