

SUBJECT: CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Controversial issues may be studied as part of the curriculum and teachers shall present these issues in their classrooms in an impartial and objective manner.

Teachers wishing to call upon outside speakers in the presentation of controversial issues are required to obtain the approval of the program supervisor who shall keep in mind the obligation for presenting opposing views as well, and who shall inform the District Superintendent prior to the presentation.

If deemed appropriate by the program supervisor, parents or students have the right to request exclusion from exposure to controversial subjects.

It is also recognized that parents and citizens of the community have a right to object to perceived unfair and prejudiced presentations made by a teacher. In considering such objections, the District Superintendent shall provide for a hearing so that both parties may fairly express their views. If requested, the District Superintendent's decision may be appealed to the BOCES.

Instructional Materials Selection and Controversial Topics and Material

Legal Responsibility

- a) The BOCES, as policymaking and governing body, is legally responsible for the selection and approval of all printed and non-printed materials.
- b) The BOCES delegates the authority for the selection of materials to the instructional staff.
- c) Final recommendation on purchase should remain with the teaching staff, subject to approval by the District Superintendent and, where appropriate, the Board.

Objectives of Selection

- a) The selection should reflect and help implement the basic functions of a quality school and BOCES program. The materials chosen should:
 - 1. Provide teachers and students with materials which will support and enrich the curriculum.
 - 2. Enable and encourage students to further develop their full potential as creative and responsible individuals by meeting and stimulating the greatest possible diversity of interest and abilities.

- b) To fulfill these two basic functions, endeavors should be made to provide easy access to a cataloged and comprehensive selection of a variety of materials at appropriate levels of difficulty to:
1. Generate an understanding of American freedom and a desire to preserve those freedoms through the development of informed and responsible citizenship.
 2. Develop intellectual and practical skills, literacy and aesthetic taste and discrimination in choice of materials.
 3. Foster a breadth and depth of insight, which will stimulate growth of ethical standards and a sensitivity of social, intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual values.
 4. Encourage students to locate, use, and evaluate as much material as possible on opposing sides of controversial issues so that they may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical examination and thinking.
 5. Fairly represent the many religions, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contribution to our American heritage.
 6. Encourage the professional growth of the faculty.

c) Controversial Topics and Material

All instructional curriculums will undoubtedly include controversial topics or materials, at one time or another. For purposes of this policy, a controversial topic is one to which an individual formally objects as being inappropriate for use in a public school classroom. Guidelines shall be followed as indicated in administrative regulations.