

Book	Policy Manual
Section	DRAFT POLICIES FOR THE BOARD
Title	Copy of CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
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## 2240 - **CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

The School Board believes that ~~from time to time~~ the consideration of controversial issues has a legitimate place in the instructional program of the ~~schools.~~ School Corporation.

Properly introduced and conducted, the consideration of such issues can help students learn to identify important issues, explore fully and fairly all sides of an issue, weigh carefully the values and factors involved, and develop techniques for formulating and evaluating positions.

For purposes of this policy, a controversial issue is a topic on which opposing points of view have been promulgated by responsible opinion and/or likely to arouse both support and opposition in the community.

The Board will permit the introduction and proper educational use of controversial issues provided that their use in the instructional program:

- A. is related to the instructional goals of the course of study and level of maturity of the students;
- B. does not tend to indoctrinate or persuade students to a particular point of view;
- C. encourages open-mindedness and is conducted in a spirit of scholarly inquiry; and
- D. does not cause a substantial disruption in the school environment.

Controversial issues related to the program may be initiated by the students themselves provided they are presented in the ordinary course of classroom instruction, relate to the topic of instruction, and ~~it is not substantially disruptive to the educational setting~~ do not cause substantial disruption into the school environment.

Controversial issues may not be initiated by a source outside the schools unless prior approval has been given by the principal after consultation with the Superintendent.

When controversial issues have not been specified in the course of study, the Board will permit the instructional use of only those issues which have been approved by the principal, after consultation with the Superintendent.

~~In the context of a classroom discussion,~~ In the discussion of any issue, a teacher may express a personal opinion, but shall identify it as such, and must not express such an opinion for the purpose of persuading students to ~~his/her~~ the teacher's point of view. Teachers should be mindful that this does not permit them to offer opinions on topics which should not be the subject of discussion in the classroom due to their inappropriateness for the age(s) of the students involved. As always, teachers are expected to demonstrate good judgment as professionals in introducing controversial issues and expressing personal opinions in the classroom as exemplars for their students.

The Board recognizes that a course of study or certain instructional materials may contain content and/or activities that some parents find objectionable. If after careful, personal review of the program lessons and/or materials, a parent indicates to the school that either the content or activities conflicts with his/her religious beliefs or value system, the school will honor a written request for his/her child to be excused from a particular class for specified reasons. The student, however, will not be excused from participating in the course and will be provided alternate learning activities during times of such parent-requested absences.

The Superintendent shall develop administrative guidelines for dealing with controversial issues and with parental concerns about program content or the use of particular materials.

