

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

The Board of Trustees recognizes the inevitability of teaching about controversial issues in the classroom. The Board furthermore subscribes to the belief that our democratic social order depends upon a vigorous competition of ideas as well as any other aspect of human activity so long as the style and format are such as not to foment destructive or unlawful activity. Therefore, teaching about controversial issues is essential to the learning process.

The Board's responsibility is to defend the intellectual rights of its staff on the one hand and the welfare of pupils and community on the other. It is the teacher's responsibility to determine that the issues are germane to the program and that the pupils have reached a readiness level for the topic and materials involved. The teacher shall strive to maintain an instructional atmosphere free of bias and prejudice in which controversial issues can be discussed in a fair and responsible manner. The teacher shall feel free to state personal opinions on beliefs, clearly identifying them as such.

When dealing with controversial issues, the teacher will strive to teach pupils to collect pertinent data, to evaluate the accuracy and completeness of the data and their relevance to the question, to recognize existing prejudices and to examine critically arguments adduced from presumed facts.

Teachers shall feel free to teach about controversial issues related to their programs of instruction. They shall establish classroom atmosphere wherein pupils may search for ideas and their implications. In doing so, teachers shall strive to maintain rigorous intellectual honesty.

Legal Reference: EC 7102, 7253, 7851, 8451, 8452-5

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PLEASANTON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PLEASANTON, CALIFORNIA