

Policy 6144: Controversial Issues

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 08/11/1993 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 08/11/1993

The Governing Board believes that students should have opportunities to discuss controversial issues which have political, social, or economic significance and which the students are mature enough to investigate and address. 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 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 which they feel is not suitable for the class or related to the established course of study.

The 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 as long as its expression is not malicious or abusive toward others.

Teachers sponsoring guest speakers shall either ask them not to use their position or influence on students to forward their own religious, political, economic, or social views or shall take active steps to neutralize whatever bias has been presented.

When required by law, and reasonable to do so, parents/guardians shall be notified prior to instruction that they may request in writing that their child be excused from the instruction. Students whose parents/guardians decline such instruction may be offered an alternative activity of similar educational value.

Policy Reference Disclaimer:

These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the Governing Board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State	Description
Ed. Code 220	Prohibition of discrimination
Ed. Code 48950	Speech and other communication
Ed. Code 51240	Excuse from instruction due to religious beliefs
Ed. Code 51500	Prohibited instruction or activity
Ed. Code 51510	Prohibited study or supplemental materials
Ed. Code 51511	Religious matters properly included in courses of study
Ed. Code 51513	Personal beliefs

Ed. Code 51530	Advocacy or teaching of communism
Ed. Code 51930-51939	California Healthy Youth Act
Ed. Code 60040	Selection of instructional materials
Ed. Code 60044	Prohibited instructional materials
Ed. Code 60045	Criteria for instructional materials
Management Resources	Description
Court Decision	Garcetti v. Ceballos (2006) 547 U.S. 410
Court Decision	Mayer v. Monroe County Community School Corporation (2007) 474 F.3d 477 (7th Cir.)
Court Decision	Johnson v. Poway Unified School District (2011) 658 F.3d 954
Website	CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services

Cross References

Code	Description
0410	Nondiscrimination In District Programs And Activities
1312.1	Complaints Concerning District Employees
1312.1	Complaints Concerning District Employees
1312.1-E PDF(1)	Complaints Concerning District Employees
1312.2	Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials
1312.2	Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials
1312.2-E PDF(1)	Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials - Complaints Concerning Instructional Material
1325	Advertising And Promotion
4119.25	Political Activities Of Employees
4119.25	Political Activities Of Employees
4219.25	Political Activities Of Employees
4219.25	Political Activities Of Employees
4319.25	Political Activities Of Employees
4319.25	Political Activities Of Employees
5022	Student And Family Privacy Rights
5022	Student And Family Privacy Rights
5121	Grades/Evaluation Of Student Achievement
5121	Grades/Evaluation Of Student Achievement
5131	Conduct

5131.2	<u>Bullying</u>
5131.2	<u>Bullying</u>
5137	<u>Positive School Climate</u>
5145.2	<u>Freedom Of Speech/Expression</u>
5145.2	<u>Freedom Of Speech/Expression</u>
5145.3	<u>Nondiscrimination/Harassment</u>
5145.3	<u>Nondiscrimination/Harassment</u>
5145.9	<u>Hate-Motivated Behavior</u>
6115	<u>Ceremonies And Observances</u>
6115	<u>Ceremonies And Observances</u>
6141	<u>Curriculum Development And Evaluation</u>
6141	<u>Curriculum Development And Evaluation</u>
6141.2	<u>Recognition Of Religious Beliefs And Customs</u>
6141.2	<u>Recognition Of Religious Beliefs And Customs</u>
6142.1	<u>Sexual Health And HIV/AIDS Prevention Instruction</u>
6143	<u>Courses Of Study</u>
6143	<u>Courses Of Study</u>
6145.5	<u>Student Organizations And Equal Access</u>
6145.5	<u>Student Organizations And Equal Access</u>
6145.5-E PDF(1)	<u>Student Organizations And Equal Access</u>
6161.1	<u>Selection And Evaluation Of Instructional Materials</u>
6161.1	<u>Selection And Evaluation Of Instructional Materials</u>
6161.1-E PDF(1)	<u>Selection And Evaluation Of Instructional Materials</u>
6161.11	<u>Supplementary Instructional Materials</u>
6161.11	<u>Supplementary Instructional Materials</u>
6163.1	<u>Library Media Centers</u>