

POLICY

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INSTRUCTION

SUBJECT: CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

~~Controversial issues may be studied as part of the curriculum and teachers shall present these issues in their classrooms in an impartial and objective manner.~~

~~Teachers wishing to call upon outside speakers in the presentation of controversial issues are required to obtain the approval of the principal who shall keep in mind the obligation for presenting opposing views as well, and who shall inform the Superintendent prior to the presentation.~~

As a natural part of preparation for assuming an adult role in society, matters of a controversial nature will arise and may be dealt with as part of the student's learning experience.

The Board of Education recognizes that controversial issues deal with matters about which there are varied levels of opposing views, biases, emotions, and/or conflict. Therefore, it is essential that the classroom teacher have guidelines in order to prepare and execute lessons that will be as objective as possible while considering the nature of the subject matter. It is important that students and staff recognize the following responsibilities:

1. In the classroom, matters of a controversial nature shall be handled as they arise in the normal course of instruction and not introduced for their own sake. Such issues shall be neither sought nor avoided.
2. When presenting various positions or selecting material dealing with controversial topics the teacher shall take care that such information shall balance major views and provide as many sides of the issue as possible in a fair manner, with no position being presented as preferable and with no position being espoused or advocated by the teacher.
3. When materials dealing with controversial topics are to be used, assigned, or recommended, such materials must:
 - a. have educational value and be relevant to the curriculum;
 - b. be appropriate to the age and maturity level of the students; and
 - c. not adversely affect the attainment of the district's instructional goals or result in substantial disruption of the normal operation of the classroom.
4. Before a guest speaker is permitted to address the students, approval must be granted by the Building Principal, who must be informed of the scheduling of all guest speakers prior to the speaker being invited.

It is recognized that parents and citizens of the community have a right to protest to the school administration when convinced that unfair and biased presentations are being made by the teacher. In considering such protests, the Superintendent of Schools shall provide for a hearing so that both parties may fairly express their views. If requested, the Superintendent's decision may be appealed to the Board of Education.

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Adopted: