

1 Great Falls School District

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3 **INSTRUCTION**

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5 Controversial Issues and Academic Freedom

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7 The District shall offer courses of study which will afford learning experiences appropriate to the  
8 level of student understanding. The instructional program shall respect the right of students to  
9 face issues, to have free access to information, to study under teachers in situations free from  
10 prejudice, and to form, hold, and express their own opinions without personal prejudice or  
11 discrimination.

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13 Teachers shall guide discussions and procedures with thoroughness and objectivity to acquaint  
14 students with the need to recognize various points of view, importance of fact, value of good  
15 judgement, and the virtue of respect for conflicting opinions.

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17 The Board encourages and supports the concept of academic freedom, recognizing it as a  
18 necessary condition to aid in maintaining an environment conducive to learning and the free  
19 exchange of ideas and information.

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21 In the study or discussion of controversial issues or materials, however, the Board directs  
22 teaching staff to consider the following criteria:

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- 24 1. Relative maturity of students
- 25 2. District philosophy of education and Board approved curriculum
- 26 3. Community standards, morals and values
- 27 4. The necessity for a balanced presentation; and
- 28 5. The necessity to seek prior administrative counsel and guidance in such matters

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30 Legal References:

31 Article X, Sec. 8 Montana Constitution  
32 § 20-3-324(18) and (30), MCA Powers and Duties

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34 Policy History:

35 Adopted on: July 1, 2000

36 Revised on: November 14, 2022