



Affinity Group FAQ 2023-2024

This document is created to populate frequently asked questions so that we are able to provide and direct folk to the answers they are looking for. Please fill out the questions and/or answers you may have or know.

I want to start an affinity group, how do I get started?

Affinity spaces have, historically, been very flexible by design. There is not a prescribed format and there is not a set curriculum. Instead, affinity spaces have been intended to meet the unique needs of unique student groups within our schools. They are also meant to be adaptable to meet students where they are at on their educational journey. There are some important general guidelines about student clubs in this [Administrative Directive](#). If you're looking for a thought partner, please continue reading this document to see who the best person to support you is.

Are affinity spaces age or grade restricted?

No, students of all ages can attend affinity group meetings. Advisors should consider the size of the group, developmental needs of the students, and staffing when determining whether or not having more than one offering is appropriate.

Who can lead? Can community members lead?

Coordinating, facilitating, and hosting affinity spaces can be done by a wide range of adults. Advisors are typically teachers, counselors, administrators, or PFSP staff. In some cases, SUN school partners or community partners have led affinity groups on campus. It is generally up to building leader(s) to determine if a particular person is a proper fit for this work and has the proper clearances for working directly with students.

Who can be paid to lead? What are the parameters?

Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, PAT members were eligible for Extended Responsibility (ER) pay for leading student racial affinity groups (this was decided as part of the PAT and district bargaining process). Therefore, PAT members are eligible for this kind of pay. Schools may choose to undertake a personal services (or other) contract to pay for an advisor to lead affinity efforts in the absence of willing or appropriate school staff.

LGBTQ2SIA+ affinity advisors are also eligible for ER pay if their building administrator(s) determine an LGBTQIA+ group (e.g. SAGA, GSA, QSA, Unity, etc) is needed based on interest and school population.

If a PAT member does not want to serve as an affinity group advisor, a PFSP staff member can serve as the advisor and get the same pay (note: this is a change from previous messaging).

Who processes the payments?

School secretaries usually enter hours for ER pay and the school administration will approve those hours on a monthly basis. Questions about processing the ER pay for affinity leaders can be directed to David Stone in the Budget Office (dlstone@pps.net).

Who has access to funding support?

Funds can be available for affinity groups to take part in or host activities or special events (such as conferences). Funding is limited and not all requests can be fulfilled. Please see the bottom of this document to see who the best person to support you is.

What department supports your group?

Student racial affinity groups-

Office of Community Engagement and Student Voice: Yian Saechao.

Student LGBTQIA+ affinity groups-

Student Success & Health - LGBTQ+ Supports: Britt Bieberich.

For more contact information, please see the bottom of this document.



When can groups meet & what is required?

Groups typically meet on campus before school, at lunch time, or after school. In some cases, students may be able to meet during the school day with the proper approvals. If meeting after school, you may be required to complete a Civic Use of Buildings (CUB) request with the [PPS CUB Office](#).

Additionally, there are important general guidelines around club meetings in this Administrative Directive.

Confidentiality reminder: when do you need to report?

Because affinity spaces are designed to be safe spaces for students with unique identities, it is critical that there is confidentiality for students and that there is a shared understanding that what is said in the group stays in the group. Recurring trends, however, can be shared with district staff and/or building leaders to raise and address gaps and needs. Those reports should be sure not to name individual students so as to respect confidentiality. All adults are mandatory reporters and should immediately report any student disclosures about self-harm, a threat of violence towards others, and/or reports of being harmed by another person.

What supports are available to the affinity groups?

Support for affinity groups tends to fall into a few key categories:

- Outreach and connections: You can be connected to others in the district who lead similar affinity groups to co-plan and/or share resources and best practices. We can also help you spread the word about applicable upcoming events and opportunities.
- Communications: Staff who support affinity groups will utilize our collective channels to share information and/or updates pertinent to affinity group advisors. Be sure you have registered as an advisor to receive updates. You can find the registration form for LGBTQIA+ advisors [here](#). You can find the registration form for student racial affinity group advisors [here](#).
- Thought partnership: If you would like to talk through a particular challenge or elevate a concern, please see the contact information at the bottom of this document to see who the best person to support you is.



What is the deadline for starting a group?

There is no general deadline for starting an affinity group on campus. If the need arises and students need the support, an affinity group can be created at any time.

Who can I contact for support?

Race Based Affinity Group General Questions: Yian Saechao
(yisaechao@pps.net)

LGBTQIA+ Affinity General and Funding Questions: Britt Bieberich
(brbiebrich@pps.net)

ER Pay Questions: Your school administration or David Stone
(dlstone@pps.net)

