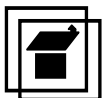


## 2240 CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Pupils must inevitably be confronted with controversial issues as they study a diversity of topics; issues may be considered controversial which arouse strong reactions, based either on personal conviction or allegiance to a group. Certainly there is a legitimate place for their discussion in the public schools. Practical as well as theoretical approaches must be emphasized. School treatment of controversial issues shall be designed to instruct pupils in fair and objective study techniques. The decision on whether a particular controversial issue shall become a matter for school study shall be based on the timeliness of the question, the maturity and needs of the pupils and the purposes of the schools.

- A. The pupils and faculty of the Edison School District shall exercise the right to study and discuss controversial issues:
  - 1. With political, economic or social significance;
  - 2. With access to full and adequate information presenting the various viewpoints on the issues;
  - 3. In a scholarly climate free from bias and prejudice;
  - 4. With the recognition that all study efforts are directed toward the achievement of responsible independent judgment; and
  - 5. With opportunities to form and express individual opinions in a rational fashion without discussing individual personalities of teachers, pupils or school authorities.
- B. Pupils shall be taught to recognize each other's right to form an opinion on controversial issues, and shall be assured of their own right to do so without jeopardizing their relationship with the teacher or the school.
- C. Consideration of controversial topics, with pupils participation, and all available resource material, shall be directed by properly qualified and certificated personnel of the school district, with the complete support of the Board of Education.
- D. The study of controversial issues shall take place within the framework of the existing curriculum and as a phase of the study of contemporary problems. When conducting such studies, teachers shall make every effort to indicate that they are speaking personally and not on behalf of the school, its administration or the Board.



- E. Classroom discussions on controversial questions which arise unexpectedly shall be the responsibility of the teacher, who shall provide relevant information on both sides of the question. Such discussions shall be kept free from the assumption that there is one correct answer which should emerge from a discussion and be taught authoritatively to the pupils.
- F. The Building Principal shall have the authority to limit or suspend discussion of controversial issues pending a review of the issue/materials. Instructional materials not previously approved must be reviewed by the Principal or designee before being introduced into the classroom.
- G. Individuals and groups may not insist on the right to present points of view directly to the pupil. Presentation by individuals and groups shall be part of a balanced program that insures the coverage of all sides of a controversial topic. Topics of a one-sided nature may be approved by the Building Principal or designee.

Adopted: 24 January 2011

