CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/GUEST SPEAKER

Many acute and pressing political, social, economic and moral problems confront our society. These issues, arising out of inevitable and continuing changes within our society, are often controversial in nature. The democratic solution of such unsolved questions is the business of citizens, the training of whom is accepted as a major purpose of our schools. Democratic solution is the result of open-minded discussion, the gathering of pertinent facts in an atmosphere of freedom from tension and prejudice, and the analysis and evaluation of proposals put forth.

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom has two facets:

A. Primarily, it is designed to expose the learner to all ideas: and
B. Secondarily, it is to assist and protect the teacher in the teacher's attempt to guide the Learner in the search for truth.

The freedom to teach is limited by the maturity of the student. For this reason, judgments about the presentation of instructional resources are appropriate in terms of the maturity of the student and not in terms of the suppression of knowledge.

The Kindergarten level through the earlier experience in high school is seen as a continuous expanding period of growth toward maturity. The latter years of high school are regarded as the first fully mature level.

Controversial Issues

A controversial issue is defined as any current problem or subject which has publicly opposing viewpoints in our society or school. A controversial issue arises when one or more of the proposed solutions to a problem is in conflict with the cherished interests, economic or social beliefs, group affiliations, or political expectations of a section of the citizens of the community. Controversial issues provide stimulation to learning by stirring intellectual excitement and are

thus an integral part of the classroom environment.
Controversial issues with respect to instruction in schools appear to present, in essence, a twofold problem:

A. The question of academic freedom for both the teacher and the student; and
B. The problem of technique or method employed in handling controversial issues in the classroom.

For the best interest of the individual, the community and the larger society, provisions must be made so that teachers and students alike, are free to exchange and develop ideas.

The Board directs the superintendent of schools to issue such regulations as are necessary to provide for the study of controversial issues.

The superintendent shall establish procedures for the approval of the use of a guest speaker. When an invited speaker expresses opinions which are partisan or considered controversial by a large portion of the community, the school shall provide for the presentation of opposing views.

A. If the teacher and the principal believe the guest speaker's topic is controversial, they will develop a plan whereby the issue(s) can be presented in an objective unbiased manner.
B. In the event the speaker's topic is determined to be controversial, the teacher will notify students beforehand that any student who does not wish to attend the presentation may have alternative assignment.