EQUIP CLUBS USA

CLUB START-UP GUIDE

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This guide is intended for educational and ministry purposes to help students and adult leaders establish and develop EQUIP Clubs USA chapters in their schools and communities.

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Students. Ideas. Faith. Real Impact.

A BRIGHTER TOMORROW STARTS HERE.



Purpose:

The purpose of EQUIP Clubs USA is to provide a welcoming environment for middle and high school students to explore, understand, and defend the Christian faith through biblical study, apologetics, and respectful discussion.

Mission Statement:

EQUIP Clubs USA exists to:

- *Equip students with a clear understanding of the Bible*
- *Strengthen faith through apologetics and critical thinking*
- *Encourage respectful dialogue about faith, culture, and truth*
- *Empower students to live out and articulate their beliefs with confidence and compassion, while exhibiting exceptional ethics amongst their peers*

Membership Eligibility:

Membership is open to all students regardless of religious background, beliefs, or affiliations. Attendance is voluntary and non-discriminatory.

Membership Expectations:

- *Show respect to all participants and viewpoints*
- *Engage in discussions in a thoughtful and civil manner*
- *Follow school policies and guidelines*
- *Contribute positively to the club environment*

Student Leadership

- *President - Facilitates meetings and provides overall leadership*
- *Vice President - Assists the President and coordinates activities*
- *Secretary - Keeps records of meetings and communications*
- *Outreach Coordinator - Promotes the club and organizes events*



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



You—yes, you—have the opportunity to make a lasting impact on your campus by launching an EQUIP Clubs USA chapter right at your school. Imagine creating a space where students gather after school to engage in meaningful, thought-provoking apologetics—discovering not only what they believe, but why it stands firm.

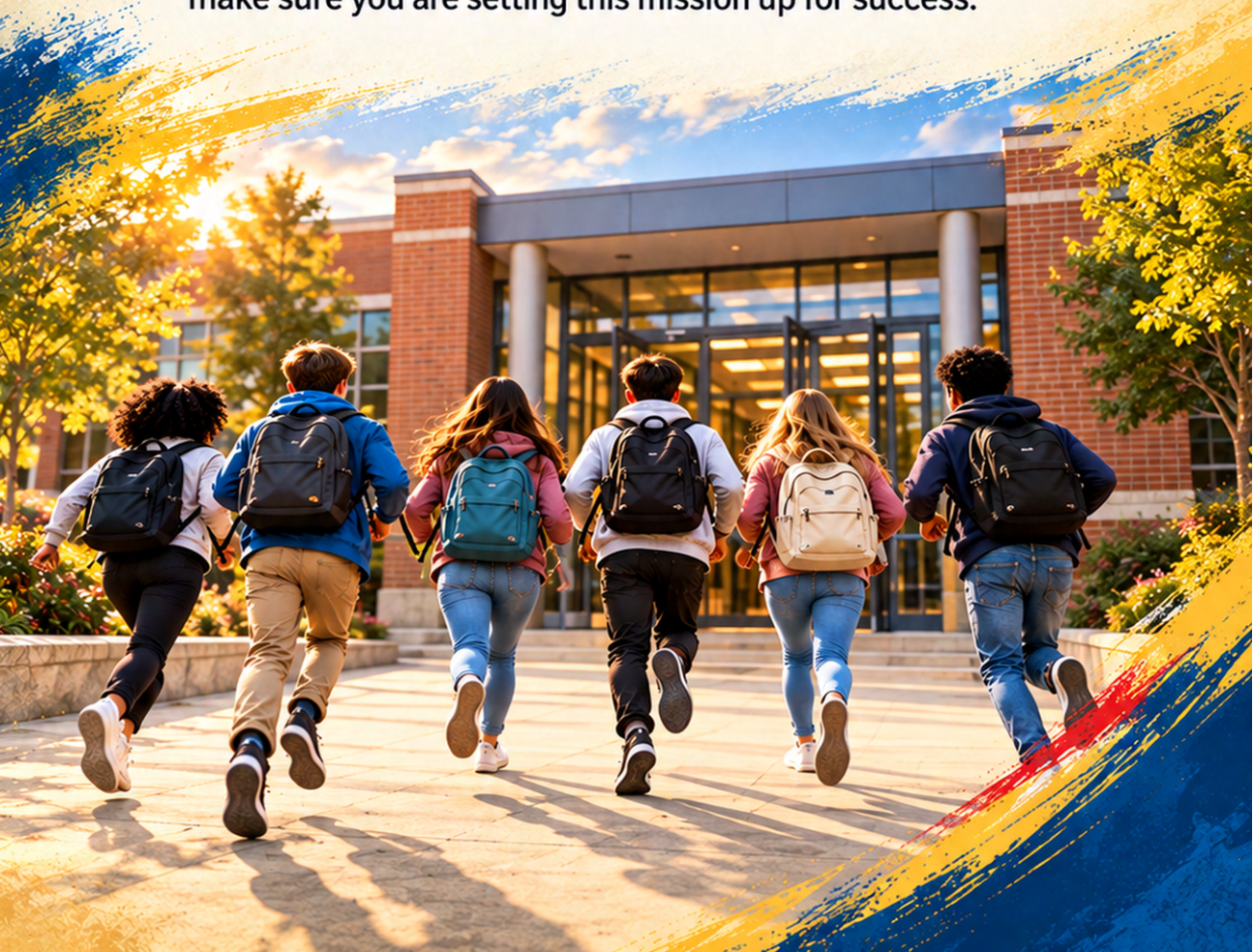
As a leader, you'll guide your peers through compelling conversations that strengthen faith, sharpen critical thinking, and equip students to become confident, articulate witnesses in a culture searching for truth and clarity.

