

TEACHING OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Effective: August 18, 2020

- I.** The Division of Academics, working with school-based administrators and in accordance with curricular guidelines, bears the primary responsibility for the development of procedures and training for the teaching of controversial issues.
 - A. Assistance and guidance from the Division of Academics will be available to school-based administrators and teachers concerning topics related to the teaching of controversial issues such as, mitigating biases and facilitating discussions that include a variety of perspectives.
 - B. Teachers will ensure that their instruction is in accordance with the procedures and training referenced in Section I. above and maintains adherence to related Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) policies as referenced in Section VII.B. of this policy.

- II.** Teachers will use the following Board of Education approved criteria for determining the appropriateness of issues for consideration as a part of the curriculum:
 - A. The treatment of the issue in question will be within range, knowledge, maturity, and civic discourse skills of the students.
 - B. Credible and relevant information that represents multiple and diverse perspectives which address the complex aspects of an issue will be provided to students.
 - C. The issue should be significant and related to written curriculum and should not adversely impact instruction or pacing.
 - D. A teacher who has concerns about discussing a controversial issue-with students should confer with his/her administration.

- III.** In order to support the development of civic interest and efficacy, student engagement, and the critical thinking among HCPSS students, community stakeholders are encouraged to:
 - A. Support the goal of the HCPSS to create engaged participants in democracy by teaching students to address controversial issues with inquiry and civility.
 - B. Work in partnership with HCPSS educators in the appropriate discussion of controversial issues.

- C. Participate in students' education experiences by continuing to have civil and thoughtful conversations that reflect multiple perspectives.

IV. Monitoring

Policy 8050 implementation procedures will be overseen by the Division of Academics.

V. History¹

ADOPTED: February 1, 1972

REVIEWED: July 1, 2011

MODIFIED: August 18, 2020

REVISED: March 8, 1990

April 28, 2005

February 13, 2020

EFFECTIVE: August 18, 2020

¹ Key: *Adopted*-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; *Reviewed*-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent's Standing Policy Group; *Modified*-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; *Revised*-The date the Board took action on a that policy based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; *Effective*-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.