



INSTRUCTION: Curriculum

Teaching of Controversial Issues

I. Philosophy

- A. The Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board) recognizes that the teaching of controversial issues represents an integral part of the curriculum when used to enhance and support the instructional program.
- B. The Board believes that the study and discussion of controversial issues have an important role for education in a free society. Students' Learning is enhanced by examining evidence, facts, and differing viewpoints through the exercise of freedom of thought. It is the responsibility of Baltimore County Public Schools to develop students' abilities to think reflectively and responsibly based upon opposing points of view and multiple perspectives.

II. Definition

Controversial issue – A problem, subject, or question about which there are significant differences of opinion, no simple resolutions, and for which related discussion may create strong feelings among people.

III. Standards

A controversial issue may be considered for classroom instruction or discussion when the following criteria are met:

- A. The issue is related to the instructional goals of the course of study and level of maturity of the students.
- B. The controversial issue is presented in an impartial and objective manner and in an atmosphere that is free from bias and prejudice.
- C. The controversial issue presented encourages open discussion and a respect for conflicting beliefs and opinions.

IV. Implementation

The Board directs the Superintendent to implement this policy.

Legal References: COMAR 13A.04.04, *Religious Education*
COMAR 13A.04.05, *Education that is Multicultural*
COMAR 13A.04.08, *Program in Social Studies*
COMAR 13A.04.09, *Program in Science*
COMAR 13A.04.14, *Program in English Language Arts*
COMAR 13A.04.18, *Program in Comprehensive Health Education*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 5600, *Students' Rights and Responsibilities*
Board of Education Policy 6000, *Curriculum and Instruction*
Board of Education Policy 6002, *Selection of Instructional Materials*
Board of Education Policy 6100, *Curriculum*

POLICY
Adopted: 09/25/69
Revised: 07/09/13

Board of Education of Baltimore County