



CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALBANY POLITICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

Officers and employees of the City School District of Albany, New York are often interested in seeking elected political office or volunteering for political campaigns. However, in doing so, they must ensure that they do not violate the Public Officers Law provisions on ethics. The heart of those provisions, the Code of Ethics, found in Public Officers Law §74 provides minimum standards against which school district officers and employees are expected to gauge their behavior.

That provision of the Public Officers Law requires that officers and employees engaged in political activity pursue a course of conduct which will not raise suspicion among the public, that they are likely to be engaged in acts that are in violation of the public trust. To help determine what campaign activities give rise to such suspicions, the Board of Education adopts the following guidelines:

1. If you are a candidate, consider whether the office sought might conflict with your school district position. Prospective candidates should seek an opinion from their employer and/or the State Department of Education. Should an incompatibility exist, the employee may be prohibited from seeking or holding office.
2. Candidates and volunteers must campaign on your own time. Depending on the amount of time you will have to devote to the campaign, candidates should consider requesting a leave of absence without pay for the duration of the campaign.
3. Scrupulously avoid using your school district position to gain any special advantage over a political opponent.
4. Do not use school district resources of any type to aid in the campaign. This rule applies to telephones, equipment such as computers and word processors, office supplies, postage, photocopying machines or support staff assistance.
5. If you are a candidate, form a separate entity for the receipt of campaign contributions. Take care in soliciting and accepting campaign contributions. If contributions come from individuals or entities that do business with the District and/or the school building(s) you are most closely associated with, such contributions might constitute illegal gifts or give rise to actual or apparent conflicts of interest. Having a separate entity for the receipt of contributions will help you avoid the appearance of impropriety and the question of a possible illegal gift under Public Officers Law §73(5).