

Controversial Issues and Academic Freedom

The District will offer courses of study which will afford learning experiences appropriate to levels of student understanding. The instructional program respects 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.

Teachers will guide discussions and procedures with thoroughness and objectivity to acquaint students with the need to recognize various points of view, importance of fact, value of good judgment, and the virtue of respect for conflicting opinions.

The Board encourages and supports the concept of academic freedom, recognizing it as a necessary condition to aid in maintaining an environment conducive to learning and to the free exchange of ideas and information. In a study or discussion of controversial issues or materials, however, the Board directs teaching staff to take into account the following criteria:

- Subjects of a controversial nature shall be defined as a political, religious and moral;
- Both the building principal and the teacher must agree to allow a speaker or material of a controversial nature in the classroom. If the teacher and building principal are unable to agree, they shall include the Superintendent/designee in the decision-making process;
- If the material or speaker requests presentation at an assembly, the principal shall make the decision and inform the community;
- The person or persons responsible for approving the presentation shall also be responsible for other viewpoints expressed; and
- Opposing viewpoints shall be presented in the same general setting within a month.

Legal References:

§ 20-3-324, MCA
10.55.701, ARM
10.55.603, ARM

Powers and duties
Board of Trustees
Curriculum and Assessment

Policy History:

Adopted on:

Revised on: 11 July 2016