

Student Organizations – Open Forum

In addition to clubs and groups related to the curriculum, students in middle and high schools in this district shall be permitted to organize and conduct meetings of non-curriculum-related student clubs or other groups to pursue specialized activities outside the classroom. Such groups shall not be considered school-sponsored student organizations nor be given all the privileges afforded to school-sponsored organizations.

Students may conduct meetings under this policy on school premises only during non-instructional time so that meetings do not interfere with the orderly conduct of the educational activities of the school. Meetings of noncurricular student groups must be scheduled, organized and conducted within the guidelines established by this policy and accompanying regulations.

For purposes of this policy, "non-instructional time" means time set aside by each school before actual classroom instruction begins or after actual classroom instruction ends. Lunch period is considered "non-instructional time."

Requests for permission to conduct a noncurricular student meeting must originate from a student or groups of students. Persons not attending school in this district, parents, school personnel or any other non-school persons are prohibited from directing, conducting, controlling or regularly attending the activities of a non-curricular student group.

All noncurricular student groups meeting on school premises are required to open membership to all interested and/or eligible students. Fraternities, sororities and/or secret societies shall not receive recognition in any manner under this policy. Attendance at all meetings must be voluntary.

The administration shall develop general guidelines and rules so that students will be informed about the procedure for scheduling meetings and activities, the hours available for meetings and the facilities available for meeting space. Students must request permission for a meeting of a non-curriculum-related group from the principal and submit all scheduling requests to the principal for approval.

A member of the professional staff must be invited to attend every meeting or activity scheduled on school premises as a monitor for purposes of general supervision.

Students shall be responsible for ensuring the presence of a faculty monitor prior to every meeting.

Under no circumstances shall the school compel a faculty member or school employee to monitor or attend a meeting of a noncurricular student group if the content of the speech at the meeting is contrary to the beliefs of the school employee.

School employees may be present at religious meetings of a noncurricular group only in a non-participatory capacity.

All forms of hazing shall be prohibited in any group meeting on school premises. No initiation shall be held for any noncurricular student group, which will be degrading to the student.

The school district, through the building principal, retains the authority to prohibit meetings which otherwise would be unlawful. Further, nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit the authority of the school to maintain discipline on school premises, to protect the well-being of students and faculty and to insure that attendance at meetings is voluntary. Neither shall anything in this policy be used to imply that the school is sponsoring a noncurricular student group. No public funding or support shall be extended to noncurricular student groups other than an opportunity to meet on school premises.

In providing equal access to school facilities for all noncurricular groups, the district is not expressing any opinion or approval of the subject matter discussed at any meeting nor is it advocating or supporting in any manner the point of view expressed by any student or group meeting as allowed by this policy.

Noncurricular student groups shall not be denied equal access to school facilities solely on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical or other content of any speech at such meetings.

Adopted: November 27, 2007
Revised: September 25, 2018

LEGAL REFS.: 20 U.S.C. §4071 *et seq.* (*Equal Access Act*)
C.R.S. 22-1-117 (secret fraternities forbidden)
C.R.S. 22-1-118 (board has power to enforce prohibition on secret fraternities)

Garfield School District No. Re-2, Rifle, Colorado