

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

- 1.0 **Defined.** A controversial issue is herein defined as a prolonged public dispute or debate, usually concerning differing points of view.
- 2.0 **General.** School personnel, including the building principal or his/her designee, and parents share the responsibility for identifying and responding to controversial issues presented outside of context of the curriculum.
 - 2.1 Controversial issues shall be related to the curriculum being taught and be appropriate to the grade level, maturity and intellectual capacity of the students.
 - 2.2 School personnel, including the building principal or his/her designee, shall develop procedures to notify parents in a timely manner, should exceptional circumstances arise regarding anticipated content, materials, learning activities and instructional strategies that could reasonably be considered controversial, and provide opportunities for parents to request and receive additional information as is reasonably necessary to comprehend the contents, learning materials, learning activities, and/or instructional strategies.
 - 2.2.1 Teachers shall refrain from demonstrating practices, or directing students to demonstrate practices, which have significant religious or spiritual components.
 - 2.2.2 Sensitivity to practices and beliefs of other cultures shall be manifested in instructional methods and academic content.
 - 2.2.3 This policy shall not be construed to prevent teachers from teaching about the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our World heritage consistent with state content standards and District curriculum.
 - 2.2.4 An educational climate shall be established which is conducive to rational thought, free inquiry, and reflect respect for the dignity of the individual.
 - 2.2.5 Students shall be taught how to study issues and shall be provided the opportunity to identify, express, and defend their opinions without penalty or fear of reprisal or ridicule.
 - 2.2.6 Adequate instructional resources shall be provided in order to promote fair representation of a variety of views on all issues presented.
 - 2.3 Staff members shall inform the principal or designee of controversial issues that arise unexpectedly which cause or are likely to cause concern among students and/or parents.
 - 2.4 Building principals are responsible for seeking guidance from General Counsel whenever the presentation of a controversial issue has been challenged on legal grounds or threatens the orderly operation of the school.
 - 2.5 Whenever possible, appropriate learning alternatives, equivalent in value/quality to those to which parents object, shall be provided in a non-stigmatizing manner when a student's parent/guardian determines that the student should not be exposed to the assigned materials, methods, curriculum, activities or presentations. This provision shall not be invoked so as to fundamentally alter District or school curriculum.
- 3.0 **Controversial Health Curriculum.** School personnel shall notify parents/guardians in writing prior to student participation in a District-approved controversial health education course or topic. Exhibit A shall be used to inform parents/guardians of the upcoming instructional activities and the parents'/guardians' right to exclude their child from all or part of such instruction.

- 3.1 To assist parents/guardians in determining whether to request an exemption, each school shall give parents/guardians so requesting an opportunity to review the materials to be used and participate in a conference with the instructor and principal or designee.
- 3.2 Parents/guardians shall direct written requests for exemption to the school as provided in Exhibit B and shall specify the components of the curriculum from which the student is to be excused.
- 3.3 Building administrators shall maintain all requests for exemption in students' files.
- 3.4 Students for whom parents/guardians have submitted a signed exemption request shall be provided with appropriate alternative activitie(s).

EXHIBIT A
District Policy 6220

**NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS ABOUT
HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Dear Parent:

As part of the school District's curriculum, students are instructed in age-appropriate components of the approved health curriculum.

During _____ instruction in your child's classroom will include the following topics AND MATERIALS of the health curriculum:

You are encouraged to call _____
at _____ if you wish to discuss any of the above topics.

You may exclude your child from all or any part of the above topics by signing and returning a form available from your child's school before _____
on the grounds that you wish such exemption for personal reasons.

MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR IN DEPTH REVIEW AT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL.

If you do wish to exclude your child from the program, or any part of it, you can anticipate that the following alternative(s) will be available to him/her during the time he/she would normally have that instruction:

Again, please call _____ before deciding to exempt your child.

Sincerely,

EXHIBIT B
District Policy 6220

Adams 12 Five Star Schools
1500 East 128th Avenue
Thornton, CO 80241

**EXCLUSION OF STUDENT FROM
PART OR ALL OF HEALTH PROGRAM**

I wish to exclude _____ from

- _____ 1 all of the health curriculum units described in _____
School's letter of notification about the health education program.
- _____ 2 the following topics _____
of the health curriculum units described in the letter of notification.

I request such exclusion for personal reasons.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date