

## CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

### Background

The Division believes that in providing students with the opportunity to deal with controversial issues it can fulfill its commitment to students to provide relevant, challenging, life-based learning opportunities. Therefore the Division approves the exploration of controversial issues in its classrooms in a structured way to develop students' capacities to think clearly, to reason logically, to open-mindedly and respectfully examine different points of view, and to reach sound judgments.

### Procedures

1. The examination of controversial issues in the classroom should develop from a topic being studied as a part of the course of studies as authorized by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education.
  - 1.1 Students shall be provided with opportunities to develop skills in selecting and organizing information in order to think clearly, to reason logically, to examine different points of view, and to reach sound conclusions.
  - 1.2 Information regarding controversial issues shall:
    - 1.2.1 Represent alternative points of view subject to the condition that resources used are not restricted by any federal or provincial law;
    - 1.2.2 Appropriately reflect the maturity, capabilities and educational needs of the students;
    - 1.2.3 Reflect the requirements of the course of study as stated in the Provincial Curriculum; and
    - 1.2.4 Reflect local as well as provincial, national and international contexts.
2. Students shall be provided with the opportunity to explore controversial issues in an intellectually and emotionally safe environment.
  - 2.1 No student or students will be ridiculed or embarrassed for positions which they hold on any issue. Teachers and students must be sensitive to the views and rights of others.
3. The treatment of controversial issues in the classroom must take place within the framework of a set of rules developed by the principal and staff.
  - 3.1 The principal, in consultation with the Superintendent of Education and School Community Council shall ensure that school policy is developed regarding:
    - 3.1.1 Identification of controversial issues; and

- 3.1.2 The involvement of students, parents, teachers, administrators and the School Community Council in issues related to the controversial issue to be studied.
  - 3.1.3 Parents or guardians who wish to know more about specific taught content prior to their child receiving that instruction are to be provided the opportunity to meet with the teacher and principal.
- 4. The approval of the teacher's plan by the principal is required regarding the outcomes and/or objectives, the resources and the teaching strategies.
- 5. Students can be excused from class attendance during the study of controversial issues with the written consent of his or her parent or guardian,

Legal Reference: Section 85, 87,109, 175, 176, 182, 184, Education Act  
Saskatchewan Human Rights Code  
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

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