

# Brick Township Board of Education District Policy

**Instructional Program  
Controversial Issues**

**Series 6000  
Policy 6144**

Date Adopted: May 29, 2008 | Date Revised: December 17, 2015

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Free discussion of controversial issues-political, economic, and social shall be encouraged in the classroom whenever appropriate for the level of the group.

Issues may be considered controversial which arouse strong reactions, based either on personal conviction or allegiance to a group. School treatment of controversial issues shall be designed to instruct pupils in fair and objective study techniques. The decision on whether a particular controversial issue shall become a matter for school study shall be based on the timelines of the question, the maturity and needs of the pupils and the purposes of the school. Classroom discussions on controversial questions that arise unexpectedly shall be the responsibility of the teacher, who shall provide relevant information on both sides of the question. Such discussions shall be kept free from the assumption that there is one correct answer that should emerge from the discussion and be taught authoritatively to the pupils.

Students shall be taught to recognize each other's right to form an opinion on controversial issues, and shall be assured of their own right to do so without jeopardizing their relationship with the teacher or the school.

The building principal shall have the authority to limit or suspend discussion of controversial issues pending a review if the issue/materials. Instructional materials not previously approved must be reviewed by the principal before being introduced into the classroom.

Guest speakers may be invited with the approval of the principal. In determining speakers to be invited for a class or school wide program, consideration must be given as to whether:

- A. The speaker is controversial for any reason;
- B. The topic is controversial, or sensitive, or known to arouse strong community feelings;
- C. The proposed speaker would gain an advantage by having a "captive" audience.

The Superintendent of Schools will assist the principal in this regard.

## Legal References

- NJSA 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties
- 18A:36-34 Written approval required prior to acquisition of certain survey information from students
- Pupil Protection Rights Amendment - 20 U.S.C. 1232h
- Tenure Hearing of William Lee Johnson, Clearview Regional School District, 79 S.L.D. 267; 79 S.L.D. 273 aff'd with deletion of paragraph
- Garcetti v. Ceballos 2006 U.S. LEXIS 4341(May 2006)