

The Center for School Study Councils

Framing the Discussion

To engage community members in meaningful discussion of issues, the nonpartisan, nonprofit National Issues Forums Institute in Dayton, Ohio, frames topics in terms of three or four different perspectives. Here is a brief example of perspectives that might structure a public forum of value differences in schools:

- **Choice 1** – *The Pluralism Perspective: Preparing for Life in the 1990s*. America has long recognized the necessity of separating church and state. In an increasingly diverse society, it is essential for the schools to remain strictly neutral and not favor any moral tradition.
- **Choice 2** – *School for Virtue: An Idea Whose Time Has Come*. Most Americans share certain values and agree that the public schools should teach them. Conveying a common core of civic values is a legacy of the common schools and a tradition to which we should return.
- **Choice 3** – *Christian Traditionalists: Convictions of the Moral Majority*. We must not water down or abandon Christian values in the name of tolerance and diversity. These are the values on which the American republic was based, and they deserve a prominent place in the nation's schools.
- **Choice 4** – *Parental Choice: Breaking the Public School Monopoly*. Parents have a right to raise their children according to their own values. Since we are so diverse, the only workable solution is to permit parents to choose which schools their children will attend.

For more information, contact the National Issues Forums Institute at (800) 433-4819.– H.S.