

**FOSTER-GLOCESTER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Glocester, RI**

**POLICY ON STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

The Foster-Glocester Regional School Committee (“School Committee”) encourages extracurricular organizations which develop character, leadership, critical thinking, cooperation, and well-rounded personalities.

The Foster-Glocester Regional School District (“District”) will provide opportunities for both “sponsored” and “non-sponsored” student activities to meet on school premises during non-instructional time. Such activities will be supervised by a staff member at all times.

The School Committee acknowledges that pursuant to the Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. §§ 4071-74:

*It shall be unlawful for any public secondary school which receives Federal financial assistance and which has a limited open forum to deny equal access or a fair opportunity to, or discriminate against, any students who wish to conduct a meeting within that limited open forum on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or content of the speech at such meetings.*

A “sponsored” student activity is one which is deemed by the School Committee and school staff to be related to the educational mission of the school.

A “non-sponsored” student activity is one that is not curriculum related but is an outgrowth of students’ interest in a particular topic, and is also supervised by a staff member under the following conditions:

1. the meeting is voluntary and student-initiated;
2. employees or agents of the school or government may be present at non-sponsored activities in a non-participatory capacity only;
3. the meeting does not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school; and
4. non-school persons may not direct, conduct, control or regularly attend activities of student groups.

The District will not:

1. influence the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity;

2. require any person to participate in prayer or other religious activity;
3. expend public funds beyond the incidental cost of providing the space for student-initiated meetings;
4. compel any school agent or employee to attend a school meeting if the content of the speech at the meeting is contrary to the beliefs of the agent or employee;
5. limit the rights of groups of students which are not of a specified numerical size;
6. abridge the constitutional rights of any person; or
7. permit meetings in which unlawful conduct occurs.

The Equal Access Act provides that:

*schools shall be deemed to offer a fair opportunity to students who wish to conduct a meeting within its limited open forum if such school uniformly provides that there is no sponsorship of the meeting by the school, the government, or its agents or employees.*

Furthermore, the school must provide that the meeting “does not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school.”

Equal Access to meeting space includes a listing in the school newspaper and use of bulletin boards. However, listings, notices, etc., referring to non-sponsored student organizations would include a disclaimer of school sponsorship or endorsement, and faculty representatives to these clubs would be directed to restrict their involvement in such clubs to keeping order. Religious, political, and advocacy clubs would fall into this category.

The Superintendent shall have the authority to approve school sponsored clubs and organizations. School sponsored clubs and organizations include those clubs that are related to the educational mission of the school. Such clubs would include, but are not limited to, existing school sponsored clubs and organizations such as:

Art Club	PE Leaders	Varsity Club
Drama Club	Recycling Club	Yearbook (Publication)
Future Business Leaders of America	Student Council	Class of 2014
Future Farmers of America	Share Our Strength (SOS)	Class of 2015
Math Club	Spanish Club	Class of 2016
Mock Trial	Students for Social Awareness	Class of 2017
National Honor Society	TOPS - Outreach Program for Sports	
Natural Helpers	Technology Student Association	

## Definitions

1. Secondary school -- A public school which provides secondary education as determined by state law.
2. Sponsorship -- Includes the act of promoting, leading, or participating in a meeting. The assignment of a teacher, administrator, or other school employee to a meeting for custodial purposes does not constitute sponsorship of the meeting.
3. Meeting -- Includes those activities of student groups which are permitted under a school's limited open forum and are not directly related to the school curriculum.
4. Non-instructional time -- Time set aside by the school before actual classroom instruction begins or after actual classroom instruction ends. The lunch period is not considered non-instructional time.

This policy does not apply to community organizations, adult or youth oriented, that seek to use school facilities during non-instructional hours, i.e. scouting groups.

First Reading: December 3, 2013  
Second Reading: January 7, 2014  
Adoption: January 7, 2014