



Election Guide for School Board Elections

With local school board elections happening this fall, it's important that PTA members be aware of the laws regarding what PTA units can and cannot do. The guidelines are different for a candidate election from a ballot issue/measure election, such as a Mill or Bond election.

The IRS does not allow registered 501(c) (3) organizations to support or oppose candidates. All PTA units in Colorado are registered 501(c) (3) non-profit organizations. Therefore, if your PTA endorses a candidate or violates other campaign laws, you jeopardize not only your PTA's non-profit status, but also the non-profit status of every PTA in the state of Colorado.

What Are PTAs NOT Allowed to Do?

- Support/oppose/endorse candidates.
- Make a campaign contribution to, or an expenditure for, a candidate or a candidate committee.
- Rate candidates on who is most favorable to your issue(s).
- Let a candidate use the organization's facilities or resources, unless those resources are made equally available to all candidates at their fair market value.

NOTE: While PTAs are prohibited by law from supporting or opposing candidates, PTA members are allowed to engage in any campaign activities they wish, on their personal time, as long as they do not present themselves as representatives of PTA.

What Are PTAs Allowed to Do?

- Conduct or support voter registration – ask members to check their voter registration status and if necessary, register to vote at www.GoVoteColorado.com.
- Host, co-sponsor, or encourage members to attend candidate forums.
- Educate members on candidates – rent the room used for your regularly scheduled PTA meeting and showcase campaign flyers and information provided by the candidates, as long as ALL candidates are invited to participate.
- Encourage PTA members to do their own research by looking at candidates' websites and flyers, reading articles in the media, and/or looking at the endorsements by other organizations that they have.
- Distribute nonpartisan sample ballots, candidate questionnaires, and election guides.
- Educate the candidates on PTA's Mission, Purposes, Resolutions, Position Statements, and Legislative Priorities.
- Conduct issue advocacy – write a Letter to the Editor (or post to the public or social media) information about PTA's positions on relevant issues.
- Educate voters on the voting process – let them know how and when to vote – especially regarding the fact that voting in Colorado is now conducted mainly by mail ballots.
- Organize Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) activities.
- Encourage and remind members to vote no later than Election Day.