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Research exercise: Syntheses of Research on School Curriculum

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Issues that Surround Curriculum
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What Teachers Should Do About Censorship
- Censorship occurs when selected materials are challenged after they have been approved for use
- Books are censored most commonly for language, sexual content, religious content, politics, or other "offensive" material
- Teachers should create approved or recommended reading lists
- School districts must create and implement clear policies on how to handle censorship before materials are selected
- Committees must be organized to handle the controversy in an orderly and timely manner to avoid problems in the communities
- Teachers, librarians, and other educators must not allow prejudices and biases to interfere with problems
- Educators must fight censorship as it does a disservice to the students

Exploring the Literacy Debate
- Reading instruction has been one of the most volatile debates in the history of American school curriculum.
- The two main methods are phonics instruction and whole language instruction.
- Since the 1930s, curricular decisions on literacy instruction have been based on the research studies and federal funding of each decade.
- Both literacy instruction methods have developed and changed since their original forms.
- Today, most educators believe that a combination of aspects from phonics and whole language is the best way to teach students to read.

The Controversy of Sex Education
- Sex education has become a continuing controversy among school districts.
- Sex education is controversial because people can't agree on where it should occur, when, and what it should include.
- There are two types of sex education classes; Abstinence Only classes that only address waiting until marriage, and classes that explore sexually transmitted disease, emotions, pregnancy, and more.
- Most people that are against sex education believe should be the responsibility of parents
- Data have been collected to determine that there is a significant correlation between sex education and the decrease of teen pregnancy across the United States.

The Effects of Legislation on Curriculum
- The No Child Left Behind Act has defined the essentials of what students need to know: Reading, Math, Science
- Teaching to the test is a common problem as a result of NCLB, where teachers base curriculum on subjects only covered in NCLB
- As a result of testing in reading, math, and science, more time is spent on those subjects and other important subjects are ignored.
- Social Studies is a highly affected subject because it is part of a core curriculum but is not recognized on standardized tests.
- Foreign Language and other elective programs are being cut and not taught as a result of the increased time spent on reading, math, and science.