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6013
Teaching Controversial Issues

10 The ability to discuss, listen, and dissent are essential elements of responsible
11 citizenship. The school district encourages students to develop skills in analyzing
12 issues, respecting the opinion of others, distinguishing between fact and opinion,
13 considering all pertinent factors in reaching decisions, and arriving at group
14 decisions.

15 Teachers may teach or lead discussions about controversial issues if they comply
16 with the following criteria:

- 17 1. The issues discussed must be relevant to the curriculum and be part of a
18 planned educational program.
- 19 2. Students must have free access to appropriate materials and information for
20 analysis and evaluation of the issues.
- 21 3. The teacher must encourage students to consider and discuss a variety of
22 viewpoints.
- 23 4. The topic and materials used must be within the range, knowledge, maturity,
24 and competence of the students.
- 25 5. The teacher must inform parents and the building principal before discussing
26 sensitive or controversial issues.
- 27 6. The teacher must keep detailed, documentary evidence to prove that both
28 sides and/or all facts available were presented.
- 29 7. Teachers must refrain from advocating partisan causes, sectarian religious
30 views, or selfish propaganda of any kind through any classroom or a school
31 device. However, a teacher shall not be prohibited from expressing a
32 personal opinion as long as the student is encouraged to reach his/her own
33 decision independently.

34 Teachers who are unsure of their obligations under this policy must confer with
35 their principal prior to discussing controversial issues in the classroom.

36 Adopted on: November 14, 2017

37 Revised on: _____

38 Reviewed on: November 14, 2017; August 14, 2019