

**Recommended**

**WASHINGTON CENTRAL UNIFIED  
UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Board of Directors' Policy**

**CREATING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

**TO ENGAGE IN CIVIL DISCOURSE**

**POLICY:**           D24          

**WARNED:**           10.16.24          

**ADOPTED:**           10.16.24          

**EFFECTIVE:**           10.16.24          

The Washington Central Unified Union School District respects the power of public education that stresses the free exchange of ideas as a vital element of our democracy. The teacher implements district procedures and protocols that ensure an environment that allows students to ask questions, share opinions and engage in civil discourse when discussing controversial topics.

WCUUSD embraces the understanding that public schools need to teach our students the full and comprehensive history of our United States and the world, so they can make responsible decisions, understand how/why current systems were created and how those same systems currently impact our society, avoiding the mistakes of the past, as they prepare to become contributing and involved citizens in our democracy.

WCUUSD is committed to ensuring all students, staff, and families feel a sense of belonging and community. By establishing these environments, we can encourage meaningful conversations about important topics that nurture respect, empathy, and critical thinking.

Our staff serve as trusted adults and play a critical role in supporting and encouraging these principles. They can guide discussions anchored in mutual respect, allowing students to express their opinions while learning to engage constructively with those who think differently. More than ever, we should take this opportunity to reacquaint ourselves with the school system's standards of civility and respect for proper expression.

Recognizing the desire to develop independence of thought, it is the responsibility of educators to create a learning environment where:

1. **IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT:** Students develop their identities and make connections to the identities, knowledge, histories, and experiences of others (Ethnic Studies Groups)
2. **RESISTING RACISM:** Students develop systems literacy to understand and change the impact of racism and intersectional forms of oppression on others
3. **INTERCONNECTEDNESS:** Students value the cultural wealth of Ethnic Studies Groups and support community actualization-meeting basic needs of all, ensuring safety, and creating the conditions for connectedness- at the local, state, national and international levels.
4. **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Students participate in uplifting collective liberation: the freedom, well being, and joy of all peoples.

All students deserve an education that helps them understand who they are and where they come from, and gives them the confidence and skills to work and learn constructively with others --- regardless of a student's race, gender, color, creed, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability, or any other reason set forth in state or federal non-discrimination requirements.

Our students need the freedom to learn authentic and complex histories through multiple global perspectives. Only an honest and comprehensive education can prepare the next generation to contribute to their local and global communities.

Regarding the District instructional program, the Board fully recognizes the authority of the State of Vermont to establish guidelines for the district curriculum and standards. WCUUSD commits to following all applicable state laws and rules.

Cross Reference other policies:

I.R.I.S. Framework (Identity Development, Resisting Racism, Interconnectedness, Social Responsibility)

EQS Standards

Educational Philosophy

Library Media Policy

Equity Policy

HJC Statement