

BOARD POLICY: CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

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Section A

The Board of Education believes that it is the responsibility of the school to assist students in the critical examination of the various issues and points of view facing society today. Such investigation and evaluation of controversial issues is deemed essential if the school is to achieve its objective of educating students as thinking, discriminating individuals and participants in a democratic society. The Board also believes that it is imperative that our schools provide an environment where open discussion, free discourse, spirited debate, and individual decision are encouraged. Free inquiry, free expression, and free association are an essential part of this environment and must be protected as a matter of individual right. The Board reserves its statutory right to withhold its consent for any school activity which, in its judgment, is not beneficial to the district and in the best interests of the students.

Section B

1. The following guidelines should be observed by the staff and students when involved with controversial or sensitive issues:
 - 1) Presentations should always be informative, balanced and objective, reviewing not only extreme, but also moderate positions. Teachers should be cognizant of the maturity of their students and this should be reflected in their instructional presentations.
 - 2) Discussions and presentations should be conducted within the bounds of good judgment and proper decorum and with full consideration of the rights and sensibilities of others. Profanity, obscenity, libel, slander or disruption are not considered legitimate means of complying with this policy.
 - 3) The emotional criticism of individuals, ideas or movements is antithetical to decision-making and should be discouraged as inappropriate to classroom procedures.
 - 4) This policy applies to the regular curricular program of the schools, to school-related extra-class activities, and to those guest speakers invited by staff or students to address school groups. All invitations to outside speakers on controversial issues shall be cleared through and approved or disapproved by the principal.

Approved: April 24, 1973

Revised: May 29, 2001