

POLICY

**PATERSON
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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5842 EQUAL ACCESS OF PUPIL ORGANIZATIONS

The Board of Education will permit the use of school facilities by pupil-initiated organizations for non-curricular pupil activities. A pupil-initiated organization, regardless of the size of the group, will not be denied an opportunity to meet and use school facilities on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at their meeting.

An application for permission to meet on school premises shall be made to the principal, who shall grant permission provided that he/she determines that:

1. The activity has been initiated by pupils;
2. Attendance at the meeting is voluntary;
3. No agent or employee of the district will promote, lead, or participate in the meeting;
4. The meeting is for a lawful purpose;
5. The meeting does not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of instructional activities in the school;
6. Nonschool persons do not direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend the activity; and
7. The activity is adequately supervised by appropriately certified school district staff.

A pupil-initiated group granted permission to meet on school premises shall be subject to the same rules and regulations that govern the meetings of pupil organizations sponsored by this Board, except as provided by this policy. Participation in a pupil-initiated meeting must be available to all pupils who wish



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to attend and cannot be denied on the basis of a pupil's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectational or sexual orientation or sex, social or economic status, or disability. The Board will not permit the organization of a fraternity, sorority, or secret society. A pupil-initiated meeting may be attended by no more than three outside resource person(s) or one resource person per ten pupils.

Access to school facilities by pupil organizations will be provided within the governing principles of the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

An appropriately certified staff member shall be assigned to attend a pupil-initiated meeting in a custodial capacity and shall not participate in the activity while serving in this custodial capacity. No teaching staff member shall be compelled to attend a pupil-initiated meeting if the content of the speech at the meeting is contrary to his/her beliefs.

The Building Principal may take such actions as may be necessary to maintain order and discipline on school premises and to protect the safety and well-being of pupils and staff members.

20 U.S.C.A. 1701 et seq.
United State Department of Education - Guidance on
Constitutionally Protected Prayer in Public Elementary and
Secondary Schools

Cross reference: Policy Guide Nos. 2430, 7510

Adopted: 31 October 2002

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