

DELANCO TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Controversial Issues

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

The Board of Education believes that the consideration of controversial issues has a legitimate place in the instructional program of the schools. Properly introduced and conducted, the consideration of such issues can help pupils 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 likely to arouse both support and opposition in the community. The Board will permit the introduction and proper educational use of controversial issues provided that their use in the instructional program is related to the instructional goals of the course of study and level of maturity of the pupils. The discussion of controversial issues must not tend to indoctrinate pupils or persuade them to a particular point of view. Instead, teachers must encourage fair presentation and open-mindedness and the free exchange of ideas in a spirit of scholarly inquiry, drawing upon information and insights from the widest feasible range of resources.

When controversial issues have not been specified in the curriculum guide, the Board will permit the instructional use of only those issues which have been approved in advance by the principal. The discussion of controversial issues in the classroom shall be conducted in an unprejudiced and dispassionate manner and shall not disrupt the educational process. In the discussion of any issue, a teacher may express a personal opinion, but shall identify it as such, and must not express such an opinion for the purpose of persuading pupils to his or her point of view.

The Superintendent shall assist teaching staff members in developing an alertness to the occurrence of controversial issues in the context of the curriculum and developing techniques for the management of controversial issues that do not stifle a spirit of free inquiry.

N.J.S.A. 18A:33-1, 18A:34-1
Adopted: September 10 , 1986