

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS & PROGRAMS

Controversial issues arising from classroom situations and subject matter may be discussed and explored in the classrooms throughout the school district.

Controversial issues provide stimulation to learning by stirring intellectual excitement and are thus an integral part of the normal classroom environment. Free inquiry in a democratic society requires that controversial issues arising in the normal classroom situation be handled as a regular aspect of instruction and learning in such a way as not to inhibit the dignity, the personality, or the intellectuality of either the teacher or the students.

Controversial issues with respect to instruction in the public schools appear to present, in essence, a twofold problem: first, the problem of academic freedom for both the teacher and the student and, second, the problem of technique or method employed in handling controversial issues in the classroom. For the best interests of the individual, the community, and the larger society, provision must be made so that teachers and students alike are free to exchange and develop ideas in a responsible and reasonable manner.

The teacher/sponsor and the building principal are expected to exercise judgment and to investigate fully those proposed resource persons to whom questions may arise.

When appropriate, staff should encourage the use of resource persons representing various approaches or points of view on a given topic in order to afford the students a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of the topic/issue.

The ideas presented and the resource person invited to present them will have demonstrable relation to the curricular or co-curricular activity in which the participating students are involved.

Prior to his or her appearance or participation, the resource person will be given in writing, and will agree to abide by the following Board regulations:

- a. Profanity, vulgarity, and lewd comments are prohibited;
- b. The staff member responsible for inviting the resource person, or any member of the school administration, has the right and duty to interrupt or suspend any proceedings if the conduct of the resource person is judged to be in poor taste or endangering to the health and safety of students and staff.