

## STUDENT GROUPS - LIMITED OPEN FORUM

The Equal Access Act (Title VIII of Public Law 98-377) requires that public secondary schools grant equal 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. This policy 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 provided that:

- A. The meeting will take place during lunch or non-instructional time as determined by the Principal.
- B. The meeting is open, voluntary and student initiated. The Principal must be assured that students are the ones promoting such activities and that they are participating of their own volition. Only students enrolled in the school may request the meetings.
- C. School authorities or district employees do not promote, lead or participate in such meetings. Appropriate school personnel will supervise these meetings. This action does not constitute sponsorship by the district of such meetings.
- D. The presence of school authorities or district employees or district personnel at any open forum is non-participatory in nature. The presence of school authorities is for the purpose of observation only.
- E. The meeting does not in any way interfere with the conduct of regular instructional activities of the schools. Since the education of the students 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.
- F. Student meetings are not controlled, conducted or directed by person(s) 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.

- G. To the extent allowed by law, student meetings that promote activities that violate the District's non-discrimination and harassment policies may be prohibited.

Legal Reference: 5 MRSA § 4592

Cross Reference: AC Non-Discriminatory Policy  
ACAA Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students  
ACAD Hazing

Adopted: April 14, 2003

Reviewed: December 14, 2009