

2240 CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

The Board of Education believes that the consideration of controversial issues has a legitimate place in the instructional program of the schools. Properly introduced and conducted, the consideration of such issues can help pupils learn to identify important issues, explore fully and fairly all sides of an issue, weigh carefully the values and factors involved, and develop techniques for formulating and evaluating positions.

For purposes of this policy a controversial issue is a topic:

1. On which opposing points of view have been expressed by responsible and thoughtful persons.
2. Likely to arouse both support and opposition in the community.

The Board will permit the introduction and proper educational use of controversial issues provided that their use in the instructional program is related to the instructional goals of the course of study and level of maturity of the pupils. The discussion of controversial issues must not indoctrinate pupils or seek to persuade them to a particular point of view. Instead, teachers must encourage fair presentation and open-mindedness and the free exchange of ideas in a spirit of scholarly inquiry, drawing upon information and insights from the widest feasible range of resources.

The discussion of controversial issues in the classroom will be conducted in an unprejudiced and dispassionate manner and can not be allowed to disrupt the educational process. In the discussion of any issue, a teacher may express a personal opinion, provided the expression is characterized as personal opinion, does not attempt to persuade pupils to the teacher's point of view, and taken into consideration the level of maturity of the pupils.

The Superintendent or designee shall assist teaching staff members in developing an alertness and sensitivity to the occurrence of controversial issues in the context of the curriculum and developing techniques for the management of controversial issues that do not stifle a spirit of free inquiry.

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