



Book	Policy Manual
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Title	Copy of CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN THE CLASSROOM
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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 **District schools**.

Properly introduced and conducted, the consideration of such issues can help students learn to identify important issues, explore fully and fairly all sides 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 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:

- A. is related to the instructional goals of the course of study and level of maturity of the students;
- B. does not tend to indoctrinate or persuade students to a particular point of view;
- C. encourages open-mindedness and is conducted in a spirit of scholarly inquiry.
- D. **does not cause a substantial disruption in the school environment.**

Controversial issues related to the program may be initiated by the students themselves provided they are presented in the ordinary course of classroom instruction **relate to the topic of instruction, and do not cause substantial disruption to the school environment 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.

When controversial issues have not been specified in the course of study, the Board will permit the instructional use of only those issues which have been approved by the principal.

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. **(X) and may only express a personal opinion after student discussion has concluded. Teachers should be mindful that this does not permit them to offer opinions on topics which would not be the subject of discussion in the classroom due to their appropriateness for the age(s) of the students involved. As always, teachers are expected to serve as exemplars for their students by demonstrating good judgment as professionals when discussing controversial issues and expressing personal opinions in the classroom. (X) The classroom should not be used as a forum for the discussion of District employment issues.**

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.

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Legal (See also Policy 3310 – Freedom of Speech in Noninstructional Settings)
Garcetti v. Ceballos, 126 S. Ct. 1951 (2006)

Last Modified by Coleen Frisch on January 23, 2022