

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Curriculum Decisions

Controversial Issues

A controversial issue involves a problem about which different individuals and groups urge conflicting courses of action. It is an issue for which society has not found consensus, and it is of sufficient significance that each proposed way of dealing with it is objectionable to some sector of the citizenry and arouses protest.

Public schools have a responsibility to develop critical-thinking skills in students. This includes objectives and resources related to controversial issues in appropriate curriculum areas and grade levels and in classrooms and library media centers. Controversial issues are included in the curriculum to help students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to become an informed citizen in preparation for adulthood.

Through the discussion of controversial issues, teachers can help students analyze issues, investigate and consider various positions, keep an open mind and weigh alternatives, organize and present arguments and draw intelligent conclusions.

Public schools, as an educational institution, and the individual classroom teacher have a responsibility to provide the student:

1. Opportunities to study controversial issues which have political, economic or social significance about which they will begin to have an opinion,
2. Competent instruction balancing the various and/or conflicting points of view in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice, and
3. The right to form, identify and express his/her own opinions on controversial issues as long as a balanced presentation is made of conflicting positions.

Teachers will notify parents in advance when controversial issues are to be a part of the curriculum. Notification will be far enough in advance that teachers can provide students alternative learning activities if the students and/or the student's parents object to the controversial issue being studied and wish to opt-out of a specific component of the curriculum.

Unplanned topics may arise during a class that may be considered controversial (i.e., discussion of current events). Teachers may proceed with addressing the topics, helping students analyze issues with open minds, investigate and consider various positions, weigh alternative viewpoints, organize and present arguments and draw intelligent conclusions.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Curriculum Decisions (Continued)

Politicians in the Classroom

The District encourages interaction between students and politicians. The procedures established in this policy and the regulation dealing with resource speakers are created to guide teachers in conducting this interaction.

If a candidate for a political office is invited to speak at a school, attempts should be made to invite all candidates seeking the office. Candidates being invited to speak should be informed that all candidates are being invited. Since all candidates are not always available, the Lincoln Board of Education does not automatically interpret a classroom visit by one candidate in a race for a political office as promoting partisan politics.

Candidates for national office who speak in classrooms or for larger student groups shall not be construed as promoting partisan politics, but schools/teachers shall follow all guidelines established in this policy and in the regulation (6530.1) dealing with resource speakers in arranging such a presentation.

Teachers who provide student learning opportunities consistent with approved curriculum objectives, and according to the intent of this policy and within administrative guidelines and procedures will be protected by the district from unjust charges, harassment and attack by every means at its disposal, including legal.

The Board's position in this matter applies to the regular curricular program of the schools and to other school-sponsored student activities held within the school building or outside the school. The Board must reserve the right assigned it under the law to give or withhold consent for sponsoring any school activity according to its judgment as to whether or not the activity is in the best interest of the District and the pupils of the District.

Last Revision:	2022-09-13
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Related Policies and Regulations:	3970.1, 6450.2, 6530, 6530.1
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