This guide is your roadmap, designed to walk you step by step through the entire process, from vision to launch. What begins as a simple idea can become a movement that transforms lives for all eternity.

Get ready—this is MORE than a club. It's a mission.

Public school is the most common educational setting for students in the United States. As a student, you have the constitutional right to start an EQUIP Clubs USA chapter at your school under the Equal Access Act of 1984. After establishing a Teacher or Faculty sponsor you will visit your school's main office or student services office and request a "Club Start-Up Form." Simply complete all required steps outlined by the school. While specific requirements may vary, the typical process for starting a club is usually pretty simple.

Don't worry! Although this may sound like a lot, we are about to break each step down for you for easy clarification. And remember that you always have a support team on your side to make sure you are setting this mission up for success.



1. Pray

Prayer is a vital first step in starting an EQUIP Club chapter because it transforms the process from simply launching a school organization to stepping into a God-led mission. It aligns your heart with God's purpose, ensuring your motives and vision reflect His will rather than just your own excitement or ideas. Through prayer, you gain wisdom and clarity for important decisions—like finding the right teacher sponsor, navigating school guidelines, and leading your peers well. It also prepares you spiritually for challenges or resistance, strengthening your confidence and helping you respond with both boldness and humility. Prayer invites God to work ahead of you, opening doors you couldn't open on your own and connecting you with the right people at the right time. And just as importantly, it sets the tone for your club's culture. When a chapter is birthed in prayer, it establishes a foundation of dependence on God that will sustain and guide it moving forward.



[2] Find

If you plan to launch a school-recognized club, securing a teacher/faculty sponsor is an essential step. A teacher/faculty sponsor is a member of the school staff who ensures your club operates in a safe, responsible, and school-approved manner. While they provide important adult oversight, it's equally important to understand that sponsors generally do not lead, direct, or actively participate in the club's activities. This structure empowers students to take full ownership of the clubwhile maintaining the accountability needed for a successful organization.



Tips for choosing the right person:

This person should have a love for Jesus that is noticeable to all. They should be willing to help behind the scenes with lesson planning, events, and general guidance on how to handle situations in a Biblical way.

