

## 2240 - CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN THE CLASSROOM

The Board of Education believes that the consideration of controversial issues has a legitimate place in the instructional program of the schools.

Properly introduced and conducted, the consideration of such issues can help students learn to identify important issues, explore thoroughly and fairly all perspectives of an issue, weigh carefully the values and factors involved, and develop techniques for formulating and evaluating positions.

For purposes of this policy, a controversial issue is a topic on which opposing points of view have been promulgated by responsible opinion and/or likely to arouse both support and opposition in the community.

The Board will permit the introduction and proper educational use of controversial issues provided that their use in the instructional program:

1. is related to the instructional goals of the course of study and level of maturity of the students;
2. does not tend to indoctrinate or persuade students to a particular point of view;
3. encourages open-mindedness and is conducted in a spirit of scholarly inquiry.

Controversial issues related to the program may be initiated by the students themselves provided they are presented in the ordinary course of classroom instruction and it is not disruptive to the educational setting.

Controversial issues may not be initiated by a source outside the schools unless prior approval has been given by the principal. Issues pertaining to human growth and development, as defined by statute, are subject to 118.019, Wis. Stats.

In the discussion of any controversial issue in the classroom or in the course of professional duties, a teacher may express a personal opinion, but shall identify it as such, and must not express such an opinion for the purpose of persuading students to his/her point of view.

**The Board recognizes that a course of study or certain instructional materials may contain content and/or activities that some parents find objectionable. If after careful, personal review of the program lessons and/or materials, a parent indicates to the school that either content or activities conflicts with his/her religious beliefs or value system, the school will honor a written request for his/her child to be excused from particular classes for specified reasons. The**

student, however, will not be excused from participating in the course or activities mandated by the State and will be provided alternative learning activities during times of parent requested absences.

The District Administrator shall develop administrative guidelines for dealing with controversial issues.

(See also Policy 3310 – Freedom of Speech in Noninstructional Settings)

Legal

Garcetti v. Ceballos, 126 S. Ct. 1951 (2006)