

Section 7-7.1. Rights of employees to engage in political activity; Restrictions on political activity. — A. The School Board recognizes the right of its employees to engage in political activity. Employees may solicit support for political candidates or political issues outside regular work hours, and off school property.

B. The Board also recognizes that school time and school property should not be used for partisan political purposes. “Partisan political purposes” that is strictly prohibited by this policy mean actions to promote or advance the political views, ideologies, or positions of a particular political party, but this policy does not prohibit any employee of Suffolk Public Schools from commenting on any law and/or regulation enacted at the federal or state level that has the potential to impact operations of Suffolk Public Schools. Thus, when engaging in **partisan** political activities, an employee may not:

- (1) use the employee’s position within the school division to further a political cause;
- (2) engage in any activity supporting or opposing a candidate or political party while on duty, while on school property during school hours, or while representing the school division;
- (3) suggest in any manner that the school division or any component of it supports or opposes a candidate for election to any office; or
- (4) use any school division property to engage in any activity supporting or opposing a candidate for public office or a political party.

These restrictions are not intended to limit the rights of school division employees to support or oppose any political candidate or party on their own time. They are intended to minimize distractions from instruction, to assure that no public funds are used to support any candidate for public office, and to assure that the public is not given the false impression that the school division supports or opposes any political candidate or party. School division employees who engage in political activities on their own time must make it clear that their views and actions represent their individual positions and do not represent the views of the school division. (Adopted August 10, 1995; Ordinance 22/23-45, Revised/Effective: February 9, 2023)

Legal Authority - Virginia Code §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-70 (1950), as amended.