

## COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS AND NORMS: CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

### Background

The Division approves the exploration and deconstruction of various perspectives in its classrooms in a structured way to develop students' capacities to think clearly, to reason logically, to respectfully examine different points of view with an open mind, and to reach sound judgments. Saskatchewan students are from diverse families and backgrounds and bring with them a range of values and ideas about various topics. Depending upon community perceptions and norms, some topics such as human sexuality, theory of evolution, tragic death and suicide, abuse in relationships, addictions, and differing ways of knowing may be perceived as controversial for some people while accepted without question by others.

### Procedures

1. The examination of all concepts in provincial curriculum should be addressed in ways for building on what is already known, by initiating and engaging in contextual thinking, creative thinking, and critical reasoning through cultural, experiential, and inquiry processes.
  - 1.1 Students shall be provided with opportunities to self-reflect and purposefully seek, evaluate, and use historical, contemporary, and evolving information.
  - 1.2 Information regarding controversial issues shall:
    - 1.2.1 Investigation of community perceptions and norms regarding the issues;
    - 1.2.2 Consider the maturity, capabilities and educational needs of the students;
    - 1.2.3 Understand the intent of the learning outcomes as stated in provincial curricula; and,
    - 1.2.4 Reflect local as well as provincial, national, and international context.
2. Students shall be provided with the opportunity to explore controversial issues in intellectually and emotionally safe learning environments.
  - 2.1 No student or students will be ridiculed or embarrassed for positions which they hold on any issue. Views that are discriminatory towards identities that are protected in the human rights legislation will be addressed.
3. Student learning must take place within the instructional expectations developed by the principal and staff.

- 3.1 The principal, in consultation with the Superintendent of School Operations and School Community Council shall ensure that school protocols reflect division procedure regarding:
  - 3.1.1 Response to community perceptions;
  - 3.1.2 Identification of controversial issues;
  - 3.1.3 Involvement of students, parents, teachers, administrators and the School Community Council in issues related to the community perception; and,
  - 3.1.4 Parents or guardians who wish to know more about provincial curriculum and the specifics of what is part of the teaching and learning should meet with the teacher and principal.
4. The approval of the teacher's planning by the principal is required regarding the outcomes, the resources and the teaching strategies.
5. The school will use the [letter provided by the school division](#) to inform parents about instruction of the outcomes listed below (commencement/completion dates, outcomes, scope and sequence of content, resources, and activities) and give them the opportunity to ask questions, get clarification, and express concerns.
  - Grade 5 USC5.2
    - Understand the responsibilities associated with the physical, social, spiritual, and emotional changes of puberty.
  - Grade 8 USC8.7
    - Assess the social, cultural, and environmental influences on and supports for sexual health knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and decisions.
  - Grade 9 USC9.9
    - Develop and demonstrate the personal insight, motivation, and skills necessary to enhance and promote sexual health and avoid health-compromising sexual attitudes and behaviours.
  - Life Transitions 20, 30 Module 22: Sexual Health (Optional)
6. Please see AP 208 Appendix Parental Request for Exemption From Instruction

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

Updated: March 2017, February 2022, August 2023