

Studying Controversial Issues

The Board supports the inclusion of controversial issues as part of students' education. The presentation and discussion of controversial issues will be informative. The development of ability to meet issues without prejudice and to withhold judgments while facts are being collected, assembled and weighed and to see relationships before drawing inferences or conclusions are among the most valuable outcomes of a free educational system.

Staff members will become knowledgeable concerning major theories and views (and evidence upon which they are based) in their area of instruction, particularly those espoused by their students.

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 material 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. Any personal opinions voiced by the teacher must be stated as such.

Before beginning 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 students' maturity level; (3) the approach to instruction; (4) the instructional 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 I.