



Washington State Public Disclosure Commission

PO Box 40908 | Olympia, WA 98504-0908

(360) 753-1111 | (877) 601-2828

[www.pdc.wa.gov](http://www.pdc.wa.gov)

# Guidance for School Districts

## in Elections and Campaigns

Presented by:

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## Our Agenda

- Available resources for school districts
- Overview of public use prohibitions
- “Normal and regular” conduct
- More detailed guidance

**Not included today:**

Commissioner issues/policies/potential revisions



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## About the PDC

RCW 42.17A

WAC 390

- 1972 ballot; Initiative 276
- 37 employees
- Led by Commissioners and Executive Director
- Commission sets policy

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## Resources for School Districts

- [pdc.wa.gov](http://pdc.wa.gov)
- *Election-Related Communications by Local Government Agencies*
- *Guidelines for School Districts in Election Campaigns*

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## Guidelines for School Districts...

RCW 42.17A.555

- Commission's view of RCW, WAC, case law
- Chart form
- Examples not exhaustive
- Consult school district legal counsel
- Consult [pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov](mailto:pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov) or call 1-877-601-2828



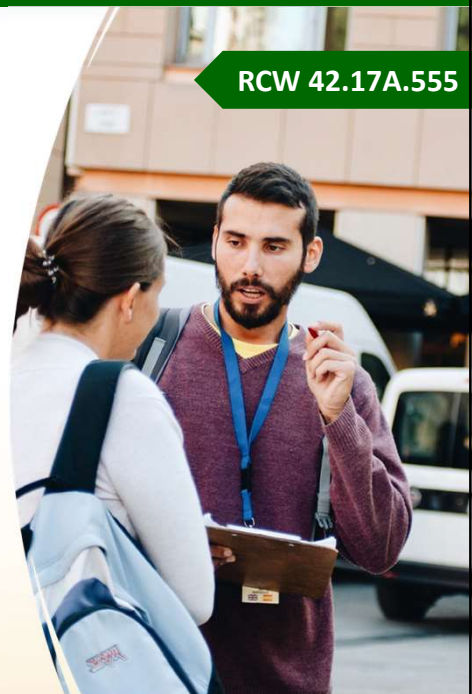
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## Overview of Prohibitions

RCW 42.17A.555

### RCW Addresses:

- Local government and special districts
- Work time prohibitions
- "Public facilities" prohibitions
- Some exceptions



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## “Normal and Regular”

WAC 390-05-271

WAC 390-05-273

RCW 28A.320.090

- Defined as both lawful and usual/customary
- Combination and coordination of activities examined
- Marketing and sales efforts do not qualify
- Influencing the outcome of an election not allowed by RCW

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## District Publications Specific to Elections

### Permitted

- ✓ Objective and fair info
- ✓ Facts on needs and impact
- ✓ Customary distribution
- ✓ Normal and regular for district

### Not Permitted

- ✗ Target specific subgroups
- ✗ Support a candidate or ballot measure
- ✗ Oppose a candidate or ballot measure

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## Regular District Publications

### Permitted

- ✓ Facts on needs and impact
- ✓ Info on community meetings
- ✓ Facts on school board support
- ✓ Thanks to citizens after election

### Not Permitted

- ✗ Encourage staff to participate in campaign
- ✗ Support a candidate or ballot measure
- ✗ Oppose a candidate or ballot measure



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## Reader Boards & Posters

### Permitted

- ✓ Encouragement to vote and dates of election
- ✓ Thanks to citizens after election
- ✓ Some campaign materials
- ✓ Info on election-funded improvements

### Not Permitted

- ✗ "Vote Schools" etc.
- ✗ Signs for or against accessible to public or in classrooms
- ✗ Materials displayed on publicly owned vehicles



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## Technology

### Permitted

- ✓Objective and fair
- ✓Facts on needs and impact
- ✓Customary formatting and updating
- ✓Normal and regular emails/calls

### Not Permitted

- ✗Support a candidate or ballot measure
- ✗Oppose a candidate or ballot measure
- ✗Forward info that does the above

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## Teachers and staff may...

### During work hours:

- ✓Speak to community about facts
- ✓Respond to ballot questions if customary
- ✓Wear campaign items if policy allows
- ✓Place items on personal vehicle

### On their own time:

- ✓Inform staff of chances to participate
- ✓Participate without public resources
- ✓Make materials available in staff-only rooms

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## Teachers and staff shall not...

- ✗ Use work hours or public resources to support or oppose
- ✗ Pressure or coerce staff to participate in campaigns
- ✗ Use district resources to organize distribution of materials



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## Equipment & Supplies

### May use it to:

- ✓ Produce objective facts
- ✓ Present facts at community forums/clubs

### Shall not use it to:

- ✗ Support a candidate or ballot measure
- ✗ Oppose a candidate or ballot measure
- ✗ Prepare materials for meetings regarding elections



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## Voting Information

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### Districts may:

- ✓ Encourage staff and public to vote (if typical)
- ✓ Use public facilities to register people to vote
- ✓ Use public facilities for periodic poll checking

### Districts shall not:

- ✗ Pressure staff to vote
- ✗ Encourage staff to wear buttons, etc.
- ✗ Encourage staff to display campaign materials

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## Surveys & Research

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### Permitted


- ✓ Determine community priorities
- ✓ Determine perceptions
- ✓ Inform about programs/policies
- ✓ Publish survey results if normal and regular

### Not permitted:

- ✗ Ask about taxation support
- ✗ Shore up support or opposition
- ✗ Target specific voters
- ✗ Target specific subgroups

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# Thank you!

## Remaining Questions?



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# Contacting us

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forms</li> <li>• Manuals</li> <li>• Electronic filing</li> </ul>		



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