Are teachers indoctrinating students?
A Conversation Guide*

To view a conversation that followed this guide, go to:
https://www.schoolconversations.org/episodes/ep-01-are-teachers-indoctrinating-students

Education board rooms across the country have recently become battle grounds over mask and vaccine mandates, how history should be taught, and how race and racism should be studied. Amidst these contentious debates are concerns among some that too many educators are *indoctrinating* their students with partisan viewpoints. But what does it really mean to indoctrinate and is it always undesirable or undemocratic?

Conversation Agreements
- Be curious and listen to understand
- Show respect and suspend judgment
- Limit contributions to allowed time limits (typically 2 minutes)
- Allow others to speak without interruption
- Seek to find common ground and note differences in perspective
- Own and help guide the conversation

Round 1 Questions:
- What's your connection to teaching, education and your local schools?
- What do you recall from your own experiences as a student that had a positive impact on your life?
- What's one important thing you hope schools accomplish for students?

Round 2 Questions:
- What does indoctrination mean and how is it different from education? (Examples?)
- Is it ever acceptable for teachers to indoctrinate students?
- Is it indoctrination when teachers teach their students to be kind, to be patriotic, or to embrace and promote social justice?

Round 3 Questions:
- What did you learn and takeaway from today's conversation?
- Has your thinking changed in any way?
- Might this conversation lead you to take different actions going forward?

* This guide, including the conversation agreements listed above, borrows from the work of Living Room Conversations, whose goal is to "…heal society by connecting people across divides - politics, age, gender, race, nationality, and more – through guided conversations proven to build understanding and transform communities."