

Todd County School District Policy: IB

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Academic freedom may be defined as the right of qualified scholars in their own field of expertise to pursue the search for truth in its many forms, and to make public their methods and findings. It is the right of qualified teachers, counselors, and administrators to encourage freedom of discussion of controversial questions in the classroom, and to develop in students a love of knowledge and a desire to search for truth. Teachers should keep in mind that academic freedom is not a guaranteed political right but rather a necessary condition for the successful practice of the academic profession in a free society.

The board believes however, that academic freedom also carries with it academic responsibility, which is determined by the basic ideals, goals, and institutions of the local community as they are expressed in the district's statements of belief and mission statement.

As a consequence of its responsibility to guarantee academic freedom to both students and staff, the board expects that

1. all classroom studies will be curriculum-related and will be presented factually, objectively, and impartially;
2. teachers will create and maintain an atmosphere of open-mindedness and tolerance; and
3. teachers will not attempt directly or indirectly to limit or control the students' judgment concerning any issue, but will make certain that full and fair consideration is given to the subject and that facts are carefully examined as to their accuracy and interpretation.

While the board intends to protect staff from any undue restraint that interferes with their instructional duties, the ultimate responsibility for determining curriculum, textbooks, and teaching methods **must rest with the board**. It also expects that when controversial issues are presented, the maturity and intellectual grasp of students will be taken into account.

CROSS REF.: IMB, Teaching About Controversial Issues

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