

Timberlane Regional School District	Policy Code: IMB
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CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Controversial issues arising from classroom situations and subject matter may be discussed and explored in the classrooms throughout the school district.

An open-minded, rational examination of issues is essential if students are to be prepared to assume their roles as participating members of a democratic society. We cannot avoid conflict in public issues. Students, therefore, must be provided with experience in analyzing issues, in the selection of alternatives, and in gathering evidence appropriate to the testing of these alternatives.

Choices must always be made regarding the appropriateness of issues to be considered. In theory, we subscribe to the belief that all public issues should be open for study and discussion in the school. From the wide range of these issues, however, a solution must be made as to which issues are most relevant for consideration in any particular classroom. In the final analysis, the teacher will bear primary responsibility for this determination in terms of the best interest of the students involved, always keeping in mind the overall District policy.

Issues should be consistent with the experience and the maturity level of the student and reflect real concerns to him or her. The issue should be one which is persistent in society and not merely transitory, and the manner of consideration of the issue should contribute to the development of the student's skill in decision making. It must be assured that the teacher, by virtue of his/her background and personal point of view can appropriately handle controversial issues and is able to produce adequate materials for study.

The classroom should not be used to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views or selfish propaganda of any group and there should be an insistence that democratic procedures be conformed within the discussion of controversial issues.

The classroom cannot be used by private individuals or groups as an exclusive forum for their own special interests, but neither shall students and teachers be deprived of the right to hear responsible presentations on all sides of relevant issues.