Policy

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Purpose: To establish the board’s vision for academic freedom in the district.

The board believes that academic freedom is essential to fulfilling the purpose of the school system. Board policy must protect teachers from any censorship or restraint that might hinder their duty to perform their classroom functions. The district will maintain an atmosphere of academic freedom in the schools. Therefore, the board sets out the following positions on academic freedom.

Citizens of our American democracy must be able to listen to all sides of a controversial issue. They must be able to sort out the facts and to arrive at independent conclusions. The schools must expose students to current issues that are within their intellectual grasp.

Teachers will not attempt, directly or indirectly, to limit or control students’ judgment concerning any issue. Teachers will make certain full and fair consideration is given to the subject and facts are carefully examined as to their accuracy and interpretation. Through lesson plans or other means, teachers will consult with the administration on the appropriateness of discussing controversial issues with students.

The community has a right to expect that teachers will present controversial issues in a fair and unbiased manner. The community also has a right to communicate concerns regarding these matters through proper channels to the board.

Teachers will consult with the administration on the appropriateness of discussing any planned controversial issues with students.

While the board acknowledges the fundamental need to protect teachers from any censorship or restraint which might interfere with their obligation to pursue truth in the performance of their job duties, it is important for teachers to recognize that academic freedom is not absolute. The board may place reasonable restrictions on any activity, whether in the classroom or not, supervised by teachers and designed to impart particular knowledge or skills to students which might reasonably be perceived to bear the imprimatur of the school. Teachers will comply with policy with respect to school-related student publications.

Adopted 11/28/72; Revised 7/1/03,

Richland County School District Two