IMB Teaching About Controversial/Sensitive Issues

Issued 7/03 Draft/20

Purpose: To establish the board's vision for teaching about controversial/sensitive issues in district schools.

Education for effective citizenship is a major goal of the district. To achieve this purpose, students should have an opportunity to examine controversial/sensitive issues within the context of their formal education experiences.

A controversial or sensitive issue is a point or matter about which significant opposing viewpoints and/or multiple perspectives exist. Controversial/sensitive issues may be found as a natural part of the curriculum or they may occur in local, national or international situations. These topics may arise across a range of political, social, economic or cultural aspects such as religion, language, customs or values.

Emotional criticism and the promotion of a cause within the classroom are inappropriate and will not be tolerated. Teachers/Instructional staff should guard against giving their personal opinions on sectarian or political questions or any other controversial/sensitive issues. The teacher's instructional staff member's attitude should be that of the true scholar. Issues should be presented impartially and in an atmosphere free of bias or prejudice where there is fair representation of multiple perspectives.

Before introducing a controversial/sensitive topic, a teacher an instructional staff member will discuss it with the principal or his/her designee as to these conditions:

- appropriateness to the course
- appropriateness for the maturity of the students
- approach to instruction
- teaching materials to be used
- appropriateness of the content to be presented by the speaker
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The principal or his/her designee must approve all aspects of the instruction in line with the statements in this policy. The principal or his/her designee may seek guidance from district personnel and appropriate content specialists.

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