

POLICY

NORTHVALE

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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. 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:

1. On which opposing points of view have been expressed by responsible and thoughtful persons.
2. Likely to arouse both support and opposition in the community.
3. Not expressly enumerated in the course guide as appropriate for the course of study.
4. Subject to interpretation as obscene, profane, doctrinaire, or grossly inappropriate, each in relation to the level of maturity of the students concerned.

The Board will permit the introduction and proper educational use of controversial issues provided that their use in the instructional program is related to the instructional goals of the course of study and level of maturity of the students. The discussion of controversial issues must not tend to indoctrinate students or persuade them to a particular point of view. Instead, teachers must encourage fair presentation and open-mindedness and the free exchange of ideas in a spirit of scholarly inquiry, drawing upon information and insights from the widest feasible range of resources.

When the consideration of controversial issues have not been specified in the course guide, the Board will permit the instructional use of only those issues that have been approved in advance by the Principal.

The discussion of controversial issues in the classroom will be conducted in an unprejudiced and dispassionate manner and cannot be allowed to disrupt the educational process. In the discussion of any issue, a teacher may express a personal opinion, provided the expression is characterized as personal opinion and does not attempt to persuade students to the teacher's point of view.



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The Superintendent shall assist teaching staff members in developing a sensitivity to the occurrence of controversial issues in the context of the curriculum and developing techniques for the management of controversial issues that do not stifle a spirit of free inquiry.

Cross reference: Policy Guide Nos. 3310, 9130

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