

Teaching about Controversial Issues and Use of Controversial Resources

Guidelines for Teachers

Teachers will adhere to the following guidelines in teaching about controversial/sensitive issues and using controversial resources:

1. Teaching about controversial issues and using controversial learning resources are permitted in accordance with this regulation as long as the issue or resource is relevant to the curriculum objectives of the course.
2. Issues and learning resources selected for discussion and study must be appropriate for instructional use and contribute to the attainment of the educational objectives of the course.
3. The issues and learning resources should be within the level of student ability and maturity.
4. The main goals of teaching about controversial issues or using controversial learning resources will be to develop student skills in critical thinking and problem-solving and understanding of the democratic process.
5. Teaching strategies should be fairly employed so that all sides of the issues are explored. Suitable materials including facts and concepts relating to all aspects of the issue should be available.
6. The principal must be informed in writing within 20 days of 1) any planned teaching of controversial issues that are not already included in board-approved curricula, or 2) any planned use of controversial learning resources. Such notification must include an identification of the controversial issue or resource and a statement of the educational purpose of its planned use.

Guidelines for Principals

The principal will adhere to the following guidelines in reviewing the proposed teaching of controversial issues or use of controversial materials:

1. The principal will approve or disapprove the teaching of controversial issues and the use of controversial learning resources on the basis of the above teaching guidelines.
2. The principal will advise the teacher in writing within seven working days of receiving the notice of the reasons for any disapproval.
3. If the teaching of the controversial issue or the use of controversial learning resources is approved by the principal, the teacher will notify parents within five

teaching days of the upcoming instruction or use of controversial materials via the *Teaching about Controversial Issues and Use a/Controversial Resources Parent Notification Form* (exhibit IMB-E).

4. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher and/or principal regarding the proposed instruction and/or instructional resources. Parents may choose to withhold their child from the proposed instruction or exposure to the approved learning resource. Students exempted by parents will receive instruction via alternate formats and will not be ostracized in any way.

Procedures for Review and Appeal

In the event the principal disapproves of the proposed teaching of a controversial issue or the planned use of controversial learning resources, a conference will promptly be held with the teacher to review the reasons for the disapproval. The teacher and principal will endeavor to resolve their differences at this conference.

If, following this conference, the teacher and principal are still in disagreement concerning the proposed teaching or use of materials, the teacher may request a review of the decision by the superintendent. The review must be requested within seven working days of the principal's notice of disapproval. The superintendent must issue a decision within seven working days of the teacher's request for review. If the principal's decision is upheld by the superintendent, the teacher may request review by the Board of Education at its next regularly scheduled meeting. In the absence of such request for review, the superintendent's decision will be final.

The teacher involved will not present the controversial issue or controversial learning resource to students during the review and appeal procedure outlined above.

It is the intent of this procedure to provide for a prompt resolution of the issues. Time limitations are to be adhered to except upon mutual agreement of the parties.

Approved: 02/13/97