



Policy 0602.20: Teaching Controversial Issues

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/11/1994 | **Last Revised Date:** 08/18/2025 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 08/18/2025

Meridian Technical Charter High School shall offer courses of study that provide learning experiences appropriate to the students' level of understanding. The instructional program shall respect the right 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.

The Charter School affirms that the School, including its employees and students, are to respect the dignity of others and acknowledges the rights of others to express differing opinions and foster and defend intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry, and instruction as well as speech and association rights appropriate for the educational setting.

The Board recognizes the need for teachers to have the freedom to discuss and teach subjects and issues which may be controversial. Such subjects and issues may include but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Politics;
2. Science;
3. Health and sex education; and
4. Values and ethics.

Teachers shall guide discussions and instruction in a thorough and objective way to help students to recognize opposing viewpoints, the importance of fact, the value of good judgment, and the virtue of respect for conflicting opinions.

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

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

1. Relative maturity of students;
2. Charter School philosophy of education;
3. Community standards, morals, and values;
4. The necessity for a balanced presentation; and
5. The necessity to seek prior administrative counsel and guidance in such matters.

As a consequence of its responsibility to guarantee academic freedom to both students and teachers, the Board expects that:

1. All classroom studies will be curriculum-related, objective, and impartial;
2. Teachers will create and maintain an atmosphere of open-mindedness and tolerance, and no one idea or viewpoint should necessarily prevail;
3. Teachers will not attempt, directly or indirectly, to limit or control students' judgment concerning any issue, including but not limited to requiring students to personally affirm, adopt, or adhere that any race is inferior or superior or on inherent responsibilities regarding: sex, race, ethnicity, religion, color or national origin, but will make certain that full and fair consideration is given to the subject and that facts are carefully examined as to their accuracy and interpretation. This shall include not arguing that individuals should be treated adversely on the basis of any of the attributes listed above; and

4. No distinction or classification of students shall be made on account of race or color, other than as required for collection or reporting of demographic data required by public schools.

To this end:

- When speakers are to be used, the Executive Director or designee must always give approval as outlined in the teacher handbook.
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1. The teacher shall be free to choose supplemental materials to support and enhance the regular classroom curriculum except in sex education instruction. To encourage the free flow of information and enhance student creativity, unplanned issues may be brought up in the classroom and briefly discussed.
2. The school shall provide for parents/guardians to have their child excused from a topic which may be contrary to their religious or moral values. This shall be done in writing by the parent/guardian and include an explanation of the conflict. The student may also request to be excused if the student personally finds the topic to be contrary to their religious or moral values. The student must explain in writing as to the nature of the conflict. The teacher will provide an alternative assignment if the request is approved by the teacher and Executive Director or designee.

Date of Revision:

07/11/94; 06/12/18 ;09/27/21

Legal Reference: Code of Idaho

33-512

33-1603

Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators

West Ada School District Policies:

100.1

203.3

403.71

403.73

403.80

502.70

502.90

602.40
