

**CLOVIS UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT****INSTRUCTION**

Instructional Program

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for the consideration of controversial issues.

The Board believes that the consideration of controversial issues has a legitimate place in the instructional program of the schools. The Board recognizes that controversial issues may evoke strong reactions based on personal values and beliefs, political philosophy, culture, religion, or other influences. Instruction shall be relevant to the adopted course of study, curricular goals, and California content standards. Properly introduced and conducted, the consideration of such issues can help students learn to identify important issues, explore fully and fairly all sides of an issue, weigh carefully the values and factors involved, and develop techniques for formulating and evaluating positions.

For purposes of this policy, a controversial issue is a topic on which opposing points of view have been promoted by responsible opinion or are likely to evoke both support and opposition in the community.

The Board expects administrators and teachers to exercise professional judgment when deciding whether or not a particular issue is suitable for study or discussion. They shall consult with the Superintendent or designee as necessary to determine the appropriateness of the subject matter, guest speakers, and/or related instructional materials and/or resources.

When providing instruction related to a controversial issue, the following guidelines shall apply:

1. Issue is related to the instructional goals of the course of study, age, and maturity level of the students.
2. In the classroom, District staff act on behalf of the District and are expected to follow the adopted curriculum. Instruction shall be presented in a balanced manner, addressing all sides of the issue without bias or prejudice and without promoting any particular point of view.
3. In leading or guiding discussions about controversial issues, District staff shall not advocate their personal opinion or viewpoint. This principle includes not displaying items in the classroom setting that reflect personal opinions or viewpoints of District staff on controversial issues of politics, religion, social movements, and personal ethics. The display of any item in workspaces is considered District speech and may be regulated in accordance with Board Policy No. 4119.25, 4219.25, 4319.25.

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4. Students shall be informed of conduct expected during instruction and the importance of being courteous and respectful of the opinions of others.
5. Adequate factual information shall be provided to help students objectively analyze and evaluate the issue and draw their own conclusions.
6. The subject matter of the instruction shall not otherwise be prohibited by state or federal laws.

No controversial issue may be addressed which, in the Board's determination, contains any matter promoting a discriminatory bias or reflecting adversely upon persons because of bases or status protected by law. (Education Code 51500, 51501, 60044)

Adopted: 12/12/1979

Reviewed: 05/01/2007, 09/07/2008, 02/09/2011

Amended: 11/06/1991, 02/11/2004, 11/18/2020 (BP 3205 renumbered as BP 6144), 10/19/2022

EDUCATION CODE

220 Prohibition of discrimination

48950 Freedom of speech

51240 Excuse from health instruction due to religious beliefs

51500 Prohibited instruction or activity

51501 Prohibited means of instruction

51510 Prohibited study or supplemental materials

51511 Religious matters properly included in courses of study

51513 Materials containing questions about beliefs or practices

51530 Prohibition and definition regarding advocating or teaching communism with intent to indoctrinate

51930-51939 California Healthy Youth Act; comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention education

60002 Selection of instructional materials

60040 Portrayal of cultural and racial diversity

60044 Prohibited instructional materials

60045 Criteria for instructional materials

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