

2240 CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

To assure freedom of inquiry to both pupils and teachers, the following principles are presented as a means of safe guarding the rights of pupils and teachers in the search for truth:

- A. As one of its essentials, a republic assumes intelligence, actual or potential, in every person. As a republic requires intelligence, so its perfecting depends upon open-mindedness and critical thinking. The processes of inquiry and investigation are involved in the right of the individual to participate in decisions on matters which affect him/her. If there is to be open competition of ideas and values, there must be a wide dissemination of knowledge and opportunity for independent value judgments within any community.
- B. The school is but one aspect of the total community. Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and friends influence pupils attending school, and often segments of the public unite to promote their special interests by exerting pressures on the school. In view of this, pupils may be confronted with conflicts or opinion which may necessitate their deciding what to think or believe or do. A decision becomes controversial and of concern to the community whenever there is a significant difference of opinion as to which of the possible alternatives should be selected. Unanimity is rare and opinions are subject to change. Hence, every decision is potentially controversial. The determination of the best possible choice among several ways of believing and acting is important to the individual, and frequently to the group as well. It is essential that pupils be taught to distinguish fact from opinion, proof from allegation, and logical substance from assertion.
- C. In the study of controversial issues, indoctrination shall not be the purpose; rather, the purpose shall be to have the pupil see as fully as possible all sides of the question or issue.

All pupils have four rights which should be recognized in connection with the study of controversial issues:

- 1. The right to study any controversial issue which has political, economic, social, or artistic significance, and concerning which at maturity, the pupil could begin to have an opinion.
 - 2. The right of access to all relevant information available.
 - 3. The right to study under competent instruction.
 - 4. The right to form and express an opinion on controversial issues without thereby jeopardizing his/her relations with his/her teacher or his/her school.
- D. Instruction materials not included in the curriculum guides shall be reviewed by the Principal.

Adopted: 03 March 2010

