

## **CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS**

**P6122**

The School Committee recognizes that visiting speakers, a valuable supplement to regular school programs, may be of specific persuasion and that their topics may be controversial. If they are prohibited from speaking because of their points of view, academic freedom is endangered. Students need to study issues upon which there is disagreement and to practice analyzing problems, gathering and organizing facts, discriminating between facts and opinions, discussing differing viewpoints and drawing tentative conclusions.

However, professional staff members have a serious responsibility to structure correctly the learning situation involving a speaker. They must have a clear idea of the speaker's purpose; prepare students properly; and provide follow-up activities. When correctly handled, the use of such a speaker becomes an invaluable component in accomplishing the goals of citizenship education, in showing the world as it is, and in preparing them to deal with reality.

Therefore, all speakers must be invited through and approved by the Principal, who shall endeavor to engage speakers for both sides of the issues. In no instance shall a speaker who advocates unconstitutional or illegal acts or procedures be permitted to address students. The Principal will seek the advice of the Superintendent who in turn shall seek the advice of the School Committee, in all cases of doubt.

Candidates for political office may be asked to speak provided the above guidelines are followed.

Policy Adopted: April 9, 2001  
Policy Reviewed:  
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WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Westford, Massachusetts 01886