3. Build

Don't start this journey alone—build your core team and step into it together. Every strong EQUIP Club begins with a small, committed group of student leaders who share the vision and are ready to make an impact. Start small, then watch your team grow as momentum builds. Begin with students you already know—friends from your church who are passionate about their faith and ready to lead. If that's not an option, reach out to friends or other Christians at your school, no matter their church background. Denominations don't define the mission—unity in Christ does. Your goal is simple but powerful: gather a core group of students who are ready to be part of something bigger than themselves—a Christ-centered movement on your campus. This is where it gets exciting!



4. Submit

Now it's time to bring your vision to life. Choose a day and time that works within your school's after school schedule. Once you've completed the requirements, submit your forms to the main office with confidence. In many cases, approval comes quickly. But if it doesn't, this is where your initiative sets you apart. Follow up. Ask questions. Show that you're serious about making this happen. Track down the right person, confirm your paperwork is in the right hands, and, if needed, request a meeting. This is your moment to lead. Don't hesitate to involve your Teacher Sponsor or School Counselor if you need support—because persistence matters. What you're building is worth it. Every step you take, every conversation you initiate, is moving you closer to launching something that can truly make an impact on your campus that will last through all eternity.



5. Plan

Get ready—this is your moment to make some serious noise. It's time to throw an unforgettable launch party and announce to your school that something powerful has arrived—a brand new Christian Apologetics Club. Don't just start quietly… make an entrance. A pre-launch welcome event builds buzz, sparks curiosity, and draws people in before your first official meeting. Go all out. Rally support from adults in your community to provide food—pizza, snacks, desserts, ice cream—whatever it takes to create an atmosphere people don't want to miss. Think energy. Think excitement. Think "you had to be there." (And don't forget the drinks.) This is more than an event—it's momentum. When people feel the excitement, they want to be part of it. And remember: don't do it alone. Involve your team, delegate responsibilities, and build something together. Great leaders don't carry everything—they empower others.

Launch it big.
Make it count.





As part of the EQUIP family, you'll receive full access to our online teaching platform, giving you the freedom to use our resources and shape your meetings in a way that reflects your own unique teaching style. Our team will be with you every step of the way, providing support, guidance, and encouragement as you lead. If you'd like to incorporate one of our teaching videos into your course, we can provide a direct download link for your convenience. You'll also have access to downloadable course notes that can be shared with your students, along with the flexibility to create your own quizzes using content from our modules. It's way of equipping and honoring you as you invest in the next generation.

www.emusa.org/equipu

Frequently Asked Questions

What qualifications do I need to lead an EQUIP Club USA chapter?

You do not need any special qualifications to lead—simply consider two important questions: (Matthew 22:37-40)

1. **Do you love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind?**
   If so, you have a desire to see Him honored in your school.
2. **Do you love your neighbor as yourself?**
   If so, you care deeply about your peers and want to see their lives impacted now and for eternity.

If you can answer yes to these two greatest commandments, you are ready to serve.

God does not call the equipped—He equips those He calls.

How much does it cost to start an EQUIP Clubs USA chapter?

There is no cost to start an EQUIP Clubs USA chapter at your school. However, we recommend securing one or more sponsors to help cover expenses for events such as your launch party. You may also choose to budget for leadership team shirts, name tags, or other club materials. Fundraisers can also be a great way to build a small budget for future events, outreach projects, and ongoing club activities. Again, any help you need in doing this... *we got you!*

What is the best time to hold a meeting and how long?

Research consistently shows that meeting once a week after school is often the most effective schedule. Before-school meetings can limit attendance, as many students are unwilling to arrive earlier than necessary, while lunch meetings can be difficult to coordinate when multiple lunch periods exist. After school typically provides the greatest opportunity to reach the most students. A meeting length of 30 to 50 minutes is generally ideal. However, your leadership team should evaluate the schedule, frequency, and timing that best fits your school community and student audience.

What if your club is denied?

