COMMUNITY RELATIONS: Use of School Facilities

Contests Sponsored by External Organizations

I. Purpose

To implement Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board) Policy 1320 by establishing guidelines for the approval of contests sponsored by external organizations.

II. Definitions

A. Contest – A competitive activity or event sponsored by an external organization.

B. External Organization – A public or private, for-profit or not-for-profit, organization not affiliated with Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS).

III. Guidelines

A. When more than one school will be participating in the contest, the contest and contest award shall be approved by the chief academic officer (CAO).

B. A contest involving one school shall be approved by the school’s principal.

C. Criteria for Approval

1. The contest must have defined educational value and/or further students’ civic, social, and character development.

2. The contest must not require excessive use of class time of students and teachers.

3. The duplication of contest themes, purposes, and skills in any one year should be avoided.

4. Participation must be completely voluntary for students and teachers.

5. An award which is a part of the contest must be appropriate to the age of the students participating.

6. Awards should be appropriate in number, kind, and value.

7. The contest does not involve an entry fee to the students, teachers, or schools.

8. No grade penalty will be assessed for a student’s failure to participate in or submit materials to a contest, and no grade may be given for materials produced solely for a contest.
9. The screening and selection of contest winners is the responsibility of the sponsoring organization.

D. Review Process
1. A written request to approve the contest must be submitted to the school principal or CAO by the external organization.
   a. Requests for contests involving more than one school shall be submitted to the CAO.
   b. Requests for contests involving one school shall be submitted to the school principal.
2. The written request shall include:
   a. A description and purpose of the contest;
   b. Date, time, and place of the contest;
   c. Cost;
   d. Any agreements or releases required for participation in the contest;
   e. A description of the contest awards;
   f. The organization’s procedures for processing and judging entries; and
   g. Any additional information that may assist the principal or CAO in reviewing the request.
3. The CAO or school principal, as appropriate, will ensure that all contest agreements and releases are reviewed in accordance with Board policy, Superintendent’s rules, and established procedures.

E. Approval
1. The CAO will advise the external organization of approval or disapproval for participation by more than one school.
   a. The CAO will notify principals when approval has been granted for inclusion of their school or the school system in a particular contest.
2. The school principal will advise the external organization when a request for a contest in a single school is approved or disapproved.
   a. The principal will advise his/her assistant superintendent of the school’s participation in a contest.
3. If participation in a contest is approved, the external organization shall supply enough copies of the contest rules and regulations to the CAO or school principal, as appropriate, for distribution to students at least one month prior to the start of the contest.
F. Radio/Television Programs

1. Participation on any radio or television program is voluntary, both on the part of a school and/or individual students. There should be educational value derived from the participation of any student or team of students representing a school on a radio or television program, and such participation should be an extension of regular class activities or related to the role of the student(s) in recognized school organizations.

2. When a group or team of students participates in a radio or television program and the time involved for the activity includes extended sessions during and/or after school hours, the policies and rules related to extracurricular activities including the necessity of a faculty supervisor must be applied.

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 3160, *School-Sponsored Activities*
Board of Education Policy Series 8300, *Ethics Code*