

385 TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

An issue shall be considered "controversial" when it stimulates objections or a strong reaction from the citizenry. The immediate cause of this reaction may be personal conviction or the opinion/belief of an interested group. Controversial issues are characterized by current importance and by group opinion and interest.

The consideration of controversial issues shall have a legitimate place in the work of the public schools. Sooner or later young people must meet and face such questions. It is important that they have experience with such questions under circumstances, which promote consideration of all pertinent factors.

The purpose of such study shall be to have the student see as fully as possible all sides of the question. The handling of a controversial issue in school shall be free from the assumption that there is one correct answer which shall emerge from the discussion and be taught authoritatively to the student.

The decision as to whether a controversial question shall become a matter for school study shall be based on such considerations as the timeliness of the question, the maturity and needs of the students and the mission of the School District.

No individual or group may claim the right to present arguments directly to students in school. Such a "right" will make the schools battlegrounds for dozens of kinds of controversial questions. Citizens have the right to know that controversial issues are being presented fairly, and to protest to the Board and/or administration if convinced that they are not.

Subject areas or content material shall be taught in accordance with the requirements of state law.

The professional staff, under the direction of the Superintendent, is directed to prepare suitable guidelines as necessary, for teachers who deal with controversial issues and to prepare or secure suitable instructional materials.

CROSS REF.: 333, Parent Rights in the Curriculum
 361, Instructional Materials Selection
 361.1, Library Materials Selection
 386, Teaching about Religion

APPROVED: November 11, 1974

REVISED: April 9, 2001