

## CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT REGULATION

6124.2

### CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

#### I. Definition

A “controversial issue” is defined as any problem that society is in the process of debating and for which more than one solution may be offered and supported by individuals or any groups of people. The teaching or indoctrination of religious or sectarian beliefs in public schools is specifically prohibited in the State of Nevada. Therefore, although the teaching of sectarian beliefs could be considered a “controversial issue” as defined in this regulation, such teaching is not permitted in the Clark County School District (Policy and Administrative Regulation 6113.2).

#### II. In order to provide the necessary guidelines from which teachers and principals can plan their instructional programs and effectively and systematically handle controversial issues, the following statements are presented:

- A. The District recognizes that a large part of the curriculum is made up of established truths and values and elements of our American heritage and traditions; however, the District also recognizes that gradual social change is inevitable and that such change involves controversial issues.
- B. The District believes that sober consideration of such controversial issues is a responsibility of the public schools, since respect for facts and an impartial search for truth are inherent in our American democratic society.
- C. The District shall provide for objective study of controversial issues in a classroom.
- D. The professional teacher has not only the personal but also the professional responsibility to uphold, protect, and defend the fundamental freedoms of our American democratic society. In the fulfillment of this responsibility, the teacher has a right to protection from the pressures that would demand any withholding of important facts.
- E. The professional teacher as an impartial moderator and guide shall not attempt, either directly or indirectly, to limit or control the judgment of students on such controversial issues. Individually, however, the right to express a personal opinion is provided insofar as the teacher indicates that it is a personal opinion, and it should not necessarily influence the students’ opinions or decisions.

- F. All questions and issues used for classroom discussion or investigation should come within the range of the knowledge, maturity, and competence of students. Problems and issues thus selected for discussion and investigation should be significant and of interest to students and add to the curriculum area in which they are being discussed.
- G. The issues studied should be allotted only that amount of time needed for a satisfactory study by the class. There should be an equitable amount of materials available on both sides of the issue with complete and objective consideration given to the differing points of view and information related to the issues.
- H. No group or individual may claim the right to present arguments for or against any issue under study directly to students or to the class without authorization. The teacher, with the approval of the principal or other designated school administrator, may invite representatives of different points of view to appear before the class to discuss their opinions.
- I. The teacher's professional judgment shall be a significant factor in the determination of what shall be the instructional program in any classroom. In fulfilling this responsibility and in exercising this professional judgment, the teacher shall be constantly aware of the need to inform the school principal or other designated school administrator of potentially controversial issues or activities before they occur or certainly as they occur.
- J. Whenever there are disagreements or misunderstandings, either from the public or among the professional staff, concerning the proper handling of any controversial issue, the school principal may request the party or parties involved to complete a "Request for Review of Educational Materials or Procedures" stating their position and requesting a review of the matter.
- K. Whenever a school desires to deviate from the District's established curriculum, the principal shall follow the procedures established for experimental programs. In such cases it is the principal's responsibility to involve the community in the initiation of such programs and to keep the community informed of progress and results. The ultimate prerogative of involving students in pilot programs shall remain with the parent.

Legal Reference:	NRS Chapter 388 System of Public Instruction, Section 150
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