If you have met all of your school's requirements and your club is still denied, it may violate the Equal Access Act. This law protects students' rights to form clubs for religious, political, and philosophical purposes on equal terms with other groups. *If your school denies your club, contact EQUIP Clubs USA and we can help guide you through understanding and communicating your legal rights. Public schools may only deny a club if they prohibit ALL student-led clubs.*



TAKE YOUR LEADERSHIP TO THE NEXT LEVEL

SAME MISSION. BIGGER IMPACT.

You're building an EQUIP Club on your campus. Now imagine spending a week surrounded by other students who want to know their faith, defend what they believe, and live it out.

EQUIP Retreats give student leaders a week to step away from the normal routine and dive into biblical worldview, apologetics, worship, friendship, fun, and practical faith.

Bring your team. Build relationships. Ask hard questions. Strengthen your confidence. Come home ready to lead your club with greater purpose.

REAL PEOPLE
REAL CONVERSATIONS
REAL ADVENTURE
REAL FAITH

ZIP LINES
ROCK WALLS
CAMPFIRE WORSHIP
S'MORES & MORE

ONE WEEK. A STRONGER FAITH. A STRONGER TEAM.

emusa.org/retreats

LEARN MORE. GET INVOLVED. BRING YOUR TEAM.



EQUIP CLUBS USA

START-UP CHECKLIST

STUDENTS TODAY • STRONGER TOMORROW

SMALL STEPS BIG IMPACT!

STEPS TO STARTING A CLUB:

- [ ] **Gather Student Interest:** Find at least one or two committed students to serve as leaders.
- [ ] **Find a Faculty Sponsor:** Locate a teacher or staff member willing to supervise the meetings, which is required by most schools.
- [ ] **Create a Club Constitution:** Outline the club's purpose, leadership structure, and meeting times for school approval.
- [ ] **Meet with Administration:** Present the plan to the principal, highlighting the legal right to meet under the Equal Access Act.
- [ ] **Promote the Club:** Use school announcements, posters, and word of mouth to invite students.

LEGAL AND OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

- [ ] **Equal Access:** If a school allows other non-curriculum clubs (e.g., Chess Club, Anime Club), they cannot deny a religious club.
- [ ] **Student-Led:** While adult volunteers (parents/pastors) can help, they often need to go through volunteer background checks.
- [ ] **Non-School Hours:** Meetings must be held during, for example, lunch or immediately after school, not during class time.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- [ ] **Focus on Character:** Define the club's purpose around fostering good character or social service.
- [ ] **Keep it Voluntary:** Ensure all activities are open to all students and that attendance is not mandatory.
- [ ] **Resources:** Utilize resources from organizations like Reasons for Hope and Alex McFarland Ministries.

REAL STUDENTS.
REAL CONVERSATIONS.
REAL IMPACT.

APPENDIX A

EQUIP CLUBS USA CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be EQUIP Clubs USA (hereafter referred to as "EQUIP Club" or "the Club").

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND MISSION

Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of EQUIP Clubs USA is to provide a welcoming environment for middle and high school students to explore, understand, and defend the Christian faith through biblical study, apologetics, and respectful discussion.

Section 2: Mission Statement

EQUIP Clubs USA exists to:

- Equip students with a clear understanding of the Bible
- Strengthen faith through apologetics and critical thinking
- Encourage respectful dialogue about faith, culture, and truth
- Empower students to live out and articulate their beliefs with confidence and compassion, while exhibiting exceptional ethics amongst their peers

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Eligibility

Membership is open to all students regardless of religious background, beliefs, or affiliations. Attendance is voluntary and non-discriminatory.

