



**SECTION: PROGRAMS**

**POLICY: 143**

**TITLE: CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES  
AND THE SCHOOL PROGRAM**

**ORIGINAL:** November 28, 1983

**CURRENT REVISION:**

**LAST REVIEWED BY THE**

**COMMITTEE:** December 9, 2020

**I. PURPOSE**

- A. One of the major goals of our public schools is training for effective citizenship. Our instructional program places great emphasis upon teaching about our American heritage, the rights and privileges we enjoy as citizens, and the values and attitudes necessary for responsible citizenship.
- B. One of our cherished rights is that of dissent through such channels as public and private debate, the ballot, and the process of law – all with legal protection against unjust reprisal.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

None.

**III. POLICY**

- A. For effective citizenship, students should learn the techniques and skills of democratic dissent. They should have the opportunities to hear, discuss, and study issues that are controversial. Teachers must be free to conduct such discussions without fear of reprisal so long as they maintain a high level of professional impartiality. Accordingly, it shall be the purpose of our schools to recognize the pupils' rights:
  - a. to hear, discuss, and study all sides of any controversial issue which has political, economic, or social significance;
  - b. to have free access to all relevant information, including the materials that circulate freely in the community;
  - c. to hear, discuss, and study under competent instruction in an atmosphere of freedom from instructional bias and prejudice;
  - d. To form and express opinions on controversial issues without jeopardizing their relations with their teacher or school, and without jeopardizing the same right of others.
- B. The Board against unjust charges and attacks will protect teachers who conduct study and discussion according to the intent of this policy.
- C. The Board's position in this matter applies to the regular instructional program, the co-curricular program, and other school-related activities. The Board reserves the right to give or withhold consent for any school activity according to its judgment as to whether an activity is in the best interest of the District and its students.

**IV. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

None.

**V. REFERENCES**

None.