

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

The County Board of Education believes that students should have opportunities to discuss controversial issues that have political, social or economic significance and that students are mature enough to investigate and address such issues. The study of a controversial issue should help students learn how to gather and organize pertinent facts, discriminate between fact and fiction, draw intelligent conclusions and respect the opinions of others.

The County Board expects teachers to exercise caution and discretion when deciding whether or not a particular issue is suitable for study or discussion in any particular class. Teachers should not spend class time on any topic that they feel is not suitable for the class and is not related to the established course of study.

The County Board also expects teachers to ensure that all sides of a controversial issue are impartially presented, with adequate and appropriate factual information. Without promoting any partisan point of view, the teacher should help students separate fact from opinion and warn them against drawing conclusions from insufficient data. The teacher shall not suppress any student's view on the issue, provided it is not presented in a manner which is malicious or abusive toward others.

Teachers sponsoring guest speakers shall ask them not to use their positions or influence on students to forward their own religious, political, economic or social views. Teachers are responsible for taking active steps to neutralize any bias presented by a guest speaker.

*Legal Reference:**EDUCATION CODE*

35160.5 Requirement for policies and procedures for parent complaints re employees

51500 Prohibited instruction or activity

51510 Prohibited study or supplemental materials

51511 Religious matters properly included in courses of study

51530 Prohibition and definition re advocating or teaching communism with intent to indoctrinate

51550 Sex education courses

60040 Portrayal of cultural and racial diversity

60044 Prohibited instructional materials

60045 Required to be accurate, objective, current, and suited to needs and comprehension at respective grade levels