

Attachment from Ruth E. Randall letter:

A POLICY ON THE FREEDOM TO TEACH, TO LEARN,  
AND TO EXPRESS IDEAS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The freedoms to teach, to learn, and to express ideas without fear of censorship are fundamental rights held by public school teachers and students as well as all other citizens. These freedoms, expressed and guaranteed in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, must be preserved in the teaching/learning process in a society of diverse beliefs and viewpoints and shared freedoms. Public schools must promote an atmosphere of free inquiry and a view of subject matter reflecting a broad range of ideas so that students are prepared for responsible citizenship. However, criticism of educational resources and teaching methods and the advocacy of additional educational resources are also essential First Amendment rights of students, faculty, parents, and other members of the community.

Public school personnel should:

- 1) Select curriculum, teaching methods, resources, and materials appropriate to the educational objectives and the maturity and skill levels of the students based on their professional competence as educators and according to established school board policies and procedures. However, teachers should not be allowed to indoctrinate students with their own personal views.
- 2) Provide students with access to a broad range of ideas and viewpoints.
- 3) Encourage students to become decision makers, to exercise freedom of thought, and to make independent judgments through the examination and evaluation of relevant information, evidence, facts, and differing viewpoints.
- 4) Support students' rights to present their ideas even if some people might find the ideas objectionable.
- 5) Discuss issues, including those viewed by some as controversial, since such discussion is essential to students' development of critical thinking and other skills which prepare them for full participation as citizens in a democratic society.

Each school district board of education should adopt a written policy reflecting the principles included in this policy and stating the criteria, the personnel, and the process to be used to select and to reevaluate curriculum and educational resources and make the policy available to members of the school community and the public.

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Individuals or groups outside the public schools should not be allowed to:

- 1) Use the public schools to indoctrinate students with particular viewpoints or beliefs.
- 2) Determine which viewpoints will be presented or avoided in public schools.
- 3) Require the disciplining of professional staff for including issues or resources considered controversial in their classes if the reasons for including them are educationally sound.

March 12, 1985

Adopted by the  
Minnesota Board of Education