

Controversial Issues**

1. Classroom teachers who are planning discussions involving government, religion, human physiology, morals, race relations or other areas that may create controversy, should first review the proposed lesson plans with a school administrator, who will assist the teacher in clarifying the approach to be used. Care should be taken to present such topics in a well-prepared, meaningful and appropriate manner, with tact, decorum and good taste.
2. Controversial issues shall be addressed as they arise in the classroom and shall not be avoided nor raised simply because the issue is of a controversial nature. The teacher is expected to remain in control of the discussion at all times and to ensure that the issues are related to the curriculum and are appropriate to the students' intellectual and emotional maturity.
3. The teacher's role in discussions of controversial issues is that of an impartial guide, aiding students in the process of formulating their decisions by providing relevant materials and maintaining an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice. The teacher has an obligation to make students aware of the extent to which they must consider the norms and expectations of their community and society.
4. Teachers are obligated to relate the facts from both sides of an issue, and should clearly distinguish when they are stating a personal opinion. Teachers may not present their personal positions as the only acceptable opinion on a particular issue, or shall they seek to bring about a single conclusion to which all students must subscribe.
5. The teacher shall not suppress a student's view on an issue as long as the expression is not derogatory, malicious or abusive of other views. However, the teacher shall not permit one student's view to dominate the discussion.
6. The teacher should provide suggested resource materials or sources of information on all different aspects of the issue, if possible, so that students may pursue individual reading and study and reach individual conclusions on controversial issues.
7. The same process outlined in IIA-AR for the challenge of instructional materials may be used by students, parents, staff members or other citizens who register complaints about classroom discussions of controversial issues. Any such complaint shall first be discussed informally by the teacher and complainant, with the principal present, if desired.
8. If a student objects on ethical grounds to reading, studying or discussing any instructional materials or controversial issues the process outlined in 7. will be followed. If objection is deemed legitimate by the teacher and/or principal, the teacher shall apply alternate material or assignments without prejudice to the student.