

Instruction

MOUNT PLEASANT COTTAGE SCHOOL UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**SUBJECT: CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

- 1) Opportunities should be provided within the instructional program to study controversial issues under competent guidance. At all grade levels these opportunities should be provided students according to their maturity.
- 2) The study of controversial issues should at all times be objective and scholarly with a minimum emphasis on opinion. The teacher must approach the issue in an impartial and unprejudicial manner and must refrain from using the classroom to promote a partisan point of view. All sides to any issue should be presented.
- 3) Planning for the teaching of any controversial issue must be carried out with the acknowledgment of the building administrator as to the topic, materials used, guest speakers, etc. The administrator, being informed, is better able to support the teacher and the instruction regarding concerns, questions, and/or challenges to what is being attempted.

Students and/or parents/guardians are to be informed before beginning a planned unit of study which may be controversial in nature.

The intent of this regulation in no way implies that a spontaneous discussion of an issue can not be held when the occasion arises.

- 4) In discussing controversial issues, the teacher should keep in mind that the classroom is a forum and not a committee for producing resolutions or solutions. The class should feel no responsibility for reaching an agreement.
- 5) The consideration of any issue should require only as much time as is needed for satisfactory study by the class, but sufficient time should be provided to cover the issue adequately.
- 6) It is the teacher's responsibility to bring out the facts concerning controversial questions. He/she has the right to express an opinion, but in doing so it is important that students understand it is his/her opinion and is not to be accepted by them as an authoritative answer.
- 7) Any criticism and/or challenge to the teaching of a controversial issue is to be handled by the Building Principal with the teacher involved. If the complaint includes a challenge to instructional materials, the procedure for requesting reconsideration of library or instructional materials may be initiated.