

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Policy #381

Waukegan Community School District

Page 1 of 2

The consideration of controversial questions shall have a legitimate place in the work of the Waukegan Schools. Young people must meet and face such questions in order to gain experience in handling them under circumstances that promote consideration of all pertinent factors.

Teachers are generally expected to avoid the pursuit of controversial topics that have no substantial connection to the curriculum the teacher is charged with delivering. For example, in a math class, a math teacher should not direct a learning activity about religion and religious controversies. An exception to this general rule may apply when, for example, a school administrator or leadership team directs or approve the examination of an issue of immediate concern that students are having to process.

The decision as to whether a controversial question shall become a part of school curriculum shall be based on such considerations as the timeliness of the question, the maturity of the students, the needs of the students, and the philosophy and goals of the Waukegan Community School District.

District employees may not use their position to attempt to indoctrinate or convince students to adopt the employee's personal beliefs or personal world view with respect to controversial subjects/issues. District employees also shall not demonstrate any improper favoritism toward students who may share or who express support for beliefs, positions, or opinions on controversial issues that are consistent with those held by the employee.

Although it will often be appropriate for educators to avoid revealing their personal opinions, positions, or beliefs to students on a controversial topic or issue, if an educator determines that circumstances exist that justify making such a disclosure, the educator is expected to do so in a manner that does not denigrate the legitimacy of other positions/responses.

Educators who are unsure whether or how to approach a controversial issue in a class or other school activity are expected to communicate such concerns to the building principal. Educators are expected to notify a supervising administrator if a parent or guardian complains that the teacher or other representative of the school improperly handled a controversial issue or topic.

Questions regarding controversial issues should be addressed to the building principal. Questions not resolved by the building principal should be submitted to the superintendent in writing who shall act upon the question and report his/her actions to the Board of Education. The Board shall have final authority regarding questions arising from teaching about controversial issues.

Legal Ref.: Sections 118.01(2)(d) Wisconsin Statutes
118.019

Cross Ref.: 110, Educational Mission Statement
381.1, Teaching About Religion

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Policy #381

Waunakee Community School District

Page 2 of 2

310, Instructional Goals
341.3-Rule, Health Education Parental Objection
341.31, Family Life Education (Human Growth and Development)
411.1, Equal Educational Opportunities
871, Public Complaints About the Curriculum or Instructional Materials

Adopted: 11/8/82

Revised: March 1994
January 2002
May 2023

Adoption Date: 11/8/82

Revised: March 1994
January 2002
May 2023