

Paso Robles Joint USD

Board Policy

Academic Freedom/Controversial Issues

BP 6144

Instruction

The Governing Board believes that in a democratic society, it is necessary to encourage open inquiry and the free examination of ideas that will allow our society to grow and develop. Academic freedom protects the people in their right to hear, to read, to view, to discuss, and to reach judgement according to individual conscience. Academic freedom is defined as the right and responsibility to study, investigate, present, interpret, and discuss all the relevant facts and ideas within a field of study.

The Board is vested with broad discretion in adopting curriculum and approving or providing for the approval of instructional materials and methods. The Board's authority derives from its accountability and its role in transmitting community values to students. In exercising that authority, the Board accepts as one of its major responsibilities, the protection of academic freedom for students, teachers, and others directly concerned with our school program(s). The role of the Board is to provide all possible support, within the law, to teachers, administrators, students, and other staff members who are making use of their abilities and resources to maintain a climate of intellectual freedom in furtherance of the curriculum.

Basis for judgement in matters pertaining to academic freedom within the district shall be:

- * The welfare of students, individually and collectively, in the present and for the future.
- * The social, emotional, physical, and intellectual maturity of students.
- * The security and dignity of students, teachers, administrators, and other employees.
- * The moral and civic standards of our democratic society.
- * The relevance to the adopted curriculum.
- * The informative, literary and/or general cultural value which may assist students in their growth and development in our democracy.
- * The consideration of policy statements regarding academic freedom available from organizations representing teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, Board members, and other citizens with special interest in public education.

Controversial Issues

The Board believes it is the prime responsibility of schools to help students assume the responsibilities of democratic citizenship. To do this, our educational community must impart the skills needed for intelligent study and orderly resolution of the problems inherent in a democratic society. Students need to study issues upon which there is disagreement and to recognize that differing viewpoints are valuable and normal.

The study of controversial issues should develop the following skills and attitudes:

- * The recognition that reasonable compromise is often an important part of the democratic decision-making process.
- * The desire and ability to use rational methods in researching and considering significant issues.
- * The desire and ability to study relevant problems and to make intelligent choices among alternatives.
- * The skill of analyzing and evaluating sources of information - recognizing propaganda, half-truths, and bias.
- * The need to respect the opinions of others

(cf. 1312.2 - Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials and Controversial Issues)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

51500-51540 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

51933 Sex education courses

60040 Portrayal of cultural and racial diversity

60044 Prohibited instructional materials

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

Policy PASO ROBLES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

adopted: July 14, 1998 Paso Robles, California