Section 2: Expectations

Members are expected to:

- Show respect to all participants and viewpoints
- Engage in discussions in a thoughtful and civil manner
- Follow school policies and guidelines
- Contribute positively to the club environment

ARTICLE IV: LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

Section 1: Student Leadership

The club may include the following student leadership roles:

- **President** – Facilitates meetings and provides overall leadership
- **Vice President** – Assists the President and coordinates activities
- **Secretary** – Keeps records of meetings and communications
- **Outreach Coordinator** – Promotes the club and organizes events

Section 2: Selection of Leaders

Leaders may be selected by:

- Volunteer basis
- Election by members
- Appointment by faculty sponsor

**Selection method may be adapted to school guidelines.*

ARTICLE V: FACULTY SPONSORSHIP

Section 1: Role of Faculty Sponsor

A faculty sponsor shall:

- Provide supervision in accordance with school policies
- Ensure meetings comply with school rules
- Serve as a non-participatory advisor

Section 2: Non-Interference

The faculty sponsor shall not direct or control the content of religious discussions, in accordance with student-led club protections.

APPENDIX A

EQUIP CLUBS USA CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

Section 1: Frequency
Meetings shall be held regularly (e.g., weekly) as approved by the school.

Section 2: Structure of Meetings
Meetings may include:

- Bible study
- Apologetics training (defense of the Christian faith)
- Group discussions and Q&A
- Guest speakers
- Prayer (student-led and voluntary)

Section 3: Open Participation
All meetings are open to any student who wishes to attend.

ARTICLE VII: ACTIVITIES

The Club may engage in:

- Discussions on biblical teachings and worldview topics
- Training in apologetics (e.g., responding to common questions about Christianity)
- Community service projects
- Outreach events (as permitted by school policy)

ARTICLE VIII: NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

EQUIP Clubs USA shall not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, or religion. Participation is open to all students.

ARTICLE IX: STATEMENT OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP AND INITIATIVE

EQUIP Clubs USA is a student-initiated and student-led organization. All religious expression, discussions, and activities are voluntary and led by students in accordance with applicable laws protecting student religious expression.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by:

- A majority vote of active members
- Approval consistent with school policies.

ARTICLE XI: AFFILIATION

EQUIP Clubs USA may be affiliated with a broader network or ministry organization, provided such affiliation aligns with school guidelines and does not interfere with student leadership.

ARTICLE XII: DISSOLUTION

If the club is dissolved, all materials and responsibilities shall be handled in accordance with school policies.

APPENDIX B

THE FACULTY *SPONSOR*

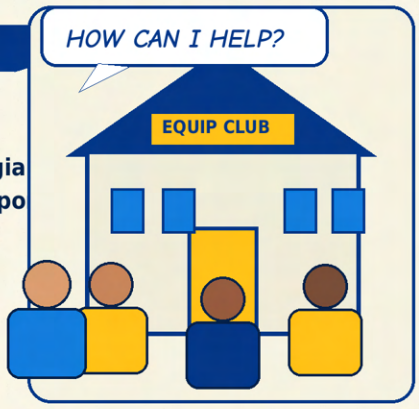
YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW EVERYTHING.

? ARE YOU QUALIFIED?

YES.

You do not have to be a pastor, theologia
or Bible teacher to serve as a faculty spo
You do not need to have every answer.

"That's a great question.
Let's find out."



✓ YOUR ROLE

SUPPORT THE CLUB.
Help the club operate within school policies and provide a place for students to meet.

BE PRESENT.
Provide supervision and serve as a non-participatory advisor.

LET STUDENTS LEAD.
Students lead the religious discussions and activities. Your role is support—not control.

STUDENTS LEAD. YOU SUPPORT. EQUIP EQUIPS.

APPENDIX B

YOUR ROLE

SUPPORT. SUPERVISE. STEP BACK.

✓ SUPERVISE — DON'T TAKE OVER

FOLLOW SCHOOL POLICIES.

Provide the supervision the school requires and help the club operate within approved school policies.

BE PRESENT.

Be available, attentive, and supportive without becoming the person who runs the meeting.



→ LET STUDENTS LEAD

STUDENT LEADERSHIP MATTERS.

Students lead the club's religious discussions and activities. Your role is to support that student leadership—not replace it.

! KNOW THE BOUNDARY

YOUR CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE.

The EQUIP Clubs USA Constitution describes the faculty sponsor as a non-participatory advisor. The sponsor provides supervision and helps the club comply with school rules, but does not direct or control the content of religious discussions.

