

Political Processes

The Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) has a responsibility to actively advocate fiscal and public policy that supports its programs, public education, and the children in the community. To the extent possible, SCOE shall be proactive in defining its advocacy agenda based on the needs of SCOE, local school districts, and the direction set forth in SCOE's vision, mission, and goals.

SCOE may establish reasonable regulations related to the Board members and employees engaging in political activity during working hours and on SCOE premises.

Legislation

SCOE's responsibility as an advocate for the students of Solano County may include lobbying at the state and national levels.

Because local governments also make decisions which impact public schools, the County Superintendent or designee shall work to establish ongoing relationships with city and county officials and agencies, and shall inform them of the potential effect of local issues on the schools.

SCOE shall identify issues that will affect its programs and the children in its community, establish goals and priorities for legislative advocacy and adopt legislative positions. The Superintendent or designee shall establish a coordinated plan for carrying out the advocacy agenda, including specific activities, target groups or individuals, staff responsibilities, and timelines.

In order to strengthen legislative advocacy efforts, SCOE may work with organizations and coalitions and may join associations whose representatives lobby on behalf of their members.

As necessary, the Superintendent or designee may draft legislative proposals which serve the interests of SCOE, local school districts, and the students of Solano County.

SCOE may provide fair and impartial information about legislative issues affecting schools and children and shall inform the community about its legislative advocacy activities. However, SCOE shall not urge the public to lobby the legislature on its behalf.

Ballot Measures/Candidates

SCOE may study the potential effect of ballot measures on its programs and employees and the districts, schools, and students in the community. Discussion of the effect of such measures shall include an opportunity for Board members, staff, and members of the public to speak on all sides of the issue. Following such study, SCOE may adopt positions in support of or in opposition to ballot measures of importance to education.

SCOE's positions shall be publicized only through normal procedures for reporting Board actions and in a manner that does not attempt to influence voters.

No SCOE funds, services, supplies, or equipment shall be used to urge the support or defeat of any ballot measure or candidate, including any candidate for election to the County Board or Superintendency.

SCOE resources shall not be used to disseminate campaign literature or to purchase advertisements, bumper stickers, posters, or similar promotional items that advocate an election result.

The Superintendent or designee may use SCOE resources to provide students, parents/guardians, and community members with fair and impartial information related to ballot measures, including information about the impact of ballot measures on SCOE, its programs and employees, and the students and districts served by SCOE.

Policy 1160 (Continued)

In preparing or distributing such information, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the totality of the circumstances, including language, style, tenor, and timing, does not expressly advocate passage or defeat of a measure or candidate.

The Superintendent or designee may research, draft, and prepare a measure or other initiative for the ballot, but shall not use district resources to secure signatures in order to qualify the measure for the ballot.

Upon request, SCOE administrators may appear at any time before a citizens' group to explain why the Superintendent called for an election on a measure and to answer questions.

If the presentation occurs during working hours, the SCOE representative shall not urge a citizens' group to vote for or against the measure or initiative.

For informational purposes, the Superintendent or designee may conduct a poll related to a ballot issue. Such a poll shall not advocate a particular position on the issue.

Legal Advocacy

SCOE recognizes that some issues are more appropriately addressed judicially rather than legislatively. When a legal issue is likely to set a state or national precedent, SCOE may join with other parties in order to challenge the issue through litigation or other appropriate means.

Political Forums

Forums on political issues may be held in SCOE facilities as long as the forum is made available to all sides of the issue on an equitable basis.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

- 7054 Use of district property
- 7054.1 Requested appearance
- 7055 Local rules
- 7056 Soliciting or receiving political funds
- 7058 Use of forum
- 35172 Promotional activities

GOVERNMENT CODE

- 50023 Attending legislature to support or oppose legislation
- 53060.5 Attendance at legislative body; expenses
- 54953.5 Right to record proceedings
- 54953.6 Broadcasts of proceedings
- 81000-91015 Political Reform Act

COURT DECISIONS

- Stanson v. Mott, (1976) 17 Cal. 3d 206
- Miller v. Miller, (1978) 87 Cal.App.3d 762
- League of Women Voters v. Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee, (1988) 203 Cal.App.3d 529, 250 Cal. Rptr. 161, rev.den.
- Choice-in-Education League et al v. Los Angeles Unified School District, (1993) 17 Cal.App.4th 415

OFFICE OF THE SOLANO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Policy 1160 (Continued)

Legal Reference:

COURT DECISIONS (Continued)

Yes on Measure A v. City of Lake Forest (1997) 60 Cal.App.4th 620

Scherer v. Buchanan, First Appellate District, Civil No. A076648

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

73 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 255 (1990)

FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION

FPPC No. 93/345 review of materials distributed by the County of Sacramento (1996)

Policy Cross-Reference:

0000 Vision

0200 Goals for the School District

1020 Youth Services

1100 Communication with the Public

1112 Media Relations

1325 Advertising and Promotion

1330 Use of School Facilities

1400 Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools

4119.25 Political Activities of Employees

7131 Relations with Local Agencies