

## 9700 SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

### Contests for Pupils

The Superintendent shall approve participation in extracurricular contests sponsored by organizations outside the schools, as long as participation does not interfere with the instructional program. When such contests involve promotional aid, school time, or faculty assistance to pupils in essay writing, poster making, or other activities, the Superintendent shall determine whether the experiences are closely enough allied to and in support of the instructional work of the school and will clearly serve to advance the educational aims of the district. The worthiness of the sponsoring agency's cause or the opportunity for individuals to win prizes shall not in themselves constitute sufficient reason for approving a contest.

Contests and awards whether local, State, or national shall be:

- A. For the benefit of the pupil;
- B. Open to all pupils on a non-discriminatory basis;
- C. Consistent with district objectives;
- D. Judged by disinterested parties;
- E. Properly supervised with safety precautions in place;
- F. Voluntary for pupils and teachers.

Contests and awards shall not place undue time or financial burdens on pupils, teachers and parents. They shall not promote commercial products or partisan viewpoints. Participation shall not be dependent on the financial status of the pupil.

### Distribution of Materials by Pupils and Staff

Material being sent home with pupils should relate to school matters or pupil-related community activities. Except when it pertains to the individual pupil, all such material must be approved in advance by the Superintendent or designee.



There is no district obligation to distribute or post any community group materials. But if a forum is opened up to any category or group (i.e., non-profit, non-partisan, community groups), the Superintendent will not discriminate against speech or materials on the basis of its viewpoint or religious content.

The determination of the Superintendent will be viewpoint-neutral in order to provide equal access to "limited public forums" including bulletin boards for notices, tables at back-to-school nights, or hand-outs to pupils.

Pupils shall not be used to distribute partisan materials or partisan information pertaining to a school or general election, budget or bond issue, or negotiations. Pupils shall not be exploited for the benefit of any individual, group, or profit-making organization.

No staff member may distribute any materials on school property without prior approval of the Superintendent. Materials will clearly indicate their source. Non-school-related materials will be plainly labeled, including an express disclaimer that the activity is "not a school-sponsored activity." Flyers and parental permission slips will be subject to the same review and standards.

The district website shall be the focal point of communicating information. All postings on the website homepage shall be approved by the Superintendent. Teachers shall update their classroom/program websites in an on-going fashion.

All surveys, questionnaires or other similar items requiring pupil or parent/guardian response shall be reviewed and approved by the Superintendent prior to distribution. The Superintendent shall solicit written permission from parents/guardians before pupils participate in surveys or research that requests personal information as set out in Federal law.

N.J.S.A. 18A:42-4

United States Department of Education - Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools

Adopted: 27 March 2014

