

Internal Policies and Procedures of the Utah State Board of Education	
Policy #:	02-10
Subject:	Political Activities and Public Speaking
Date:	May 16, 2022
Policy Owner:	Policy Advisor
Policy Officer:	Deputy Superintendent of Policy
References:	DHRM Administrative Rule, R477-9-4, Political Activity

- I. **PURPOSE:** To outline legal and ethical political activities employees may engage in.
- II. **POLICY:** When acting in their official capacity, USBE employees should espouse only positions formally taken by the State Board. The State Board of Education will have no position on issues that the Board has not formally adopted.
- III. **PROCEDURES:**
 1. **Activities that USBE Employees May Engage In**
 - a. USBE employees may meet together, outside of work time or following required meetings, to discuss political ideas and activities.
 - b. USBE offices and facilities (meeting rooms, copy machines, office equipment) must be available fairly to all organized groups and points of view, and used consistent with USBE policies.
 - c. A USBE employee may explain personal opinions to other USBE employees, parents, or patrons on matters of public concern, upon request. Extended discussions should occur during non-work time.
 - d. A USBE employee should acknowledge when the employee is sharing a personal opinion, that it is such, and not an official position of the Utah State Board of Education.

2. Activities that USBE Employees May Not Engage In

- a. A USBE employee may not contact people about personal political positions using USBE email, mail, directories, or other USBE resources.
- b. A USBE employee may not fundraise or campaign during work hours or during times or events that they are representing the USBE.
- c. A USBE employee may not wear political buttons or clothing advocating one viewpoint during work hours.
 - i. Buttons or clothing that advocate general, non-partisan opinions such as "VOTE!" or "We love America" are allowed.
- d. A USBE employee may not try to convince or persuade employees whom they supervise about political positions.
 - i. Answering questions and providing factual information to an employee is allowed.

3. USBE Employee Speaking at Public Events

- a. A USBE employee is not required to be designated as an authorized media contact or complete the Public Relations Section training when speaking at public events.
- b. Before speaking at a public event, a USBE employee should speak with a supervisor and make sure they are not speaking officially on behalf of the board.
- c. Section directors and other managers are encouraged to be aware of topics their employees will speak about when representing them at public events.

4. Free Speech Policy

- a. No Board policy or practice shall be construed as to limit the personal free expression of any employee.
- b. Employees may speak freely within or outside their occupations.
- c. When employees speak to members of the news media or to a public body in any context where the employee will be perceived to represent his/her division/section or the State Board of Education, the employee shall comply with the [Mass Media policy](#) as well.
- d. When an employee is off duty and outside Board property, the employee may

speak on any matter, so far as his/her expressions do not divulge information protected by statute or restricted by classification.

- e. If an employee chooses to express opinions to the news media or in any public manner, but the employee is not authorized to represent the Board or any of its division/section's, the employee is free to do so on his/her own time and outside Board property.
 - i. If any context of the employee's expressions may be construed by others to represent the position of his/her Section, the Board, or the State (when the employee is unauthorized to do so), the employee must clearly disavow his/her opinions from the Board while speaking in that context.
- IV. **HISTORY:** The effective date of this policy was October 6, 2010, with revisions September 25, 2017, and October 2, 2018. On May 16, 2022, this policy was formatted to comply with USBE Internal Policy 00-01.