YOUR JOB IS TO HELP STUDENTS LEAD WELL.

APPENDIX B

WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE EVERY ANSWER.



? YOU ARE ALLOWED TO SAY...

"THAT'S A GREAT QUESTION."
You do not need to be a pastor, theologian, or Bible expert to serve as a faculty sponsor.

THEN SAY:
"I don't know the answer yet. Let's find out together."

↗ MODEL CURIOSITY

YOU DON'T HAVE TO PRETEND.
Students learn something valuable when adults admit what they do not know and model how to look for good answers.

Help students ask better questions. Help them find trustworthy resources. Encourage them to keep learning.

+ POINT THEM TOWARD HELP

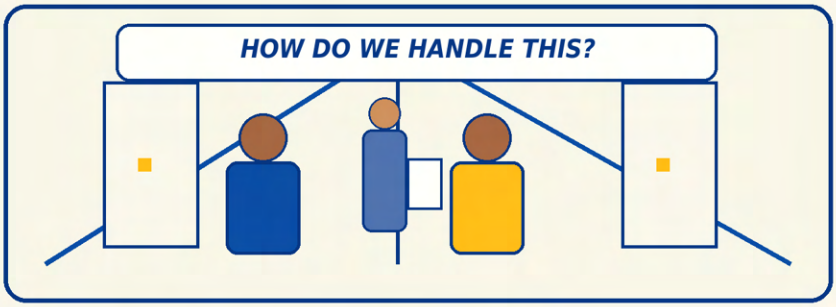
YOUR ROLE IS SUPPORT.
When a question is beyond your experience, you can help the students find someone or something that can help answer it.

CURIOUS STUDENTS DON'T NEED PERFECT ADULTS.

APPENDIX B

WHEN THINGS GET HARD

STAY CALM. STAY SUPPORTIVE. GET HELP.



! WHEN THERE'S PUSHBACK

LISTEN FIRST.

If a student, parent, administrator, or another person raises a concern, listen carefully before reacting.

KEEP THE FOCUS.

The goal is to help the student club operate within school rules while preserving the student-led nature of the club.

↔ WHEN THERE'S DISAGREEMENT

DON'T BECOME THE DEBATER.

You do not have to win every conversation. If a disagreement involves school policy or the club's operation, bring the appropriate people into the conversation.

Your role is to help keep the situation constructive and within the school's process.

+ ASK FOR HELP

YOU DON'T HAVE TO HANDLE IT ALONE.

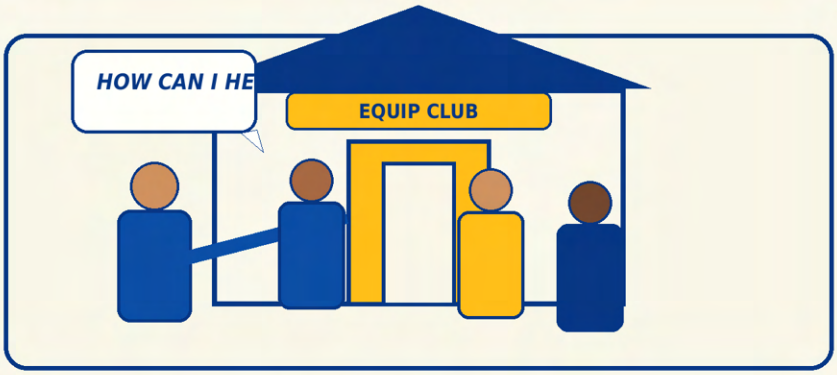
When you are unsure what to do, talk with the appropriate school administrator or contact EQUIP for guidance. Asking for help is part of serving students well.

SUPPORT THE STUDENTS. FOLLOW THE PROCESS.

APPENDIX B

SAY YES

YOU CAN OPEN THE DOOR.



1 OPEN THE DOOR

SAY YES TO SUPPORTING STUDENTS.

You don't have to run the club. You can simply be the adult who helps make it possible for students to lead.

