

Studying Controversial Issues

The Board supports teaching about controversial issues in the schools. The presentation and discussion of controversial issues will be on an informative basis. The development of an ability to meet issues without prejudice and to withhold judgments while facts are being collected, assembled, weighted, and relationships seen before drawing inferences or conclusions, is among the most valuable outcomes of a free educational system.

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

- Find, collect, and assemble factual material on the subject;
- Interpret the data without prejudice;
- 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.

Emotional criticism and the promotion of a cause within the classroom are inappropriate and unscholarly. The teacher's attitude will be that of the true scholar, which is truth-seeking, open minded and tolerant.

Before launching a class in the study of an obviously controversial topic, a teacher will discuss with the principal:

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

END OF POLICY

Legal Reference(s):

[ORS 336.067](#)

[OAR 581-022-1020](#)

[OAR 581-022-1910](#)

United States Constitution, Amendment I. Oregon Constitution, Article 1