



THE GLASGOW GROUP LLC

Guidelines for Election 2020

Schools have a critical role in teaching social consciousness and civic engagement. As the 2020 election moves forward, we must prepare for the important issues that arise within an election cycle that has been informed by the COVID-19 pandemic, racial violence and civil unrest, and economic upheaval. All presidential elections are historic, and this one certainly will be so, regardless of outcome. The impact of the election will continue well beyond November 3rd. As we navigate this election season, our schools should maintain an institutional positionality that is explicitly nonpartisan, cultivating constructive dialogue about the complex, multifaceted perspectives that surround the election. The emotional, political, and economic ripples of the election will be felt in every aspect of school life. Put simply, we need to be prepared, even with all of the unknowns. We will face this moment with the skills, tools, and emotional capacity expected of us as educational institutions called to hold all of our students, employees, and families in our care. Our planning and response to this election will challenge us to stay grounded in our commitment to equity and inclusion and the missions that drive our work in schools. **As you prepare, we recommend that you:**

- Distinguish between human rights, civil rights, and political issues while acknowledging where they intersect.
- Create a culture of dialogue not debate. Debate is about refuting, rebutting, and convincing. Dialogue is about learning and growing together.
- Create Community Norms for Civic Discourse to provide guidance for the expression of political opinions in the school community and to ensure that classrooms and school spaces are not used to advance an individual's political platform or personal agenda.
- Determine values-based and mission-aligned guidelines around election paraphernalia, clothing, and signs on campus and in virtual school settings.
- Cultivate intentionally planned learning opportunities (assembly speakers, parent discussions, professional development, curricular teach ins, etc.). Utilize the best tools within your instructional plan (in-person, hybrid, remote) to support the community around the election. Plan time within your school day on November 4 for processing the outcomes of the election.
- Support faculty and staff through professional development on dialogue facilitation and navigating challenging conversations. Provide collegial spaces for employees to process, get counseling support, etc. to navigate their own emotions during the election season.
- Clarify the role of school employees as non-partisan representatives of the school and be clear about expectations for employees around expressing political opinions in school settings and on personal media.
- Consider how your school will correspond (via letters, social media, school gatherings, etc.) with key constituencies throughout the election process including plans for communicating during pre-election debates and events, in the case of a stalled election, if we experience election-related violence, as we process the results of the election, and on the day of inauguration.
- Anticipate a range of emotional responses to the outcomes of the election. Validate the range of emotions and provide outlets for processing. Consider the needs of various constituents and proactively design spaces for each group (affinity and identity groups, parent groups, faculty and staff, administrators, divisional leaders, etc.)
- Focus on issues and policies, not candidates. Do not engage in mock elections or allow for the impersonation of candidates during mock debates.