

APPENDIX IV

Teaching About Controversial Issues

Missoula County Public Schools Board Policy

INSTRUCTION

2330

Academic Freedom

The Board recognizes and supports Academic Freedom as necessary for an environment conducive to the free exchange of ideas and learning.

Academic Freedom is the view that if teachers are to promote the growth of knowledge, they require the freedom to teach and conduct inquiry without fear of sanction or reprisals should they present an unpopular or controversial idea.

Teachers shall help students learn to objectively and respectfully examine differences of opinion, analyze and evaluate facts and their sources, and form their own reasoned judgments about the relative value of competing perspectives.

The Board directs the teaching staff to:

- Refrain from using one's classroom position to promote one's own ideology or any partisan point of view.
- Ensure that issues presented pertain to course objectives.
- Provide students opportunities to develop critical thinking: that is the ability to detect propaganda and to distinguish between fact, opinion and misinformation.
- Respect each student's right to form, choose, hold and/or change an opinion or belief.
- Create an environment in which students are free to form judgments independently.

Any person may file complaints pursuant to this policy through Board Policy 4310P, the uniform grievance procedure.

This policy may not be used to challenge educational materials themselves. Please see:

BP 2313 Dealing with Challenged Educational Resources

BP 2313P Procedure for Dealing with Challenged Educational Resources

Legal Reference: Article X, Sec. 8, Montana Constitution - School district trustees
§ 20-3-324(16) and (17), MCA Powers and duties

Policy History:

Adopted on: January 14, 2003

Revision presented to PN&P Committee on March 25, 2009

Approved on first reading: May 12, 2009

Posted for public comment until: July 22, 2009

Adopted on second reading: August 11, 2009