

### **TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES**

The Gloucester County School Board accepts the idea that training for effective citizenship is one of the major purposes of education. This can be done by recognizing that many important areas of study involve issues on which differing positions are held by individuals or groups.

In considering such issues, it shall be the purpose of the Gloucester County Public Schools to allow study of teacher assigned issues as follows:

- Have free access to all relevant information and materials in the school;
- Conduct research in an atmosphere of freedom from bias and prejudice; and
- Form and express opinions on assigned issues.

The role of the teacher in the presentation of assigned issues is vitally important. All sides of the issue should be given to the students in a dispassionate manner. The goal is for the students to be taught to think clearly on all matters of importance, and to make decisions in the light of all the material that has been presented or can be researched on the issues. Indoctrination is not the intent or purpose of the school division. Although the instructional program of the school includes many facets of the political party system in the United States, the School Board does not approve as a part of the school program the involvement of students in activities that imply school endorsement of an individual political party or candidate.

Training for effective citizenship involves a study of many areas on which opinions differ. Extreme care should be exercised by teachers to ensure that they present facts in an accurate and unbiased manner.

Teachers will acquaint themselves with rules and regulations prescribed by the School Board and State Board of Education and will observe and enforce them.

Principals will make certain that literature of a partisan, sectarian, religious, or controversial nature is not distributed in the elementary schools (K-5). Principals of the middle and high schools, who are approached about the distribution of such literature, should seek the counsel of the Division Superintendent.

**ADOPTED:** July 1, 1991

**REVISED:** July 14, 1992  
September 9, 2008

**LEGAL REFERENCE:** Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, § 22.1-78