

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/GUEST SPEAKERS

The district will offer courses of study which will afford learning experiences appropriate to the level of student understanding. The instructional program will respect the right of students to face issues, to have free access to information, to study under teachers in situations free from prejudice and to form, hold, and express their own opinions without personal prejudice or discrimination. The district encourages staff members to provide for the free and orderly flow and examination of ideas so that students may gain the skills to gather and arrange facts, discriminate between facts and opinion, discuss differing viewpoints, analyze problems and draw their own tentative conclusions.

Teachers will guide discussions and procedures, including the use of guest speakers to gain divergent points of view, with thoroughness and objectivity to acquaint students with the need to recognize opposing viewpoints, the importance of fact, the value of judgment and the virtue of respect for conflicting opinions. Teachers will exercise professional judgment in determining the appropriateness of the issue to the curriculum and the maturity of the students. When in doubt regarding appropriateness, the matter should be referred to the principal. Teachers should also exercise special care in how they present controversial issues to students, which are issues that are partisan or subject to ongoing public disagreement in the community, or for which a substantial disruption to the operation of the district or school is reasonably foreseeable, such as by generating significant tension between and among teachers and parents.

The superintendent will establish procedures for the approval of the use of a guest speaker. When an invited speaker expresses opinions that are partisan or considered controversial by a large portion of the community, the school will provide for the presentation of opposing views.

- A. If the teacher and the principal believe the guest speaker's topic is controversial, they will develop a plan whereby the issue(s) can be presented in an objective unbiased manner.

In the event the speaker's topic is determined to be controversial, the teacher will notify students and parents/guardians beforehand that any student who does not wish to attend the presentation may have an alternative assignment.

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