

Book	Policy Manual
Section	Policies Recommended for the BOE (39.2 Winter 2021 and Specials Update)
Title	CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
Code	po2240
Status	
Adopted	September 26, 2016

## 2240 - **CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

The Board of Education believes that the consideration of controversial issues has a legitimate place in the instructional program of the schools.

In the study of controversial issues, students have:

- A. the right to study any controversial issue which has political, economic or social significance and concern;
- B. the right to have free access to all appropriate information, including materials which circulate freely in the community;
- C. the right to study under competent instruction in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice and
- D. the right to form and express their own opinions on controversial issues without jeopardizing relations with teachers or the school.

The study of controversial issues should be objective and scholarly with minimum emphasis on opinion. The teacher must approach controversial issues in the classroom in an impartial and objective manner and must refrain from using classroom privileges and prestige to promote a partisan point of view.

Teachers determine the appropriateness of certain issues for consideration using the following criteria:

- A. Treatment of the issue in question must be within the range, knowledge, maturity and competence of the students.
- B. There should be study materials and other learning aids available from which a reasonable extent of data pertaining to all aspects of the issue can be obtained.
- C. The issue should receive only as much time as is needed to consider it adequately.
- D. The issue should be current, significant and relevant to the students and the teacher.

A teacher who is in doubt about the advisability of discussing certain issues in the classroom shall confer with the principal concerning the appropriateness of doing so. If discussion of an issue is not approved by the building principal, the teacher may refer the issue to the Superintendent.

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 point of view.

No classroom teacher shall be prohibited from providing reasonable periods of time for activities of a moral, philosophical, or patriotic theme. No student shall be required to participate in such activities if they are contrary to the religious convictions of the student or his/her parents or guardians.

The Board acknowledges that it may not adopt any policy or rule respecting or promoting an establishment of religion or prohibiting any student from the free, individual, and voluntary exercise or expression of the student's religious beliefs. ~~However, such exercise or expression shall be limited to lunch periods or other noninstructional time periods when students are free to associate.~~

The Board also 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.

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