



**Provo City School District**  
**Policy Series 4000 Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment**

**Policy No. 4331**

## **Controversial Issues and Guest Speakers**

Controversial issues are a part of the district's instructional program when related to subject matter in a given grade level or specific curricular field. Teachers will use professional judgment in determining the appropriateness of the issue to the curriculum and the maturity of the students. Questionable matters shall be referred to the principal for decision. Sensitivity to community norms and the appropriate age level(s) for specific discussions are key considerations to these determinations.

When controversial issues are discussed in a classroom, the teacher shall ensure a balance of biases, divergent points of view, and provide an opportunity for exploration by the students into all sides of the issue.

When the subject matter and/or the guest speaker may be disruptive to the educational environment and/or when guest presenters are invited into the school and/or classroom to express views on subjects deemed controversial, prior approval of the principal is required. If the principal decides the subject matter and/or the guest presenter to be controversial, written communication will be given to the parents/guardians of the students in the class.

Students will be encouraged, after class discussions and independent inquiry, to reach their own conclusions regarding controversial issues.

The superintendent will establish procedures for the approval of the use of a guest speaker. When an invited speaker expresses opinions that are partisan or considered controversial by a large portion of the community, the school will provide for the presentation of opposing views.

If the teacher and the principal believe the guest speaker's topic is controversial, they will develop a plan whereby the issue(s) can be presented in an objective, unbiased manner; and

In the event the speaker's topic is determined to be controversial, the teacher will notify students beforehand that any student who does not wish to attend the presentation may have an alternative assignment.

**Legal References:**

Utah Code 53G-10-202  
Utah Code 53G-10-205  
Utah Code 53G-10-203

**Synopsis:**

Maintaining Constitutional Freedom in the Public Schools  
Waivers of Participation  
Expression of Belief – Discretionary Time

**Cross References:**

Policy 4335 American Heritage  
Policy 4020 Curriculum Development and Adoption of Instructional Materials.

Approved by Board of Education: February 10, 2015