

SCOTLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION Board Policy

Instruction

Controversial Issues

Reacting to Political Action and Issues

It is the policy of the Scotland Elementary School that the Superintendent shall ensure to the greatest extent possible that school curricula and school activities remain clear of overt political action and politization from any group or party seeking to force one point of view or the other on the school system.

Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Scotland Elementary School to ensure that a fair and balanced discussion be held in conjunction with politically-charged issues. When timing does not permit the organization and implementation of fair and balanced discussion, the Scotland Elementary School, acting through the principal in consultation with the superintendent, may:

1. Provide parental choice for their child to opt out of participation of an event related to a politically-charged issue, if time and logistics permit, and to proceed with the event. The teacher will then assign the student alternate activities of equal merit. Although individuals may be excused from the activity, the continuation of the activity by class, school or district shall not be restricted until final disposition has been made in accordance with this policy, or
2. Choose to pass up on the event and the related discussion/issue altogether.

A controversial issue, for purposes of this policy, is a topic on which opposing points of view have been promulgated by responsible opinion, and/or one that is likely to arouse both support and opposition in the community.

- Properly introduced and conducted, the consideration of controversial issues can help students learn to identify important issues, explore fully and fairly all sides of an issue, weigh carefully the values and factors involved, and develop techniques for formulating and evaluating positions.
- The Board will permit the introduction and proper educational use of controversial issues provided that their use in the educational program:
 - a. is related to the instructional goals of the course of study and level of maturity of the students;
 - b. does not tend to indoctrinate or persuade students to a particular point of view;
 - c. encourages open-mindedness and is conducted in a spirit of scholarly inquiry.
- In instances where a controversial issue arises on an unanticipated basis during the course of a class discussion, as the result of a student's question, or in the coverage of current events, and where that issue is neither directly related to the course content nor specified

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Reacting to Political Action and Issues (continued)

as part of the curriculum, the teacher may deal with the issue on a limited basis, recognizing the existence of legitimate student interest and devoting sufficient time to the question to assure balanced, impartial coverage.

- (cf. 1311.1 - Political Activities/Functions of School Employees)
- (cf. 1311.2 - Political Activities in the Schools/On School Property)
- (cf. 1312 - Public Complaints)
- (cf. 6140 - Curriculum)
- (cf. 6144 - Controversial Issues)
- (cf. 6144.3 - Controversial Speakers)