

Category: 6000 INSTRUCTION	Policy Number: 6428
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Policy Title: Teaching of Controversial Issues	Effective Date: February 27, 2008
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A controversial issue is defined as any current problem or subject which has publicly evoked opposing viewpoints on the part of any mass medium of communication or of any organized group; or any subject that arises in the classroom on which strong emotional bias is expressed by members of the classroom group. Life demands an ability constantly to deal with the controversial; therefore, the school must offer experience to assist students in learning to handle issues intelligently.

It shall be the policy of the District to provide for study of controversial issues in order that the public may have an opportunity to study such issues in a class atmosphere void of partisanship and bias. The rights of students to study significant issues in an objective atmosphere should be protected. The teacher is the most important member of the school staff in the actual handling of controversial issues. Teachers have the obligation to deal with such issues in a professional manner. The issues should grow naturally out of the regular classroom learning situations, should be appropriate to the subject taught, and should be on the maturity level of the students. As many viewpoints and data as possible should be brought out in the discussion. Freedom of students to learn should be the goal of all involved. The teacher must have a thorough understanding of the role of controversial issues in the classroom. He/she must know and appreciate the nature and extent of his own knowledge and biases covering any such issue and shall not use his/her position as a teacher to impose his viewpoints on the students.

REFERENCE: Policy 6427, "Sectarian Instruction Forbidden"
 Procedure 6428p, "Teaching of Controversial Issue"

(Updated with cross references/1998)

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<p>In planning the study of controversial questions, the teacher should consider the following factors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Is this issue within the maturity level of students?2. Is this issue of interest to the students?3. Is this issue socially significant and appropriate and timely for this course and grade level?4. Is this issue one which the teacher feels he/she can handle successfully from a personal standpoint? (Is his/her background such that he/she can deal intelligently with the issue, setting aside personal bias in the classroom?)5. Is this issue one for which adequate study and material can be obtained?6. Is this issue one for which there is adequate time to justify its preparation? (Is there time for thorough study of the issue?)7. Have community customs and attitudes been considered?	
<p style="text-align: center;">Snake River School District 52, 103 South 900 West, Blackfoot, Idaho 83221</p>	