

## **Election Guidelines for Schools 2018**

The following guidelines are designed to assist school administrators leading up to the municipal elections 2018.

The municipal and school board elections will be held on **Monday, October 22, 2018**.

- Start of the nomination/campaign period is May 1, 2018
- Close of nomination period is July 27, 2018
- Term start date is December 1, 2018

### **School visit by candidates**

Requests by *candidates* to visit a school are not considered appropriate during an election campaign. This restriction includes informal visits to classrooms and meetings with the school council or with school administrators. If a candidate contacts you asking to visit your school, explain that the District School Board of Niagara election guidelines do not permit visits of any kind by candidates for municipal office.

### **All-candidates meetings**

In secondary schools, the election may be an ideal time to help students learn more about municipal government. The DSNB allows *all-candidates meetings* and other learning activities that are part of the classroom program.

### **Distribution of material by candidates**

The District School Board of Niagara Administrative Procedure 1-36 “Distribution of Materials by Outside Agencies” does not allow for the display and/or distribution of materials of a political nature in schools or facilities owned and operated by the Board. This also includes material distributed indirectly on behalf of a candidate—for example; the school council cannot choose to distribute information about a particular candidate. This restriction includes current trustees who are also candidates in the municipal election. Until the election, the school

should not distribute any information by or about trustees who are also candidates.

However, schools do not have control over what occurs off school property. If a candidate or a representative of the candidate stands off school property and distributes campaign material to parents and students, there is no action the school can or should take.

On the other hand, it *is* appropriate to distribute information about the election in general—for example, information from the municipality about the date of the election.

### **School councils**

School councils are agents of the school and the DSBN and are bound by the same guidelines as the school. It is not appropriate for the school council as a group to endorse a specific trustee candidate or to campaign on behalf of a specific candidate. However, the council could *host an all-candidates meeting* to assist parents in learning more about all the candidates.

The council shall not distribute information on behalf of, or about, a specific candidate. If it is the normal practice of the school council to meet regularly with the local trustee(s), those meetings can continue as they usually would. Otherwise, individual candidates are not permitted to meet with the council during the campaign period.

A school council chair or member who is also a candidate for election as trustee may continue in their role for the remainder of the 2017-18 school year. However, they must not use their role to promote their campaign while they are serving in the role of school council member. They are not allowed to distribute campaign material on school property or to discuss their campaign during council meetings.

### **Requests for information**

The DSBN is committed to public accountability and service when responding to information requests. If a candidate contacts the school office for information

about your school, you may provide that information as long as it does not violate privacy laws or the Education Act.

Should media contact you requesting that you comment on the election or candidates, please refer them to the Communications Department.

### **Role of current trustees**

The current members of the board of trustees are still serving out the end of their term of office and 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, attend a regular school council meeting or attend an open house at the school, this practice can continue during the election campaign.

However, schools cannot send out any campaign material on behalf of the current trustee, if he or she is also a candidate in the municipal election.

### **Advice regarding campaigning for candidates**

Obviously, it is not appropriate for any DSBN staff member to campaign for or endorse a specific trustee candidate while in the workplace. While it is not an issue for most board or school staff to campaign outside of work hours for trustee candidates, it is not recommended that school administrators or other senior staff campaign on behalf of a trustee candidate.

### **Schools as polling stations**

The safety of our students while at school is very important to everyone at the DSBN. It is for this reason that DSBN corresponded with Elections Ontario and Municipal Clerk offices across the region to encourage them not to use schools as polling stations. There are many other publicly funded buildings that are appropriate for use as polling stations, thus allowing schools to remain safe, secure places of learning.

The Municipal Elections Act mandates the requirement for use of space for polling stations, and as such, if requested, schools must comply. However, should your school be selected as a polling station, we will provide you with information to share with your school community through school newsletters, and as well, will assist in making any necessary arrangements to help ensure the security of the building while in use as a polling station.

### **More information**

If you have questions or if situations arise that are not covered by these guidelines, please contact one of the following individuals:

- Karen Bellamy, Executive Assistant, Director's Office, 905-641-1550 ext. 54101
- Communications Department
- Area Superintendent

For information about the election, visit the following websites:

- Town of Lincoln: <http://www.lincoln.ca>
- Town of Grimsby: <http://www.town.grimsby.on.ca>
- City of Niagara Falls: <http://www.niagarafalls.ca>
- Town of Pelham: <http://www.pelham.ca>
- City of Thorold: <http://www.thorold.com>
- Town of Port Colborne: <http://www.portcolborne.ca>
- Town of Fort Erie: <http://www.town.forterie.ca>
- City of St. Catharines: <http://www.stcatharines.ca/en>
- Town of Niagara on the Lake: <http://www.notl.org>
- City of Welland: <http://www.welland.ca>

- Town of West Lincoln: <http://www.westlincoln.ca>
- Town of Wainfleet: <http://www.wainfleet.ca/>