2 LET THEM LEAD

HELP. PRAY. ENCOURAGE.

Help students think through the practical details. Encourage them when things don't go as planned. Pray for the students they are trying to reach.

3 TAKE THE NEXT STEP

YOU DON'T NEED THE WHOLE PLAN.

Start with the students who are ready. Follow your school's process. Ask for help when you need it. Give students the opportunity to lead.

STUDENTS LEAD.
YOU SUPPORT. EQUIP EQUIPS.

20 U.S. Code § 4071 - Denial of equal access prohibited

(a)Restriction of limited open forum on basis of religious, political, philosophical, or other speech content prohibited
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 other content of the speech at such meetings.

(b) "Limited open forum" defined
A public secondary school has a limited open forum whenever such school grants an offering to or opportunity for one or more non-curriculum related student groups to meet on school premises during noninstructional time.

(c)Fair opportunity criteria 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—
(1)
the meeting is voluntary and student-initiated;
(2)
there is no sponsorship of the meeting by the school, the government, or its agents or employees;
(3)
employees or agents of the school or government are present at religious meetings only in a non-participatory capacity;
(4)
the meeting does not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school; and
(5)
Non-school persons may not direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend activities of student groups.
(d)Construction of subchapter with respect to certain rights. Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to authorize the United States or any State or political subdivision thereof—

(1)
to influence the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity;
(2)
to require any person to participate in prayer or other religious activity;
(3)
to expend public funds beyond the incidental cost of providing the space for student-initiated meetings;
(4)
to 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)
to sanction meetings that are otherwise unlawful;
(6)
to limit the rights of groups of students which are not of a specified numerical size; or
(7)
to abridge the constitutional rights of any person.

(e)Federal financial assistance to schools unaffected

Notwithstanding the availability of any other remedy under the Constitution or the laws of the United States, nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to authorize the United States to deny or withhold Federal financial assistance to any school.

(f)Authority of schools with respect to order, discipline, well-being, and attendance concerns

Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to limit the authority of the school, its agents or employees, 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.

(Pub. L. 98–377, title VIII, § 802, Aug. 11, 1984, 98 Stat. 1302.)

Formal Proposal for a Student-Led Christian Club

[Your Name]
[Your Grade Level]
[Date]

Principal [Principal's Last Name]
[School Name]
[School Address]

Dear Principal [Principal's Last Name],
I am writing to formally request permission to start a new student-led club at [School Name] called "**EQUIP***CLUBS* USA."
The purpose of this club is to provide a space for students to gather to equip students with a clear understanding of the Bible. Strengthen faith through apologetics and critical thinking. Encourage respectful dialogue about faith, culture, and truth, and empower students to live out and articulate their beliefs with confidence and compassion, while exhibiting exceptional ethics amongst their peers. Our goal is to create a positive environment on campus where students can encourage one another in their faith while also contributing to our school community through service projects.

Consistent with the **Equal Access Act of 1984**, we understand and will ensure that the club adheres to the following guidelines:

- **Student-Led**: The club is student-initiated and will be entirely student-directed.
- **Voluntary**: Participation will be strictly voluntary and open to all interested students.
- **Non-Instructional Time**: We propose meeting during [mention specific time, e.g., Thursday after school].
- **Supervision**: [Teacher's Name] has expressed interest in serving as our faculty sponsor to provide required custodial supervision in a non-participatory capacity.

I have attached a preliminary list of [number] interested students as well as a brief outline of our planned activities. We are eager to comply with all standard school procedures for new club approval.

Thank you for your time and for supporting student involvement at [School Name]. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how we can move forward.
Sincerely,
[Your Signature]
[Your Printed Name]
[Your Email/Contact Information]

Get INVOLVED

To start an EQUIP Club USA chapter, simply contact us at one of the following ways:

Email:
DaveGlander@equipministriesusa.org

Text:
706-202-3141

Send:
Your Name - Age
School - City, State
Email - Phone

Let's Make a Difference Together!

