A. PURPOSE

To recognize the participation of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) students and employees in political campaigns and issues in accordance with the state Maryland constitution and election laws (see MCPS Exhibit KEA-EC: Political Committees, Campaign Materials, and Advertising [State Law]) regarding participation in political campaigns, partisan election activities, and distribution of political or partisan materials as well as student participation in civic engagement activities intended to be an active participant in our democratic process.

B. ISSUE

The Montgomery County Board of Education recognizes the rights of MCPS students and employees to participate in
political campaigns, and issues; the constitutional rights of students and employees and the general public to distribute materials relating to their political views on school grounds; the interest of students to participate in civic engagement activities; and the right of students to pursue an education conducted in a suitable academic environment free from disruption.

C. POSITION

1. The Board approves the participation of students in Grades 9-12 in political campaign activity during school hours during the two-week period immediately prior to a primary or general election at the request of the political candidate or organization with parental written parent/guardian consent, and notification to approval of the principal or his/her designee, and.

2. The Board approves the participation of students in Grades 9-12 in civic engagement activities with written parent/guardian consent, the agreement of a representative of the sponsoring organization, evidence of a sponsored/organized event or activity and notification to approval of the principal/designee to ensure compliance with Board policies and MCPS regulations as well as federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Schools should encourage students to reflect on their learning as they participate in civic
engagement activities.

3. Released time may be granted to students for such participation in political campaign activity and/or civic engagement activities for a total of three school days per school year—during the two-week period immediately prior to a primary or general election.

3.4. The Board approves the participation of employees in political campaigns and issues as set forth in MCPS Regulation KEA-RA:, Student and Employee Participation in Political Campaigns and Distribution of Political Campaign Materials and MCPS Exhibit KEA-EC:, Political Committees, Campaign Materials, Campaign Advertising Authority Line (State Law)

3.5. Printed materials advocating or opposing a candidate for public office or other political views may be distributed on school premises under certain conditions.

D. DESIRED OUTCOME

The outcome for this policy is to ensure that the employees and students of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are well informed and guided in their activities regarding the requirements of state election laws and their participation in civic engagement activities, political campaigns, partisan election activities, and distribution of political or
partisan materials.

E. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. The Board directs the superintendent of schools, in consultation with staff, to prepare implementing regulations regarding participation in political activities by employees and students, civic engagement activities by students, and the time, place, and manner in which printed materials advocating or opposing a candidate for public office or other political views may be distributed on school premises.

2. The Board further directs the superintendent of schools to develop a document incorporating this Board policy with the procedures for distribution to all schools, Parent Teacher Associations, Parent Teacher Staff Associations, PTA's, appropriate organizations, individual citizens by request, and the supervisor of elections for distribution to political candidates.

3. The superintendent of schools will develop procedures to implement and publicize this policy.

F. REVIEW AND REPORTING

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board of Education's policy review process.