

## 2240 CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Free discussion of controversial issues--political, economic, social--shall be encouraged in the classroom whenever appropriate for the level of the group.

Issues may be considered controversial which arouse strong reactions, based either on personal conviction or allegiance to a group. School treatment of controversial issues shall be designed to instruct pupils in fair and objective study techniques. The decision on whether a particular controversial issue shall become a matter for school study shall be based on the timeliness of the question, the maturity and needs of the pupils and the purposes of the schools. Classroom discussions on controversial questions which arise unexpectedly shall be the responsibility of the teacher, who shall provide relevant information on both sides of the question. Such discussions shall be kept free from the assumption that there is one correct answer that should emerge from a discussion and be taught authoritatively to the pupils.

Pupils shall be taught to recognize each other's right to form an opinion on controversial issues, and shall be assured of their own right to do so without jeopardizing their relationship with the teacher or the school.

When public employees make statements pursuant to their official duties: in the classroom, at Board meetings, and at other meetings related to educational issues affecting the district, the employees are not speaking as citizens for First Amendment purposes, and the Constitution does not insulate their communications from employer discipline (*Garcetti v. Ceballos*).

The Building Principal shall have the authority to limit or suspend discussion of controversial issues pending a review of the issue/materials. Instructional materials not previously approved must be reviewed by the Principal before being introduced into the classroom.

Adopted: 17 December 2013

