

CAMBRIAN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board Policy

Policy 6144
Adopted: October 15, 2002
Page 1 of 2

INSTRUCTION

Teaching About Controversial Issues

Free discussion of controversial issues is the heart of the democratic process. Freedom of speech and free access to information are among our most cherished traditions. Those charged with providing the students of the Cambrian School District with the opportunity to study controversial issues shall consider the following statements prior to engaging in these discussions.

I. Criteria for Determining the Appropriateness of Controversial Issues

- A. Only those issues should be discussed at length which are in the judgment of the teacher relevant to the curriculum and within the range of maturity and competence of the students.
- B. Sufficient materials should be available to insure a reasonable discussion of alternatives.

II. Rights and Responsibilities of Students

- A. To study significant issues about which he/she should begin to have an opinion.
- B. To have free access to all available pertinent information.
- C. To express his/her opinion without fear of jeopardy.
- D. To respect the divergent opinions of others.

III. Rights and Responsibilities of Teachers

- A. To determine the wisdom of considering any specific controversial issue.
- B. To discretely express his/her own opinion provided it is recognized as such and its acceptance is not mandatory
- C. To maintain an atmosphere of objectivity and balance in light of various alternatives.
- D. To encourage a spirit of mutual respect for honest and informal opinions regardless of how divergent they may be.

IV. Responsibilities of the Board and Administration

- A. To provide qualified teachers capable of conducting discussions on controversial issues in an unbiased manner.
- B. To support teachers subject to criticism and as soon as possible, to investigate and ascertain, in light of this policy the substance of the criticism.