

I-17 CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

The Board recognizes that controversial issues are an inherent part of our democratic tradition and that knowledge and understanding of controversial issues are an indispensable part of education for citizenship. Therefore, professional employees shall have the freedom to deal with controversial issues in the public school curriculum so long as the following guidelines are observed:

- Teachers shall adapt the study of controversial issues to the age, maturity and academic background of pupils.
- Teachers shall place major emphasis on HOW to think rather than WHAT to think.
- Pupils shall have access, insofar as possible, to all materials that are relevant and educationally significant to the issues at hand.
- Pupils shall have the opportunity to express their opinions within the limits of decency, good will and respect for the opinions of others.
- Teachers shall teach pupils the principles and techniques of the scientific method and shall provide opportunities for practice in applying established facts to specific problems.
- Teachers shall seek to develop in pupils the ideals of truth and honesty.
- Teachers shall seek to create an atmosphere in which differences of opinion can be voiced without fear and hostility but with mutual respect for all viewpoints.
- Teachers shall seek to develop in pupils a sense of responsibility for their beliefs, opinions and attitudes and shall encourage pupils to base same on research, tested experience and knowledge as recorded in our cultural heritage.
- Teachers shall encourage the suspension of judgment and conclusions until all relevant and significant facts have been assembled, critically examined and checked for accuracy.
- Teachers shall take a neutral position in the classroom during the discussion of controversial issues.

ADOPTED: May 11, 2004

LEGAL REF: Code of Alabama 16-1-30