

Philosophy of Education

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the Valley School District's education philosophy.

Scope

This policy is intended for all who may be interested in, and/or affected by, the District's education philosophy.

Policy

1. The Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitution indicates that any powers not delegated to the federal government are reserved to the States or to the people. Thus, Article IX of the Washington State Constitution addresses education and establishes the foundation for the existence of the Valley School District. Rightfully, neither the Constitutions nor the laws of the State of Washington address a specific philosophy of education. One might reason, then, that the choice of a particular philosophy of education belongs to the people. The U. S. Supreme Court confirmed this view in *Pierce v Society of Sisters*. It is the policy of the Valley School District that the choice of any particular educational philosophy belongs to the parents or guardians of the families served by the district's educational programs.
2. The Valley School District recognizes its duty "to make ample provision for the education of all children" (Washington State Constitution, Article IX) and that education is fundamentally social; it must involve people other than the learner. At a minimum, every person's life depends upon a mother and father who are, by nature, a child's first educators. Thus, the foundation of education, as echoed by the Washington State Legislature (RCW 28A.150.211 (8)), is "Family as the basis of society." However, while affirming the natural norm of family structure, the Valley School District also recognizes that the actual arrangements of an individual child's home situation do in fact vary. Consequently, in carrying out its duty to educate all children, the district accepts its responsibility not only to honor parents as the fundamental educational decision-makers for their children, but also to proactively work with individuals and agencies responsible for children whose home situations do vary and to provide for any gaps in a child's family structure from its own resources whenever and wherever necessary to ensure that the important educational foundation provided by a natural family structure is as secure as possible for every child.
3. Any philosophy of education must rest on a definition of education. It is universally accepted that the human person is embodied, rational, free, and social. Physical education, then, addresses the health and fitness of the body; intellectual education deals with knowledge and rational thought; moral education involves the will, which governs the freedom of body, mind, and action; and, to each of these is added cultural and civic education aimed at forming the human person as a member of a family, community, state, and the world. The following statement will serve as the working definition for all Valley School District educational programs:

Education is an art that changes a person for the better. “Change for the better” refers to relatively permanent changes, which by definition are good habits or, synonymously, virtues. This process can be directed by one’s self or another person. The aim of education is to become a good person, something all people can be. In terms of a human being’s social nature, a good person is also a good family member, citizen, and member of the world community. The object of change for the individual is his or her own good, while the object of change for the person as a member of society is the common good.

4. The philosophical problems, then, for which there are a variety of answers in the history of educational philosophy include: (1) The nature of the human person and specifically human powers of body, mind, will, enculturation, and civilization, (2) Defining the bodily, intellectual, moral, and social virtues, and (3) The nature of human learning, which specifies the range of human powers subject to habituation and, therefore, the cooperative art of education.

In regard to a philosophy of education, the superintendent of schools shall:

- (a) Ensure that all district functions operate in alignment with the working definition of education by providing appropriate written procedures and informational documents as well as supervision, training, and staff development;
- (b) Exercise educational leadership by amplifying, explaining, promoting, and serving as an example of the working definition of education;
- (c) Ensure that the choice of an educational philosophy rests primarily with each student’s parents or guardians;
- (d) Provide resources to district staff members that explain the history of educational philosophy, the various schools of educational philosophy, and information about specific philosophies of interest to the parents and guardians of families served by the district.

Related Procedures

N/A

Policy Cross References

N/A

Policy Legal References

United States Constitution, Bill of Rights, Tenth Amendment

Washington State Constitution, Article IX

Pierce v. Society of Sisters, 268 U.S. 510 (1925)

RCW 28A.150.211

Management Resources

Adler, Mortimer J. Philosophy is Everybody’s Business, Winter, 2004, Vol. X, No. 4.

Policy History

Action:	Date:
Approved by the Board	February 17, 2010
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