

INSTRUCTION

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES (INCLUDING POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS)

File: INB

Training students for effective citizenship is one major purpose of education. Many important areas of study involve issues about which differing points of view are held by individuals or groups.

In considering such issues, it shall be the purpose of the Charlottesville City Schools to allow the study of teacher-assigned issues in accordance with the following:

1. Ensure free access to all relevant information and materials in the school,
2. Conduct research in an atmosphere of freedom from bias and prejudice, and
3. Form and express opinions on assigned issues respectfully

The role of the teacher in the presentation of an assigned issue is important. All sides of the issue should be shared with students in a dispassionate manner. The goal is for students to be taught to think clearly on all matters of importance, and to make decisions in light of the material that is presented or researched on the issue. Indoctrination is not the intent or purpose of the school division.

Although the instructional program of the school division includes many facets of the political party system in the United States, the Board does not approve of, as a part of the school program, the involvement of students in activities that imply school endorsement of an individual political party or candidate.

No student shall be required to convey or deliver materials that:

1. Advocate the election or defeat of any candidate seeking public office;
2. Advocate the passage or defeat of any referendum question; or,
3. Advocate the passage or defeat of any measure pending before a local school board, local governing body, the General Assembly or Congress.

Although Section 22.1-278.3 prohibits the use of students in delivering or conveying any materials that advocate a political position, the section is not meant to prohibit the discussion of or use of political or issue-oriented materials as part of classroom activities or to prohibit the delivery of information materials.

Adopted: July 16, 1998
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Legal References: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, section 22.1-78.
Code of Virginia, 2000, as amended, section 22.1-78.3.