

Austin Community College – American Federation of Teachers Local 6249 – COPE rules

Section 1 – COPE Purpose:

- A. There shall be created at Austin Community College AFT 6249, a Committee on Political Education, known hereafter as COPE.
- B. Austin Community College / American Federation of Teachers Committee on Political Education is registered with the State of Texas Ethics Commission as a general purpose political action committee that makes contributions and expenditures.
- C. The primary purpose of COPE is to promote and support responsible and qualified candidates for the Board of Trustees of the Austin Community College (ACC).
- D. COPE may also support other state and local candidates and ballot initiatives, which may have a significant impact on educational funding and policies of ACC.

Section 2 – COPE Structure:

- A. The ACC AFT COPE Committee Board shall consist of:
 - a. A chair appointed by the Local President and approved by the Local Executive Board, it shall include 4 additional COPE dues paying individuals from the local: for a total COPE Committee Board of 5
 - b. COPE Committee Board members shall be recommended by COPE chair and approved by Local Officers
- B. The President shall appoint the Chair of the COPE Board annually.
- C. The COPE Chair will work directly with the Local President to ensure that COPE is meeting the purposes and goals of the local and complying with rules and laws as required.
- D. The COPE Chair shall be responsible for coordinating COPE activities including, but not limited to:
 - 1. Chairing COPE meetings.
 - 2. Coordinating communications with COPE membership on upcoming meetings and political activities.
 - 3. Encouraging local and COPE members to participate in COPE activities and encouraging contributions to COPE funds
 - 4. Leading efforts to communicate and advocate AFT and local positions with public officials.
 - 5. Coordinating lobbying and advocacy efforts with Texas AFT before the Texas Legislature, the ACC Board of Trustees and any other governmental bodies that develop policies relevant to the concerns of union members related to their employment at ACC
 - 6. Communicating, in coordination with the local President, with Texas AFT, National AFT and the Austin Central Labor Council (CLC) about electoral campaigns, candidates and legislation that are of concern to COPE members.
 - 7. Presenting current political issues/concerns at the local, state, and national levels, where appropriate
 - 8. Coordinating ACC AFT6249 efforts to recruit candidates for the ACC Board of Trustees.
 - 9. Arranging logistics for screening, questionnaires, and endorsement / recommendation forums for candidates for ACC Board of Trustees; with approval of Local President and Officers

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10. Making recommendations to the COPE membership regarding endorsement of candidates and disbursement of COPE funds and political contributions on approval of the COPE Committee.
 11. Studying relevant proposed legislation, proposed initiatives, candidates for elected office, and initiating recommendations.
- E. The COPE Treasurer shall be responsible for filing reports with the Texas Ethics Commission in a timely manner.
1. The COPE treasurer shall be nominated by the COPE Chair and approved of the President of the local.
 2. The COPE treasurer must register as such with the Texas Ethics Commission.
 3. Any liabilities arising from filing or failing to file such reports shall be limited to Austin Community College, AFT, AFT 6249, a Committee on Political Education.
 - i. The COPE Treasurer shall NOT be considered personally liable except in case of fraud or misconduct by either of this individual.

Section 3 – COPE Membership

- A. Membership in COPE is voluntary.
- B. COPE membership is only open to ACC Local AFT6249 members in good standing and dues-paying retirees.
- C. COPE membership is established by paying COPE contributions of at least \$1 per month.
- D. The COPE Chair or designee is required to maintain an updated roster of COPE members on a monthly basis to ensure that only members in good standing are casting votes in COPE meetings.

Section 4 – COPE Meetings and Endorsements

- A. COPE meetings are closed to the public and may be attended only by COPE members.
- B. COPE Meetings may be convened with proper notification either in person or electronically.
- C. COPE members may attend by phone or other electronic means upon request.
- D. COPE Minutes shall be taken and posted by the COPE Chair or the Chair's designee within 2 weeks;
 - a. minutes shall contain major decisions made during the COPE meeting; details of endorsement discussions are considered confidential and are not to be included in the minutes.
- E. A quorum for a COPE Meeting will be 10% of total COPE membership and shall be required to conduct COPE business at a COPE meeting.
- F. Voting may be done electronically but only those members PRESENT DURING the meeting and debate of subject of vote, may vote.
- G. Proper notification shall be required to hold a COPE Meeting; proper notification shall normally be defined as 14-day advance notice; however, this may be suspended in case of an emergency situation at the request of the COPE Chair and with the approval of the Local President.

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- H. Decisions to endorse candidates, ballot measures, and legislation or to donate to campaigns shall be made upon recommendation of the COPE Committee
- I. Candidate endorsements for political activities directly related to ACC – defined as candidates for the Board of Trustees, ACC tax elections, ACC bond elections and ACC annexation elections – and the associated disbursements of funds must receive a majority vote to be endorsed.
- J. All Non-ACC endorsements and disbursements of funds for purposes other than stated above must be approved by a 2/3 vote of COPE.
- K. COPE Meetings may be convened with proper notice as part of Local General membership meetings or with timely notice by email to COPE members.
- L. Any COPE member who has any paid relationship to any candidate or campaign coming before COPE must declare that he/she has a conflict of interest and recuse himself or herself from any COPE discussions and votes related to that candidate or campaign.
- M. COPE member running for elected offices, may not serve as Chair or as a COPE Committee Board member during campaign or candidacy.

Section 5 – Amendment of the Bylaws

- A. Twenty-Five percent (10%) of COPE membership may propose, by petitioning for an amendment to these procedures by presenting it to the President of the local and the COPE Chair, who shall notify the COPE membership of the proposed amendment no later than 14 days prior to a COPE Meeting.
- B. Alternatively, the COPE Chair or a majority of the COPE Board may vote to present a proposed amendment to the COPE membership. A copy of the proposed amendment shall be distributed to all COPE members 14 days prior to the Membership Meeting at which time the amendment will be introduced and discussed.
- C. A quorum for voting an amendment to these procedures to be considered and adopted shall consist of 10% – either in person or electronically.
- D. Amendments shall be made by majority vote.