

STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH POLICY
Equal Access to Facilities

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to implement the Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.Code Section 4071-4074 (Equal Access Act), by granting equal access to school facilities for students who wish to meet for religious, political, or philosophical purposes during non-instructional time.

II. POLICY

A. It is the policy of STEM not to deny equal access or a fair opportunity to, or to discriminate against, any student who wishes to conduct a meeting using STEM facilities, on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meeting.

B. Because STEM allows non-curriculum related student groups to meet on school premises during non-instructional time, STEM has created a limited open forum for students enrolled in the school. Therefore non-curriculum-related student groups shall have equal access and a fair opportunity to conduct meetings during non-instructional time.

C. Student use of facilities under this policy does not imply STEM sponsorship, approval, or advocacy of the content of the expression at such meetings.

D. STEM retains its authority to maintain order and discipline on school premises, to protect the well being of students and faculty, and to assure that attendance of students at meetings is voluntary.

E. In adopting and implementing this equal access policy, STEM will not:

- influence the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity;
- require any person to participate in prayer or other religious activity;
- expend public funds beyond the incidental cost of providing the space for student-initiated meetings;
- 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;
- sanction meetings that are otherwise unlawful;
- limit the rights of groups of students based on the size of the group;
- abridge the constitutional rights of any person.

III. DEFINITIONS

"Limited open forum" means that the school grants an offering to or opportunity for one or more non-curriculum related student groups to meet on school premises during non-instructional time.

"Sponsorship" includes the act of promoting or leading a meeting. The assignment of a school employee for custodial, observation, or maintenance of order and discipline purposes does not constitute sponsorship of the meeting

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"Meeting" includes activities of student groups, which are permitted under a limited open forum and are not directly related to the school curriculum.

"Non-instructional time" means time set aside by the school before actual classroom instruction begins or after actual classroom instruction ends, including such other periods that occur during the school day when no classroom instruction takes place.

IV. FAIR OPPORTUNITY CRITERIA

STEM School shall uniformly provide that:

- A. Any meeting held pursuant to this policy is voluntary and student-initiated;
- B. There is no sponsorship of such meeting by STEM or STEM employees; and
- C. Such meeting does not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school.

V. PROCEDURES

A. Any student who wishes to conduct a meeting under this policy shall apply to a Director at least 48 hours in advance of the time of the activity or meeting. The student must agree to the following:

1. All activities or meetings must comply with existing policies, regulations, and procedures that govern operation of school-sponsored activities.

2. The activities or meetings are voluntary.

B. Student groups meeting under this policy must comply with the following rules:

1. Those attending must not engage in any activity that is illegal, dangerous, or which materially and substantially interferes with the orderly conduct of the educational activities of the school. Such activities shall be grounds for discipline of an individual student and grounds for a particular group to be denied access.

2. The groups may not use any designation which implies school sponsorship or affiliation in any activity, including fundraising and community involvement.

3. The groups must comply with school policies, regulations and procedures governing school-sponsored activities.

C. Students applying for use of school facilities under this policy must provide the following information to a Director: time and date of meeting, estimated number of students in attendance, and special equipment needs.

D. The Director has responsibility to:

1. Keep a log of application information.

2. Find and assign a suitable room for the meeting or activity. The number of students in attendance will be limited to the safe capacity of the meeting space.

3. Note the condition of the facilities and equipment before and after use.

4. Assure proper supervision. Assignment of staff to be present in a supervisory capacity, where determined necessary, does not constitute school district sponsorship of the meeting or activity.

5. Assure that the meeting or activity does not interfere with the school's regular instructional activities.

E. The school shall not expend public funds for the benefit of students meeting pursuant to this policy beyond the incidental cost of providing space.

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F. STEM employees or agents may not promote, lead, or otherwise sponsor meetings or activities held pursuant to this policy.

G. A copy of this policy and procedures shall be made available to each student who initiates a request to use school facilities.

Approved by the STEM School Board on 05/12/2023.
(dd/mm/yyyy)

STEM School Highlands Ranch

By: Michelle Horne (signature on file)
(Signature, Board secretary)

Michelle Horne
(Printed name, Board secretary)

Adopted: 2012

Revised: December 2023

EQUAL ACCESS POLICY MEETING REQUEST FORM

Name of student initiating request:

School:

Grade:

Home Room:

Date of Meeting:

Time:

Estimated number to attend :

Special Equipment needs:

STEM USE ONLY

Room assigned:

Condition of Facilities:

Staff (if any) assigned to supervise:

Notes: