

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Public education in a pluralistic society must strive to present, as objectively as possible, varied events, activities, and perceptions reflected in history, literature, and other sources of humanity's thought and expression. A major goal of education in a free society is to develop persons who can think critically, understand their culture, live compassionately with others, make sound decisions, and live with the consequences of their judgment. Because points of view differ and biases exist, students must have access to materials which express this diversity of perspective.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to make certain that such access to materials presenting various sides of an issue is available. Teachers must take into account the age and relative maturity of their students and the need for guidance and help in studying issues and arriving at balanced views.

The right of teachers to teach certain subjects or to employ certain teaching methods may be restricted by the Board of Education where such subject or methods are deemed by the Board and/or district administrators to be educationally unsound, inappropriate for the age or majority level of the students, or irrelevant to any valid educational objective. All instruction must conform to common core and/or state academic content standards and the District's adopted courses of study. The right to free speech protected by the First Amendment does not extend to the in-class curricular speech of teachers made pursuant to their official duties. Accordingly, teacher speech in the classroom may be subject to reasonable controls as to appropriateness.

[Adoption date: August 6, 1991]

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CROSS REF.: AC, Nondiscrimination
EDE, Computer/Online Services (Acceptable Use and Internet Safety)
INB, Teaching About Controversial Issues
JB, Equal Educational Opportunities

CONTRACT REF.: Teachers' Negotiated Agreement