

Administrative Procedure 205

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Background

Studying controversial issues is an integral part of student learning and is important in preparing students to participate responsibly in a democratic and pluralistic society.

Such study provides students opportunities to develop the ability to think critically, to reason logically, to open-mindedly and respectfully examine different points of view and to make sound judgments.

Procedures

1. Each Principal, in consultation with the staff and Parent Advisory Council, is to establish procedures for dealing with controversial issues.
2. School procedures shall:
 - 2.1 Promote that the sensitivity of the community be considered by having staff, students and parents involved in identifying controversial issues.
 - 2.2 Ensure information regarding controversial materials represent alternative points of view, subject to the condition that information presented is not restricted by any federal or provincial law.
 - 2.3 Reflect the maturity, capabilities, and educational needs of the students.
 - 2.4 Meet the requirements of provincially prescribed and approved courses, programs of study and education programs.
 - 2.5 Reflect the neighbourhood and community in which the school is located, as well as provincial, national and international contexts.
 - 2.6 Any controversial materials that represent alternative points of view shall not support or contain racist viewpoints and perspectives.
3. Teachers, students and others participating in studies or discussions of controversial issues shall exercise sensitivity to minimize the possibility that students and others are ridiculed, embarrassed or intimidated for positions they hold on controversial issues.
4. Principals shall advise the Superintendent when an issue becomes controversial in a school.
5. Schools play a supportive role to parents in the areas of values and moral development and school staff shall handle parental decisions in regard to controversial issues with respect and sensitivity.

Reference: Sections 7, 8, 17, 20, 22, 65, 76, 85 School Act
Civil Rights Protection Act
Human Rights Code
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Evaluating, Selecting, and Managing Learning Resources: A Guide (2002)
Revised: May 31, 2022