

Board Policy

Code No. 603.9R1

TEACHING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

A "controversial issue" is defined as an area of significant academic inquiry about which substantial segments of the citizens of this community, state or nation hold sincere conflicting points of view.

Teaching controversial issues should be fairly presented in a spirit of honest academic freedom to the end that individual students may recognize the validity of other points of view but can learn to formulate their own opinions based upon dispassionate, objective, unbiased study and discussion of the factual basis underlying the controversy.

It shall be the responsibility of the instructor to present fully and fairly the opportunity and means for students to study, consider and discuss all sides of controversial issues, including but not limited to political philosophies.

It shall be the responsibility of the instructor to protect the right of the student to study pertinent controversial issues within limits of good taste, allowing the expression of their personal opinions without jeopardizing their relationships with their instructors or school.

It shall be the responsibility of the instructor to refrain from advocating partisan causes, or sectarian religious views of any kind through any classroom or school device; however, an instructor shall not be prohibited from expressing a personal opinion as long as students are encouraged to reach their own decisions independently.

It shall be the policy of this school system with respect to controversial issues to encourage instructors to lead full discussions thereof in a spirit of academic freedom to the end that students may learn that they have the right to disagree with the opinion of another, but they have the responsibility to base disagreement upon fact, and at the same time respect the right of another to hold a conflicting opinion.

Cross Reference: 600 Series, Selection of Instructional Materials

Approved: August 14, 1967

Reapproved: June 15, 1970
July 15, 1985
October 17, 1988
January 23, 1995
June 15, 1998
June 18, 2001
June 21, 2004
July 9, 2007
July 11, 2011

Revised: March 16, 1981
July 20, 1992