

**Tentative Agreement Between The
Whittier City School District and the
Whittier Elementary Teachers Association
March 18, 2022**

Article XXV: Academic Freedom

Appendix G - Academic Freedom

I. Philosophy

1. It is the philosophy of the school board to educate young people in the democratic tradition to foster recognition of individual freedom and social responsibility and to inspire meaningful awareness of and respect for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. This Board accepts as one of its major responsibilities the protection of these freedoms for students, teachers, and others directly concerned with the school program.
2. Freedom of individual expression shall be encouraged and guaranteed by the board to all its teachers as they utilize their abilities and resources to maintain a climate of intellectual freedom, without license, in the schools.
3. Academic freedom is essential to the fulfillment of the educational purpose of Whittier City School District's schools. Therefore, teachers have the right of protection from any censorship.
4. It is mutually recognized that freedom carries with it responsibility; academic freedom also carries with it academic responsibility which is determined by the basic ideals and goals of the local community. Decision and analysis of controversial issues shall be conducted within the framework of fundamental values of the community as they are expressed in the educational philosophy and objectives of the Board.
5. The governing board recognizes that a teacher has reasonable freedom in classroom presentations and discussions and may introduce political, religious, or otherwise controversial material, provided that said material is relevant to the course content.

II. Definition

1. The right to teach and learn about controversial issues which have economic, political, scientific, or social significance. This shall include the right to discuss divergent ideas initiated by students as long as the expression of their dissent is done within the guidelines of debate and discussion.
2. The right to use materials which are relevant to the needs of the students and to the purposes of the school system.
3. The right to maintain a classroom environment which is conducive to the free exchange and examination of ideas which have economic, political, scientific, or social significance.
4. The right of teachers to participate fully in the public affairs of the community.
5. The right of teachers to a free expression of conscience as private citizens with the correlative responsibility of a professional presentation of balanced views relating to controversial issues as they are studied in the classroom. A teacher shall not utilize his/her position to indoctrinate students with his/her own personal political and or religious views.

III. Guidelines for selection to be studies in the classroom are:

1. The instruction and discussion of issues should be related to the course content and help achieve course objectives.
2. The instruction and discussion of issues should provide students an opportunity to study topics which have political, economic or social significance.
3. The instruction and discussion of issues should balance the various and/or conflicting points of view in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice.
4. The instruction and discussion of issues shall be fair, accurate, objective, and appropriate to the age and maturity of the students, and sensitive to the community needs and the needs and values of our diverse cultures and heritages.
5. Students shall have the right to form, identify, and express their own opinions on topics, as long as a balanced presentation is made on conflicting positions.

IV. Guidelines for selection of instructional materials are:

1. The selection and use of textbooks and core instructional materials shall be determined by the curriculum approved by the Governing Board. These materials shall meet the unique learning needs of individual students and follow the District's core curriculum in alignment with the state framework.
2. Instructional materials supportive to the basic textbooks for each course and/or grade level shall be selected by the appropriate course and/or grade level teachers and approved by the Board.
3. Additional instructional materials may be selected by individual teachers for occasional use in the classroom. Such materials are to be relevant to the needs and maturity of the students, to the content of the course and to the purposes of the school system.
4. The superintendent shall coordinate the planning, development and administration of procedures for the selection, ordering and evaluation of textbooks and core instructional materials. Teachers, administrators, and parent and legal guardians of students enrolled in the District shall be involved in the process of recommending textbooks and core instructional materials for purchases and use in the District. Selection of textbooks and core instructional materials shall be coordinated with the overall development of the district's curriculum.
5. Persons wishing to review the materials listed may do so according to the following conditions:
 - a. Basic textbooks and other instructional material supportive to the basic textbooks can be reviewed in the Administrative Offices during normal office hours by appointment.
 - b. Additional instructional material selected by individual teachers may be reviewed by appointment in the school building in which the individual teacher is assigned.

V. Guidelines for consideration of textbooks and instructional materials upon formal parent complaint:

1. Any parent or legal guardian of a student residing within the boundaries of the school district may request that the use of basic textbooks and other instructional materials be reconsidered according to the following procedures:
 - a. The parent or legal guardian of a student having concerns about continued use of basic textbooks and other instructional materials so first make an appointment to discuss his/her concerns with the classroom teacher of the course and/or class in which the student enrolled and in which the materials are being used.
 - b. If the parent or legal guardian is not satisfied after talking with the classroom teacher, an appointment shall be made within 5 days with the site administrator to discuss the request that the continued use of the basic textbook or other instructional material be reconsidered.
 - c. If the parent or legal guardian is not satisfied after talking with the classroom teacher and site administrator, a formal written request for reconsideration shall be completed on the Uniform Complaint Procedures Form and filed with the superintendent within five (5) school days.
2. Upon receipt of the written request for reconsideration, the superintendent shall establish a local review committee within five school days.
 - a. The review committee shall be composed of three (3) teachers and two (2) parent or legal guardians selected by the Association and three (3) administrators and one (1) parent or legal guardian selected by the Superintendent. The review committee shall select the chairperson from the members of the committee.
 - b. Once established, the review committee shall have twenty (20) school days to complete its reconsideration review and to make a written recommendation(s) to the board.
 - c. If the board does not agree with the recommendation(s) of the review committee, the board shall return the review committee's recommendation(s) and a written statement explaining the Board's reasons for rejecting the review committee's recommendation(s) to the review committee.

VI. Procedure for resolution of disputes between unit member and District relative to the use of instructional materials.

STEP ONE

Within five (5) school days of a request to meet made by a unit member, the site administrator shall meet with the unit member and a WETA representative in an attempt to resolve the issue through discussion of the relevant issue/materials.

STEP TWO

If the attempt to resolve the issue at Step One is unsuccessful, then a memo is jointly prepared by the site administrator and unit member shall be submitted to the Superintendent. Within five (5) school days of receipt of the joint memo, the Superintendent shall meet with the unit member and WETA representative in an attempt to resolve the matter through discussion of the relevant issues/materials.

STEP THREE

If the attempt to resolve the issue at Step Two is unsuccessful, the unit member or WETA may submit the matter to the Peer Review Panel for review. Within ten (10) school days the Peer Review Panel shall meet and issue a written recommendation to the Board of Education.

The Peer Review Panel will be composed of five (5) unit members chosen from a group of nine (9) appointed unit members assigned from the following grade levels:

3 members K-3

3 members 4-6

3 members 7-8

Three (3) of the five (5) committee members on the Peer Review Panel will be from the same grade level as a unit member taking the issue before the Panel. The other two

members will be appointed from the grade level grouping nearest to the grade level involved.

STEP FOUR

The recommendation of the Peer Review Panel will be submitted to the board. Within ten (10) school days of the receipt of the recommendation, the Board shall meet with the unit member and WETA representative for final disposition. Members of the Peer Review Panel shall be allowed to attend the meeting and speak to the issue if desired. The Board's decision will be final and conclusive.

Alex Vogel, Negotiations Chair

Date

Dr. Raquel Gasporra, Asst. Supt., Business Services

Date