

Election Campaigning

Administrative Procedure

Status:	Active
Effective:	September 2008
Revision Date:	July 2025
Review Date:	July 2029
Responsibility:	Director of Education

Intended Purpose

The Halton District School Board (HDSB) believes students should understand the electoral process, while respecting the principles of fairness and non-partisanship. The purpose of this administrative procedure is to ensure that campaign related activity during an election period does not impact the teaching/learning process in our schools. This Administrative Procedure applies to municipal and school board elections, provincial elections, federal elections, by-elections, and referendums.

Procedures

1. Campaign Activity

- 1.1. For federal and provincial elections, the election period begins on the date the writ is issued and ends on voting day.
- 1.2. For municipal and school board elections, the election period begins on May 1 and ends on December 31 (in the case of a regular election) or on the first day in which nomination papers are filed and ends 45 days after voting day (in the case of a by-election), in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act.
- 1.3. The HDSB's logo, corporate branding, or other corporate identifiers, shall not be used for any election campaign-related purposes.
- 1.4. No campaign related items, materials, letters, memorandums, documents, or media in support or opposition of candidate(s) for political office or a political party should be distributed or used in schools or on HDSB property.
- 1.5. Political signs are not to be displayed in schools or on HDSB property.

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- 1.6. Staff are not permitted to wear any item that endorses or opposes a candidate(s) for political office or a political party.
- 1.7. School social media accounts shall not be used to support or oppose any candidate for political office or political party.
- 1.8. Staff should avoid providing an opinion regarding a candidate for political office or political party. Should staff have any questions about a request, privacy or confidential information, please promptly contact the Director's Office.

2. School Board Elections

- 2.1. During a school board election period, current trustees must refrain from using: school newsletters, school websites, the HDSB's corporate website, or any other HDSB mediums of communication for campaign related purposes.
- 2.2. Requests for information from a trustee candidate should be treated in the same manner as any public request, in accordance with the HDSB's commitment to public accountability and service. Generally, information about schools and the HDSB is public, except for confidential student or personnel records, or as outlined in the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- 2.3. While staff may use social media or online accounts to communicate with trustee candidates, campaigning on behalf of or in opposition to a trustee candidate is not permitted.

3. Schools and Events

- 3.1. School events are not intended for political campaigning. Requests by candidates to visit a school during an election campaign for the purpose of campaigning shall not be granted. This restriction includes visits to classrooms and meetings with school administrators, open houses and other school related events or graduations/commencements.

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- 3.2. Current trustees who are serving out the end of their term of office and continue to fulfill their usual roles may continue to participate in events and activities at schools, but may not conduct campaign activity at school or HDSB events during the election period (see Campaign Activity section).
- 3.3. All candidate meetings may be held at the discretion of the school Administrator. If such an event is planned, all candidates for that riding must be informed and invited at the same time, and well in advance of the date. Any advertising or signage promoting such an event must be without any campaign related content.
- 3.4. Any person or group wishing to hold an all candidate meeting, election forum or information sessions for the benefit of the school community must schedule these as independent events outside instructional and school times, and coordinate such events through the usual process for facilities rentals. For clarity, schools must not be used, during the school day, for political campaigning.

4. School Councils and Statutory Committees

- 4.1. School Councils, the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) are agents of the school and/or of the HDSB. While meetings are open to the public, candidates may attend as an observer only and not as a participant. Any campaign related activity at such meetings is prohibited.
- 4.2. It is not appropriate for a School Council, PIC, or SEAC to support or oppose a candidate(s) for political office or political party.
 - 4.2.1. A School Council may, however, host an all-candidates meeting to assist parents in learning more about the candidates, in accordance with the School and Events section above.
- 4.3. A School Council, PIC, or SEAC member who is a candidate in an election may not use their role to promote their campaign, or to oppose a candidate(s) for political office or political party, while they are serving in the role of member.

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- 4.4. School Council, PIC, or SEAC members are not allowed to distribute campaign related materials on HDSB property.
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Cross-Reference:

Legislation

Canada Elections Act

Election Act (Ontario)

Municipal Elections Act

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Ministry Policy & Program Memoranda

Board Policies, Procedures & Protocols

Publicity in Schools Administrative Procedure

Revision History

- July 2025 (Comprehensive: clarified language throughout, key updates to election periods and campaign activity, and re-structured sections)
- April 2018