

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS (Secondary Schools)

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the school division to permit the organization and operation of student organizations in the secondary schools and to permit such organizations to meet on school premises during non-instructional time. The purpose of this policy is to establish criteria and procedures governing the operation of student organizations. The justification for such activities rests upon the extent to which they contribute to the fulfillment of the educational objectives of the school division.

Student-Initiated Organizations

Curriculum-related student organizations serve as an extension of the regular school curriculum. Their function is to enhance the participants' educational experience and supplement the course materials within the educational program of the schools. The activities of these organizations should bear a clear relationship to the regular curriculum. Student organizations meeting these criteria and approved by the principal shall be deemed to be officially recognized, school-sponsored student organizations.

Secondary school students are also permitted to organize and conduct meetings of non curriculum-related organizations to pursue activities outside of the school curriculum, subject to the provisions of this policy. Such organizations must be student initiated and directed, and school personnel, parents and any other persons who are not students enrolled in the division are prohibited from directing, controlling, conducting or regularly attending the meetings of such organizations, except that the faculty sponsor(s)/supervisor(s) must attend all meetings. Non curriculum-related student organizations that are student-initiated shall not be deemed to be school sponsored or endorsed. The fact that such organizations are permitted to conduct meetings under this policy shall not constitute an expression of school division support for the purposes of such organizations or the content of any meetings thereof.

Membership

Membership in all student -initiated organizations shall be open to and limited to all students currently enrolled in the sponsoring school on a voluntary basis. These student organizations may establish academic qualifications for membership where necessarily related to the purposes of the organization. No student shall be denied membership on account of his or her race, color, national origin or religion. Qualifications based on sex may be imposed only where based on competitive athletic skill or where the activity involved is a contact sport.

Faculty Supervision

Curriculum-related student organizations shall be sponsored and supervised by one or more of the members of the school faculty and approved by the principal. Faculty sponsors shall participate in the supervision and direction of all activities of the organization and shall attend all meetings.

Non curriculum-related student organizations that are student-initiated shall not have a faculty sponsor. However, a member of the school's professional staff shall attend every meeting or activity of such organizations in a non-participatory capacity for purposes of general supervision. The organization shall be responsible to assure the presence of a staff member for its meetings.

No school employee shall be compelled to attend a meeting of any student organization if the content of such meeting is contrary to the beliefs of that school employee. School employees present at any meeting of a non curriculum-related student organization which includes religious worship, prayer or practice or is identified as having a religious purpose shall attend in a non-participatory capacity only.

Meetings of Student Organizations

All student organizations shall have the right to meet on school premises during non-instructional time as designated by the school principal. No student organization shall be denied equal access to school facilities during designated meeting times on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical or other content of the speech at the meetings of such organization. No public funding or support shall be extended to any non curriculum-related student organization other than the opportunity to meet on school premises on an equal basis as other student organizations.

The principal of each school shall develop guidelines and rules concerning the procedure for scheduling meetings of student organizations and setting the times and facilities which are available for such meetings. Meeting times shall be limited to non-instructional time before or after regular classroom hours or during established activities periods. These guidelines and rules shall be made available to all students. Student organizations wishing to conduct meetings under this policy must make application to the principal for permission in accordance with division procedures.

Compliance with Law and Policy

Student organizations shall not engage in any activity which is contrary to law, division policy or school rules; which disrupts or clearly threatens to disrupt the orderly operation of the school; or which would adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of any students or staff members. Failure to comply with these provisions shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

Adopted: July 9, 1998

Legal Ref.: 20 USC § 4071 et seq. Equal Access Act title IX, Education

Amendments of 1972, 34 C.F.R. Parts 101 and 106 - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex.