

Academic Freedom

The nature of American democracy requires that citizens be able to listen to all sides of a controversial issue, sort out the facts, and arrive at independent conclusions. Students in school, therefore, have a right to be exposed to issues which are within their intellectual grasp and are under current debate in our society, and teachers have a right to present information and ideas in an atmosphere of academic freedom.

Academic freedom is the right and responsibility of educators and students to study, investigate, present, interpret, and discuss all facts and ideas relevant to the subject matter of the classroom and appropriate to the maturity and intellectual and emotional capacities of the students in the class.

However, academic freedom is not an absolute. It must be exercised within the ethical responsibilities of the teaching profession, including:

1. A commitment to present within the classroom the truth as understood by the teacher in relation to his/her area of professional expertise.
2. A concern for the welfare, growth, and total development of the student.
3. The presentation of controversial issues in a fair and unbiased manner.
4. The application of good taste and judgment in selecting and employing materials and methods of instruction.

The Wallingford Board of Education agrees that academic freedom is essential to the fulfillment of the purposes of the school system and will uphold that freedom. The Board also recognizes that the community has a right to expect that controversial issues will be presented in a fair and unbiased manner and to communicate through proper channels to the Board if convinced that they are not being so presented.

(cf: INB - Teaching About Controversial Issues)

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