

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

The Albemarle County School Board accepts training for effective citizenship as one of the major purposes of education. This includes, in part, recognizing that many important areas of study involve issues on which differing positions are held by individuals or groups.

In considering such issues, it shall be the purpose of the Albemarle County Public Schools to allow the student to do the following:

1. Study any controversial issue which has political, economic, or social significance and which is within the range, knowledge, maturity and competence of the students, and which does not conflict with State Board of Education regulations and the Albemarle County School Board Policies and regulations.
2. Provide resources containing a wide range of views on controversial issues so that students may develop the practice of critical reading and thinking.
3. ~~Study under competent instruction~~ Conduct Research in an atmosphere of freedom from bias and prejudice.
4. Form and express opinions on ~~controversial~~ assigned issues without jeopardizing his/her position with the school.

The role of the teacher in the presentation of ~~controversial~~ assigned issues is vitally important. All sides of the issue should be given the students in a ~~balanced~~ dispassionate manner. The goal is for the students to be taught to think clearly on all matters of importance, and to make their own decisions in the light of all the material that has been presented or can be secured on the issues. Indoctrination is not a policy of the Albemarle County Public Schools.

Although the instructional program of the school division includes many facets of the political party system in the United States, the School Board does not sanction as a part of the school program the involvement of students in activities that imply school endorsement of an individual political party or candidate. Individual class assignments and volunteer work involving students in political activities are permissible.

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 Reviewed: July 12, 1999; December 9, 2004
