

## 6.20.010-P Academic Freedom

- (1) Freedom to learn and think is a requisite of education in the democratic society. Inquiry and the free exchange of ideas are vital to the process of learning. The teacher is central to the learning process.
- (2) In a public school system in a democratic society, academic freedom includes the freedom of the teacher to teach about controversial issues and to make available to the students a wide range of instructional materials and community resources.
- (3) Academic freedom in the instructional program also implies responsibilities. The teacher should seek to promote intelligent study based upon a broad range of ideas to be discovered and developed through reading, listening, viewing, and discussion. Recognizing that resources used in the classroom often will reflect a particular point of view, the teacher should strive by the use of additional resources to present a fair balance of ideas so that the students have full opportunity to investigate and consider various positions and to draw informed conclusions.
- (4) Academic freedom extends to students as well as teachers. Students must be free to pursue independent study and to make use of resources beyond those in the classroom. Moreover, when in the judgment of a student or parent, a student or their family has deep-seated moral or religious beliefs which makes an item in the instructional program objectionable or offensive, the student may be permitted to engage in alternative study, including alternate reading materials. A written request from the student's parent or guardian or the student, if the student is 18 years of age or older or a legally emancipated minor, shall be submitted to the building principal. The request shall list the reasons for the request and include a proposed alternative for an individualized learning activity to substitute for the period of time the student is exempt from the program or activity and which meets the goals of the learning activity or course exempted.
- (5) The public school is a unique community institution charged with the task of guiding each new generation to responsible maturity. Young people must have the opportunity to develop their powers of discovery, perception, understanding and judgment, assisted and encouraged by teachers and administrators committed to the principle that these powers are best nurtured by free and open inquiry.

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Legal References: ORS 332.072; ORS 332.107; ORS 339.880; ORS 339.885; OAR 581-021-0050; OAR 581-021-0055; Equal Access Act, P.L. 98-377, Title III, U.S.C. Title 20, Sections 4071-4074, 98 Stat. 1302; Westside Community Board of Education v. Mergens, 496 U.S. 226, 110 S. Ct. 2356 (1990); Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, 108 S.Ct. 562 (1988).

History: Adpt 6/71; Amd 9/9/02; BA 2421

