

# Instruction

## Facility Use by Students for Extracurricular Activities

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The Equal Access Act requires that public secondary schools grant access to student groups who wish to meet for religious, political, or philosophical purposes, if the school allows other types of non-curriculum related groups to meet.

### **Open Forum:**

The principal may approve student groups' use of facilities to conduct a meeting during the open forum time which is defined as a lunch hour or non-instructional time provided that:

1. The meeting will take place during the open forum.
2. The meeting is voluntary and student-initiated, and open to all students. The principal must be assured that students are the ones promoting such activities and they are participating of their own volition. Only students enrolled in the school may request the meetings.
3. The school does not sponsor the meetings (i.e. authorities or district employees do not promote, lead or participate in such meetings). Principals may assign personnel to supervise these meetings. This action does not constitute sponsorship by the district.
4. The presence of school authorities or district employees or personnel at any student religious meeting is non-participatory in nature. The presence of school authorities is for the purpose of observation only.
5. The meeting does not in any way interfere with the conduct of regular instructional activities of the schools. Since the education of the student is the prime responsibility of the school, any other activities are secondary. The school may deny facilities to students on the basis that such activities or meetings interfere with the instructional program.
6. Student meetings are not controlled, conducted or directed by persons or groups not affiliated with the schools. Such persons may attend student meetings but not on a regular basis. Visitors to the school must be approved by the principal, and clearance must be obtained prior to the meeting.

Legal Reference:

Westside Community Board of Education v. Mergens Equal Access Act

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#### **Closed Forums:**

The Board of Education recognizes a 'closed forum' for the district's high school student organizations and requires such organizations to be directly related to the curriculum. Membership in all student organizations is open to all students of the school. Such organizations will operate within the framework of state and federal law, statutes, Board policy, administrative rules, and the parameters of the learning program.

Each principal will develop general guidelines for the establishment and operation of student organizations within the school. Such guidelines will include the approval of the principal prior to the formation of any club or organization, the assignment of at least one faculty advisor to each student organization, and compliance with the provisions of Board policy.

The formation of any student organization that may engage in activities of an apparently controversial nature that may, in the opinion of the principal, interfere with the legitimate educational concerns of the school will require approval by the Board. All student organizations are required to open membership to all interested and/or eligible students. Additionally, fraternities, sororities and/or secret societies will not receive recognition in any manner.

A faculty advisory must attend every meeting of the student organization, whether conducted on school premises or at another location.

The principal is authorized to deny all requests for forming an organization where the requirements of this policy and Board policy are not met. When the principal denies the request of students during to form an organization in a particular school, the principal will inform the students of the reasons for the denial. The students may submit a written request to the Superintendent or designee within ten (10) days of the denial for a review of the principal's decision. The decision of the Superintendent or designee after review of the denial will be final.