

Personnel -- Certified

Academic Freedom

The Stafford Board of Education recognizes that academic freedom carries with it academic responsibility which is determined by the framework of the curriculum. For the purpose of this policy, academic freedom is defined as:

1. The opportunity to teach and learn about controversial issues which have economic, political, scientific or social significance.
2. The opportunity to maintain a classroom environment which is conducive to the free exchange and examination of ideas which have economic, psychological, political, scientific or social significance.
3. The opportunity to use materials which are relevant to the levels of ability and maturity of the students and to the purposes of the school system.
4. The right of students and teachers to hold divergent ideas as long as the expression of their dissent is done within the guidelines of debate and appropriate channels.

Controversial Issues and Academic Freedom

The District will offer courses of study which will afford learning experiences appropriate to levels of student understanding. The instructional program respects the rights 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.

Teachers will guide discussions and procedures with thoroughness and objectivity to acquaint students with the need to recognize various points of view, importance of fact, value of good judgment, and the virtue of respect for conflicting opinions.

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

- Relative maturity of students;
- Connection to the curriculum;
- Community standards, morals and values;
- Necessity for a balanced presentation; and
- Necessity to seek administrative counsel and guidance in such matters.

(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: Connecticut General Statutes

[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)

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