

## Controversial Issues

### Section A - Introduction

The Board of Education believes that its educational programming should assist students in the critical examination of issues and points of view that could create controversy. Such evaluation is essential to achieving the district's objective of educating students as thinking, discerning individuals and participants in a democratic society.

The Board also believes it is imperative that our schools provide an environment where open discussion, free discourse, spirited debate, and individual decisions are encouraged. Free inquiry, free expression, and free association are essential parts of this environment and must be protected as a matter of individual rights. The Board reserves its statutory right to withhold its consent for any school activity which, in its judgment, is not beneficial to the district or in the best interest of its students.

### Section B - Guidelines

1. The following guidelines should be observed by the staff and students when involved with controversial issues:
  - a. Classroom experiences should align with the approved department curricula within a classroom environment of respect and rapport. Classroom experiences should always be informative, balanced, and objective, reviewing, without bias, not only extreme but also moderate positions. Staff should be cognizant of the maturity of their students, and this should be reflected in their instruction and presentations.
  - b. Staff and student discussions and presentations should be conducted within the bounds of good judgment and proper decorum and with consideration of the rights and sensibilities of others. Profanity, vulgarity, obscenity, threats of harm, libel, slander, statements that promote illegal activity, or substantial disruption are not considered appropriate means of complying with this policy.
  - c. The personal criticism of individuals should be discouraged as inappropriate.
  - d. This policy applies to the regular curriculum programs of the school, to school-related extra-curricular activities, and to guest speakers invited by staff or students to address school groups. All invitations to outside speakers and related contractual issues shall be approved or disapproved, in advance, by the principal or designee.

### Section C - Resolving a Concern

In an effort to resolve a concern regarding a controversial issue, the individual expressing concern will:

1. First, discuss the concern with the appropriate teacher. If the individual expressing concern is a student, the student may seek support from a school counselor as needed.
2. If not resolved, discuss the concern with the appropriate instructional supervisor.
3. If still not resolved, discuss the concern with the principal and/or designee.

Any formal complaint regarding controversial issues may be brought pursuant to Policy 2070 - Uniform Grievance.



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