

## **Instruction**

### **Extra-Class Activities: Limited Open Forum**

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 student groups to meet. The law establishes the open forum be held during the lunch hour or as determined by the school Principal to ensure equal access to student groups wishing to meet.

The Principal may approve student groups use of facilities to conduct a meeting during the open forum provided that:

1. The meeting is held during those non-instructional times identified by the Superintendent or his/her designee for non-curricular student groups, clubs or organizations to meet. “Non-instructional time” means time set aside by the school before actual classroom instruction begins or after actual classroom instruction ends. “Non-curricular student groups” are those student groups, clubs or organizations that do not directly relate to the curriculum.
2. The meeting is voluntary and student initiated. 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. 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 of such meetings.
4. The presence of school authorities or district employees or district 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 conflict with the 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 obtained prior to the meeting.
7. The meeting is open to all students without regard to race, color, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, physical disability, religion or national origin.
8. The school retains its authority to maintain order and discipline.
9. All non-curriculum related student groups that are not District sponsored receive substantially the same treatment.
10. The Superintendent or his/her designee approves the meeting or series of meetings.

Legal Reference: *Westside Community Board of Education v. Mergens*  
Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. §4071 et. seq.

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