

Sample revised policy to consider.

Personnel – Certified

Academic Freedom

The teacher must be free to think, to express ideas, to select and employ materials and methods of instruction, free from undue pressures of authority, and free to act within the teacher's professional group. Such freedom must be used judiciously and prudently so that it promotes the free exercise of intelligence and student learning.

Academic freedom, not an absolute, must be exercised within the law and the basic ethical responsibilities of the teaching profession. Those responsibilities include:

1. an understanding of our democratic tradition and its methods;
2. a concern for the welfare, growth, maturity, and development of children;
3. the method of scholarship; and
4. application of good taste and judgment in selecting and employing materials and methods of instruction.

Controversial Issues and Academic Freedom

The District will offer courses of study which will afford learning experiences appropriate to levels of student understanding. The instructional program respects the rights of students to face issues, to have free access to information, to study under teachers in situations free from prejudice, and to form, hold, and express their own opinions without personal prejudice or discrimination.

Teachers will guide discussions and procedures with thoroughness and objectivity to acquaint students with the need to recognize various points of view, importance of fact, value of good judgment, and the virtue of respect for conflicting opinions.

The Board encourages and supports the concept of academic freedom, recognizing it as a necessary condition to aid in maintaining an environment conducive to learning and to the free exchange of ideas and information.

In a study of controversial issues or materials, however, the Board directs teaching staff to take into account the following criteria:

- Relative maturity of students;
- District philosophy of education;
- Community standards, morals and values;
- Necessity for a balanced presentation; and
- Necessity to seek administrative counsel and guidance in such matters.

Personnel – Certified

Academic Freedom (continued)

(cf. 1220 – Citizens’ Advisory Committees)

(cf. 1312 – Public Complaints)

(cf. 5145.2 – Freedom of Speech/Expression)

(cf. 6144 – Controversial Issues)

(cf. 6161 – Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

53a-193 through 53a-200

Keyishian v. Board of Regents, 395 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)

Perry v. Sindermann, 408 U.S. 593 (1972)

Pickering v. Board of Education, 391 U.S. 563 (1968)

Sterzing v. Fort Bend Independent School District, 376F. Supp. 657 (S.D. Tex 1972)

Grayned v. City of Rockford, 408 U.S. 104 (1972)

Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15 (1973)

Amendment to U.S. Constitution, Article I

Connecticut Constitution, ARTICLE FIRST, Declaration of Rights, Sections 4, 5

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/8/81)

Policy adopted: