

## **FIVE TOWN CSD POLICY**

### **LEARNING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

American academic tradition stresses the free contest of ideas as a vital element both in the development of curriculum and in classroom teaching.

Instruction in critical thinking and civil discourse is incorporated in course offerings at appropriate grade levels.

1. It is the responsibility of the schools to provide for the study of controversial issues.
  - a. The study should be developmentally appropriate.
  - b. The study should be objective and scholarly with an emphasis on facts and critical thinking.
2. In the study of controversial issues, the students have the following rights:
  - a. The right to form and express opinions on controversial issues without thereby jeopardizing relations with the teacher or the school; and
  - b. The right to study under competent instruction in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice.
3. The teacher uses best practice instructional strategies.
  - a. The teacher has assured him/herself that the controversial subject to be discussed belongs within the framework of the curriculum to be covered, that the subject is significant as well as meaningful for the students, and that through the discussion, students will have the opportunity to grow.
  - b. The teacher handles the classroom presentation in ways that encourage critical analysis and perspective taking by students in regard to the information and strives to present a balance among many points of view without negating any historical truths.
  - c. If asked, a teacher can share their beliefs and rationale on a controversial topic, but the teacher does not use the classroom as a personal forum.
  - d. The teacher emphasizes keeping an open mind, basing one's judgment on credible facts, looking closely at facts to evaluate them in terms of the subject under discussion, and being ready to change one's perspective should new facts come into light.

#### **Cross Reference:**

- GBIA – Staff Participation in Political Activities

History:

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