

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The Board of Education recognizes the right of a teacher to discuss social, economic, or political problems as well as the right of a student to discuss the same and hold any belief without interference from the teacher.

The Board believes, however, that freedom carries with it responsibility. Academic freedom also carries with it academic responsibility that is determined by the basic ideals, goals, and institutions of the local community as they are expressed in the goals and objectives of the school system. The teacher's responsibility should be to show objectivity to see that various sides of controversial issues are given. To carry out this responsibility a teacher should be well informed in the areas being studied.

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, factual, objective, and impartial;
2. Teachers will create and maintain an atmosphere of open-mindedness and tolerance;
3. Teachers will not attempt, directly or indirectly, to limit or control students' judgment concerning any issue, 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.

Academic freedom is not absolute. It must be exercised within the law and the basic ethical responsibilities of the teaching profession. Those responsibilities include:

1. An understanding of our democratic tradition and its methods;
2. A concern for the welfare, growth, maturity, and development of children;
3. The method of scholarship; and
4. Application of good taste and judgment in selecting and employing materials and methods of instruction.

Freedom of expression, as defined by federal and state law and by Board policy, will be guaranteed to teachers to create a classroom atmosphere that allows students to raise questions dealing with critical issues.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM (continued)

The teacher is responsible for exercising judgment in selecting issues of educational value for discussion.

(cf. 1220 – Citizens’ Advisory Committees)

(cf. 1312 – Public Complaints)

(cf. 5145.2 – Freedom of Speech/Expression)

(cf. 6144 – Controversial Issues)

(cf. 6161 – Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-193 through 53a-200

Keyishian v. Board of Regents, 395 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)

Perry v. Sindermann, 408 U.S. 593 (1972)

Pickering v. Board of Education, 391 U.S. 563 (1968)

Sterzing v. Fort Bend Independent School District, 376F. Supp. 657 (S.D. Tex 1972)

Grayned v. City of Rockford, 408 U.S. 104 (1972)

Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15 (1973)

Amendment to U.S. Constitution, Article I

Connecticut Constitution, ARTICLE FIRST, Declaration of Rights, Sections 4, 5

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/8/81)