

Coos Bay School District 9

Code: **INB**
Adopted: 1/11/93
Readopted: 1/12/11; 3/13/17
Orig. Code(s): INB

Teaching About Controversial Issues

Controversial issues are defined as those problems, subjects or questions about which there are significant differences of opinion, for which there are no easy resolutions and discussions of which generally create strong feelings among people. Although there may be disagreement over what the facts are and what they mean, subjects usually become controversial because of the different values people use in applying the facts as known.

Controversy is inherent in the democratic way of life. It is essential, therefore, that students have the opportunity, under competent guidance and instruction, to study issues appropriate to their interest, experience, and ability. They must have access to relevant information, and have the obligation to examine carefully all sides of an issue. Students have the right to form and express their own points of view and opinions without jeopardizing their positions in the classroom or in the school.

It is the teacher's responsibility to select issues for study and discussion, which contribute to the attainment of course objectives, and to make available to students materials concerning the various aspects of the issues. Teachers also have the obligation to be objective and to impartially present the several sides of an issue. Although teachers have the right to express their own viewpoints and opinions, they do not have the right to indoctrinate students. Whenever a teacher elects to use a guest speaker or media materials to present controversial information, prior approval must be granted by the principal. Controversial issues are to be presented with good judgment, keeping in mind the maturity and background of the students.

The Board has an obligation to defend its administrators and teachers against unjust reprisals for acting in the spirit of this policy. Parents and students wishing to complain regarding the teaching of controversial issues shall use Policy KL - Complaint Procedure for School Patrons and the associated administrative regulations.

END OF POLICY

Legal Reference(s):

[ORS 336.067](#)

[OAR 581-022-1020](#)

[OAR 581-022-1910](#)

U.S. CONST. amend. I.
OR. CONST., art. I.

Cross Reference(s):

GBG - Staff Participation in Political Activities
IIA - Textbook Selection and Adoption
IB - Freedom of Expression
IICB - Student Summer Travel