

## TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

In the study of controversial issues, students have four rights which recognize:

1. the right to study any controversial issue which has political, economic or social significance and concern;
2. the right to have free access to all relevant information, including materials which circulate freely in the community;
3. the right to study under competent instruction in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice and
4. 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 a minimum of emphasis on opinion. The teacher must approach controversial issues in the classroom in an impartial and unprejudiced 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.

1. Treatment of the issue in question must be within the range, knowledge, maturity and competence of the students.
2. 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.
3. Consideration of the issue should receive only as much time as is needed to cover the issue adequately.
4. 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.

If parents desire that their child be excused from participation in discussion of such material, arrangements are made to respect that request.

[Adoption date: August 14, 2001]

LEGAL REFS.: ORC 2907.31  
OAC 3301-35-01; 3301-35-02; 3301-35-03

CROSS REFS.: IB, Academic Freedom  
KLB, Public Complaints About the Curriculum or Instructional Materials