

Dr. Marta Pérez, School Board Member

SUBJECT: PROVIDING GUIDANCE TO INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL ON HOW TO PROPERLY ADDRESS POLITICAL VIEWPOINTS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN THE CLASSROOM

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COMMITTEE: ACADEMICS, INNOVATION, EVALUATION & TECHNOLOGY

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: SAFE, HEALTHY AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMEN

At the October 21, 2020, School Board meeting, the Board approved Agenda Item H-20 (Political Biases) presented by Dr. Martin Karp, former School Board member. The purpose of Item H-20 was for the District to survey students to learn whether they believed that they had been subjected to political bias in the classroom or at their school. Similar to the concerns raised by Agenda Item H-20, prior to the recent general election, parents have voiced concerns that classroom instruction is sometimes tilted to one particular political viewpoint at the expense of an opposing political view or without allowing for the expression of all political views.

While teachers are allowed wide latitude with respect to academic freedom in classroom instruction and the introduction of political matters and viewpoints during a class lesson, our Board policies do limit the manner in which such topics be included as part of the instructional program.

Specifically, Policy 2240, *Controversial Issues and Student Expression*, allows teachers to address controversial issues, including political matters during classroom discussions and as part of the instructional program when such a discussion:

“is related to the instructional goals of the course of study and level of maturity of the students; does not attempt to indoctrinate or persuade students to a particular point of view; encourages open-mindedness and is conducted in a spirit of scholarly inquiry; provides students with the right to form and express an opinion on controversial issues without subjecting them to academic consequences or disciplinary action for expressing their viewpoints; provides students with the right to study under competent instruction in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice; and provides students with the right to form and express an opinion on controversial issues without jeopardizing their relationship with the teacher or the school.”

This item is presented to request that the Superintendent provide appropriate guidance to teachers and other instructional personnel on how to properly address or discuss controversial issues and political viewpoints with students during classroom instruction. This guidance should indicate that such classroom instruction is not used in an attempt to indoctrinate or persuade students to a particular point of view. This guidance should also be mindful to not infringe upon the academic freedom provided instructional personnel in these matters.

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**Revised
H-10**

This Item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney's Office as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. MARTA PÉREZ:**

That the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, request that the Superintendent provide appropriate guidance, as may be necessary, to instructional personnel on how to properly address or discuss controversial issues and political viewpoints with students during classroom instruction. This guidance should indicate that classroom instruction is not used in an attempt to indoctrinate or persuade students to a particular point of view and should also be mindful to not infringe on the academic freedom provided instructional personnel in these matters.

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