

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Teachers shall abide by the curriculum standards adopted by the Board. They shall only select issues for study that contribute to the attainment of course objectives, are consistent with state standards and the district’s mission, and are appropriate for classroom presentation. Teachers shall determine the appropriateness of a topic based on the following criteria:

1. There are adequate and age-appropriate materials available that will allow students to learn about all sides of an issue.
2. The topic is age-appropriate, considering the emotional, intellectual, and social capacities of the class as a whole.
3. Teachers are equipped personally and academically to present the topic objectively, allowing students to formulate their own opinions.

Controversial Topics

Controversial topics are issues that are often a matter of opinion and are subjects of public dispute, debate, or contention. When a topic is of a controversial nature, teachers shall receive administrative approval prior to presenting it in the classroom.

Teachers may offer an opinion on issues discussed in the classroom provided that the teacher clarifies that the opinion should not be construed as an authoritative answer, that the teacher is speaking on their own—not the district’s—behalf, and encourages students to form their own opinions, stressing that students are free to express their own views without fear of academic reprisal.

Teachers that violate this policy or whose speech compromises the district’s ability to provide a safe and non-disruptive educational environment may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Complementing NDSBA Templates (may contain items not adopted by the Board)

- DEBF, Employee Speech
- GAAA, Curriculum Design & Evaluation
- GBAA, Teaching About Religion