

What's News Noelle?

Taking the discussion to the desks



Photo by Hannah Dyer

Noelle Harff, *Social Media Editor*



Deborah Lynch and students talk about politics. *Photo by Noelle Harff*

What do Supreme Court nominations, Twitter, porn stars, immigration, and the Second Amendment have in common? They all relate to the political climate in 2018. This is a really unique time in history. Pop culture and politics have collided on an intense level, but we don't talk often enough about current events in the classroom.

So let's talk. Talk about climate change with Berry. Talk about the euphemisms on Twitter with Wexler. Talk about what the heck is going on in the White House with Muellenberg. As long as you keep the conversation going, especially in the classroom.

Classrooms and politics have had a standard of separation. From the national elections, to school board ballots, teachers are censored. Colorado's Fair Campaign Practices Act (FCPA) prohibits the use of public resources to support and oppose a ballot issue or candidate.

These rules are put in place to protect diverse viewpoints. "I try to be neutral," said Jennifer Long, English teacher. "It's more powerful for students to make connections themselves." Current events come up a lot in Long's class as students analyze essays.

"Teachers stay neutral whenever possible. I try to ask questions so they discover their opinion on their own. Don't tell a student they are wrong; they will just build a defensive wall," said Long. Political beliefs are built off of personal values. So, if you attack a political idea, it gets personal fast. That's a big reason why there is such strong opposition against politics in the classroom.

"My job is to make sure all voices are heard," said Deborah Lynch, social studies teacher. She plays devil's advocate whenever anything political may come up in discussion. Lynch said, "All opinions are welcome. I help students validate those opinions by making sure they use facts and are informed."

In the current climate, many are put off by politics. The stress of being "politically correct" and the fear of being ostracized by beliefs is a real issue. Some view President Donald Trump's tweets as offensive. Some see Trump 'Making America Great Again'. It's polarizing.

Just because these rules are put in place doesn't mean the conversation has to be silenced. Daniel Walker, senior, has a different perspective. "I am alright when teachers share their opinion, even if I don't agree with it," said Walker. "It's cool when they do it because it shows maturity. They treat us like adults."

If we are old enough to have jobs and drive a car, we are old enough to have mature discussions. Welcome DACA debates and compare presidential scandals. Don't avoid the debate just because you're in class. Classrooms are a platform for diverse opinions and respectful discussion.

Raise your hand and ask your teacher, 'What's News HR?'