



**REPORT TO THE BOARD  
MAY 23, 2023**

**NOTICE OF MOTION  
POLICY REQUEST**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Trustee Benoit submitted the following Notice of Motion on May 17, 2023 (Appendix A)

**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the Niagara Catholic District School Board develop a Partisan, Political or Social Advocacy Activities Policy

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Presented by: Trustee Benoit

Date Submitted: May 17, 2023

Date to be Presented: June 20, 2023

Date: May 23, 2023

## Partisan, Political, or Social Policy Advocacy Activities

All employees of the Niagara Catholic District School Board occupy positions of public trust and confidence and, as such, are expected to discharge their duties and responsibilities with integrity and professionalism in keeping with their mission of transmitting the morals and teachings of the Catholic Church.

### Purpose

This policy is designed to promote education instead of indoctrination, defined as the endorsement of partisan, political or social policy matters.

Neutrality and balance in classroom instruction are desired to create an optimal learning environment and atmosphere of inclusiveness, where all students are welcome. Because views and beliefs about partisan, political, or social policy matters are often deeply personal, employees should not, during assigned work hours, advocate to students concerning their views or beliefs on these matters. Such advocacy does not contribute to a positive learning climate and may be disruptive, divisive, and distracting. Rather, classroom instruction should relate to approved curriculum. The district's role is to teach students how to think, not what to think, thereby keeping classrooms as places of education, not indoctrination.

### Definitions

For purposes of this policy, advocacy and advocate are defined as the use of speech, conduct, or symbols to support or oppose a particular point of view or belief about partisan, political, or social policy issues or matters.

**Guidelines:**

The Board adopts the following guidelines to clarify which activities are not appropriate during assigned work hours and on all district-owned or leased property, within all school buildings, and at all district-sponsored activities:

Employees shall not advocate to students concerning any partisan, political, or social policy issue nor engage in partisan, political or social policy electioneering or campaigning related to employee representative elections.

Employees shall not display any flag, banner, poster, sign, sticker, pin, button, insignia, paraphernalia, photograph, or other similar material that advocates concerning any partisan, political, or social policy issue.

Employees shall not distribute, circulate, or display circulars, leaflets, petitions, or similar material that advocates concerning any partisan, political, or social policy issue.

Employees shall not collect or solicit funds or volunteers for any partisan, political, or social policy campaign or activity.

Employees shall not direct or encourage students to write, address, or distribute advocacy materials

related to any partisan, political, or social policy issue.

Any district employee who holds elective, appointive, or partisan office is not entitled to time off from his district duties for reasons related to such office, except as such time may qualify under the leave policies of the Board or the pertinent collective bargaining agreement.

This policy specifically exempts the following from the above prohibitions:

- Instruction and study concerning partisan, political, or social policy issues when directly relevant to the curriculum and appropriate to classroom studies given the students' age and class year, ; provided, however, that such instruction or study is not for the purpose of advocating concerning a partisan, political, or social policy issue.

Instruction on the Catholic faith in our curriculum, as long as such teaching reinforces the teachings of the Catholic faith.

- The display of Canadian Flags, the Ontario Flag, any Catholic flag or Vatican Flag; and flags of foreign countries or other Canadian provinces or territories when directly relevant to a course of study in a social studies or foreign language class.

- Wearing small pieces of jewelry, consistent with the professional dress code, that symbolically represent an individual's Catholic faith.

#### Delegation of Responsibility

When implementing and enforcing this policy, district employees, the Superintendent and principals should keep all flags that have not been mentioned as permitted by the board off school property.

Whatever is done in the school or on the board must be consistent with the Catholic faith as expressed in the Catechism.