CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO
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BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

1001 Municipal, Provincial and Federal Elections

DIRECTIONAL POLICY

Positive Communications

Title of Administrative Procedure:

Municipal, Provincial and Federal Elections

Date Approved:

April 2026

Projected Review Date:

April 2030

Directional Policy Alignment

This administrative procedure aligns with the Directional Policy entitled Positive Communications and establishes parameters within the school environment for students, staff and trustees regarding municipal, provincial and federal elections, which are in keeping with the CDSBEO's commitment to transforming the world with justice and peace through Catholic education, as outlined in our Vision.

Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

The Municipal, Provincial and Federal Elections procedure aligns with the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan supporting the four tenets: to belong, to believe, to nurture, to learn, and specifically the development of 21st century competencies: Creativity and Innovation, Collaboration, Communication, and Critical Thinking.

CDSBEO Strategic Plan

Purpose

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to ensure that all members of the CDSBEO school community remain unbiased, fair and neutral with regard to political action in the community and in regard to federal, provincial and municipal elections. Additionally, this procedure will facilitate consistent and appropriate management of possible requests from candidates during municipal, provincial, or federal elections, including all by-elections.

Principles

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario wholeheartedly supports the democratic process. To support this, during election campaigns, Board employees and students must refrain from activities or actions that demonstrate favour for one candidate or party over another, during their time at school/work. Likewise, candidates have an obligation to adhere to Board expectations of conduct in relation to schools during the campaign period.

Action Required

1) Political Notices and Material Distribution by Candidates

Flyers, brochures or other political information may not be distributed through schools or Catholic school councils (e.g. via newsletters, information tables, bulletin boards). This includes information concerning current trustees who are registered candidates for any political office. Non-partisan information regarding the election process may be distributed.

2) Candidate Visits to Schools

- Members of the Ontario Legislature may visit schools in their own riding at any time during school hours. Municipal or federal politicians may be greeted and welcomed to the school as any other member of the public. Principals should expect the courtesy of advance notice for any visit by an MLA or other political leader and inform Board Communications and/or the Director's Office.
- Neither candidates nor sitting members of a council, legislature or parliament are to be permitted to use video or photographic images of students obtained during a school visit in political or informational materials. Candidates may not invite media to school events.
- The election may be an ideal time to help students learn more about municipal government. The CDSBEO allows all-candidate meetings and other learning activities that are part of the curriculum.
- Once they have declared their candidacy, candidates may not make presentations to students, Catholic school councils or staff groups, or take part as official platform guests at any school function.

3) Role of Current Trustees

- Current members of the board of trustees who are still serving out the end of their term of office will continue to fulfill their usual roles. It is appropriate for schools to involve their local trustee in events and activities at the school in a way they would have prior to the beginning of the municipal election campaigns. For example, if it is the previous practice of a school to have the local trustee hand out student awards at the monthly assembly, this practice can continue during the election campaign.
- Schools are not permitted to send out any campaign material on behalf of the current trustee if they are also a candidate in the municipal election.

4) Candidate Signage and Promotional Items

- Political lawn signs and partisan literature are not to be posted on Board property, including bulletin boards.
- Candidates may not distribute flyers on vehicles parked on school or Board property.
- Board employees may not wear clothing, buttons, caps, etc. that support political parties or candidates. While at work, employees should avoid becoming involved in partisan political discussions with parents, co-workers or visitors.

5) Guidelines for Employees

- Employees must not engage in election activities of any kind during work hours nor on Board property. Employees who support or work for a registered candidate must keep these activities outside of work hours.
- Board employees working in support of a particular candidate may not use Board property (phone, fax, photocopier, computer) for partisan political activity.
- Employees must not provide any election related materials to students or their parents/guardians.

6) Privacy of Information

Consistent with Ontario's privacy laws, personal information (name, address, phone number, e-mail) of students, parents or employees may not be given to any candidates or their staff. Any information that is normally in the public domain should be readily provided by Board staff to candidates who request it.

7) Student Community Hours

Secondary school students working on political campaigns during an election period may count their service towards their 40 hours of community service if it takes place

outside the school day.

8) Polling Stations in Schools

Should national, provincial, or municipal elections require school facilities to be used as polling stations, the Board will make the necessary arrangements and inform schools that will be used for this purpose. The returning officer in each community will liaise with principals in these cases. Returning officers may request principals' assistance to identify responsible individuals (including senior students or school council members to provide any hallway monitoring during the polling period).

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Reviewing this administrative procedure every four years in keeping with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.
- Observing the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Election Act, R.S.O. 1990, and the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario Administrative Procedure 101 – Election Campaign Activities and use of Board Resources During Election Campaigns.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- Providing leadership and designating resources to ensure implementation and compliance with this administrative procedure.

Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:

- Ensuring the implementation of this procedure in the school environment.
- Ensuring the procedure is communicated to the school community.

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring they are knowledgeable about the requirements outlined in this procedure.

Definitions

Board Property means all sites owned, operated and leased by the Board.

Board Resources includes, but is not limited to facilities, equipment, supplies, services, staff, funds, branding (logo/wordmark) or other resources owned and operated by the Board.

Election means a regular election and also includes by-election.

By-Election means an election other than a regular election that is conducted in accordance

with the governing legislation.

Election Activity refers to activities related to campaigning for school board, municipal council, provincial and federal office, including the seeking of a nomination in an election. A Trustee may distribute information regarding an all-candidates meeting being held at a school for municipal, provincial, or federal office, provided that they are not a candidate in that election.

References

CDSBEO:

- AP101: Election Campaign Activities and Use of Board Resources During Election Campaigns
- CDSBEO Strategic Plan

Legislation:

- Education Act, R.S.O. (199), O. Reg. 440/20
- Municipal Elections Act, S.O. 1996
- Elections Act, R.S.O 1990, c. E.6
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56