

Studying Controversial Issues

The Board holds that opportunities must be provided for the examination of controversial issues through discussion and reading bearing on these issues in order for students to develop skills and abilities in critical thinking. The school program, at the appropriate age level and within the proper subject matter area, should provide students with the opportunity to study and discuss all sides of an issue in an atmosphere free from compulsion or emotion and to arrive at, and express opinions that may be different from other members of the class or that of the teacher.

It is the teacher's responsibility to plan and organize class discussion to effect a reasonable and fair discussion of issues when such issues are a reasonable part of the course of study assigned to that teacher.

Teachers will present an overall view of controversial issues and will guard against giving personal opinions until students have had an opportunity to:

1. Find, collect and assemble factual materials on the subject;
2. Interpret the data without prejudice;
3. Reconsider assumptions and claims and to reach their own conclusions.

By refraining from expressing personal views before and during the period of research and study, the teacher will encourage students to search after truth and to think for themselves.

Before beginning a class in the study of an obviously controversial topic, a teacher will discuss with the superintendent and/or principal:

1. Its appropriateness to the course;
2. Its appropriateness for the students' maturity level;
3. The approach to instruction;
4. The instructional materials to be used.

No teacher shall reflect in any way upon individuals because of their age, race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, marital or parental status.

No publication of sectarian, partisan or denominational character shall be used or distributed in any school or made part of any school library for the purpose of sectarian or denomination indoctrination.

No bulletin, circular or other material of any character whose purpose is to spread propaganda or to foster membership or subscriptions to the fund of any organization not related to, or under the control of the school authorities shall be distributed or shown to students on the school premises in support of indoctrination.

No teacher shall advocate or teach any politicalism with the intent to indoctrinate any student with, or inculcate a preference in the mind of any student for politicalism. This in no way is meant to prohibit teachers from teaching about politicalism nor is it intended to prohibit the teaching of democracy. The teaching of respect for the flag of the United States and the ideals and freedoms for which it stands is encouraged and demanded. In addition, continuous instruction in the manners and morals acceptable to the larger society shall be given in all grades.

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 - Instructional Resources/Instructional Materials

IB - Freedom of Expression