

West Hartford Public School District

Agenda Item: Motion by Lib Brassil Spinella, Bruce Putterman, and Terry Schmitt to Accept and Approve Revised Policy #6235 on Controversial Issues--
Second Reading

Meeting Date: October 4, 2011

From: Lib Brassil Spinella, Bruce Putterman, and Terry Schmitt

Through: Karen L. List, Superintendent of Schools

Recommendation:

THAT the Board of Education accept and approve as a Second and Final Reading revised Policy #6235 on Controversial Issues.

Note: Words in (*italics*) within parentheses are being removed from the current policy and words in **bold** are being added to the current policy.

Background:

Lib Brassil Spinella, Bruce Putterman, Terry Schmitt, Tom Moore, Eileen Howley, and Kimberly Boneham will be available to answer any questions.

**Agenda Item:
III.A.**

WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

POLICY 6235

Instruction

Controversial Issues

(The board recognizes that it is essential that students study issues that are deemed controversial. These issues must be handled in an educationally prudent and equitable manner.

1. *The Criteria for Determining Appropriateness of Controversial Issues for Class Study*
 - a. *The treatment of the issue in question must be within the age range, knowledge, maturity and competence of the pupils.*
 - b. *The issue should be significant, real and important to the pupils and the teacher.*
 - c. *The pupils should have access to a variety of publications and other learning aids in concert with item a. expressing the various points of view so that they may learn all sides of the issue.*
 - d. *The issue at hand should require only that amount of time needed for a productive study by the students.*
 - e. *The issue selected for study should contribute to the major purposes of the school curricula.*
2. *The Rights of the Pupil*
 - a. *To study and discuss significant moral, scientific, cultural, social, economic and political issues within his/her age range, knowledge, maturity and competency.*
 - b. *To have free access to relevant information, including materials that circulate freely in the community.)*

The Board of Education believes it is essential to study issues or topics for which there is no scientific, moral, cultural, social, economic, or political consensus in order to develop critical thinking, analytical thinking, and problem solving skills.

We expect our educators to facilitate the study of such issues when they are aligned with the goals of the district curriculum and to do so in a prudent, age-appropriate, and

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**equitable manner, presenting or providing access to the various points of view.
Students may not opt out of the study of such topics except for where provided by law.**

(cf. 1230 - Public Complaints)

(cf. 5730 - Freedom of Speech/Expression)

(cf. 6420 - Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection)

Legal Reference: Keyishian v. Board of Regents 395 U.S. 589, 603 (1967)
Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of
Education, 9/9/81)

Adopted: June 6, 1988

Revised: October 4, 2011