

**Academic Freedom and Controversial Issues****Academic Freedom**

The Board encourages and supports the concept of academic freedom, recognizing it as a necessary condition to aid in maintaining an environment conducive to learning and the free exchange of ideas and information.

In the study or discussion of controversial issues or materials, however, the Board directs the teaching staff to consider the following criteria:

1. Relative maturity of students;
2. District philosophy of education;
3. Community standards, morals and values;
4. Necessity for a balanced presentation; and,
5. Necessity to seek prior Board counsel and guidance in such matters.

**Controversial Issues**

The District shall offer courses of study that will afford learning experiences appropriate to the level of student understanding. The instructional program shall respect the right of students to face issues, to have free access to information, to study under teachers in situations free from prejudice, and to form, hold, and express their own opinions without personal prejudice or discrimination.

Teachers shall guide discussions and procedures with thoroughness and objectivity to acquaint students with the need to recognize opposing viewpoints, importance of fact, value of good judgment, and the virtue of respect for conflicting opinions.

Legal Reference: Article X Sec.8  
§ 20-3-324 (16) (17), MCA  
10.55.701 ARM

Montana Constitution  
Powers and duties  
Accreditation

Policy History:  
Adopted on: 2008-09  
Revised on: 09-2018