

The Board of Directors believe that quality educational environments offer rich conversations about controversial issues. To achieve this goal, District stakeholders (Board of Directors, Employees, Parents, Volunteers, Contractors, and Visitors) should not use the educational environment for personal advocacy or to further their personal interests. Rather, stakeholders should foster neutral educational environments that encourage students to analyze differing viewpoints, differentiate between fact and opinion, discuss their viewpoints, analyze potential solutions, and draw their own conclusions.

When students express their opinions on a social, political, economic, religious, or other issue, stakeholders should avoid imposing, or the appearance of imposing, their personal views on the student. Instead, stakeholders should promote an atmosphere of mutual respect, neutrality, and civility.

Expectations of District Stakeholders

In support of this policy, the Board of Directors expects District stakeholders to:

1. Create a neutral and welcoming educational atmosphere. Students should feel free to express their opinions, challenge viewpoints, and ask difficult questions.
2. Follow District policies and procedures in the presentation of controversial issues. Specifically, District policy requires that teachers guide discussions with thoroughness and objectivity to acquaint students with the need to recognize opposing viewpoints, the importance of facts, the value of judgment and the virtue of respect for conflicting opinions.
3. Follow District policies and procedures regarding instructional materials and curriculum. Specifically, District stakeholders should select instructional materials of sufficient variety to present opposing views of controversial issues so students may develop the skills of critical analysis and informed decision making.
4. Not use their position to *advocate* for their personal views, including their religious, political, economic, or social beliefs. District stakeholders may express their personal views, but they should identify them as personal opinion and in no event advocate for adoption of their position. The right to expression of personal opinions does not include the right of advocacy.
5. Ensure that viewpoints which differ from their own (along with pertinent facts) are discussed in an objective and impartial manner.
6. Not express their personal views for the purpose of persuading students to their point of view. The stakeholder must not suggest or require a student to accept their viewpoint as authoritative.

7. Not violate any District policies on discrimination, harassment, bias, or prejudice when presenting their personal opinion.

8. Follow appropriate standards for classroom facilitation by including all students in the lesson, encouraging an open dialogue, and actively facilitating classroom discussions. Stakeholders must not be passive observers. Active facilitation requires the stakeholder to reference relevant educational materials and course content, correct misinformation, ensure that a variety of viewpoints are considered, and summarize and review the main points of the discussion.

Adopted:

July 18, 2023

NTPS Board of Directors