

CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS

The Wells-Ogunquit C.S.D. School Committee holds that freedom to learn is no less a desirable freedom than freedom of speech, press, and assembly. One goal of education is to prepare our students to participate constructively in a democratic, pluralistic society, a society in which many differing opinions are held and differing causes are espoused. It is important that students develop an understanding of ideas and of people who may seem alien to them. It is also important that they develop judgment, a capacity to discern the difference between fact and opinion, and to weigh arguments, slogans, and appeals. Books, films, and other media are valuable for giving students exposure to many differing ideas; but for effective learning it is also useful to invite appropriate persons not on the educational staff to speak to or to meet with groups of students as part of the educational process.

No overall standard can be established which will automatically separate and exclude as a resource the person whose views or manner of presenting them may actually obstruct the educational process or endanger the health and safety of students or staff. However, the School Committee, in an effort to uphold the students' freedom to learn while also recognizing obligations which the exercise of this freedom entails, establishes the following guidelines:

- A. The teacher/sponsor and school building administrator are expected to exercise judgment and to investigate fully those proposed resource persons to whom questions may arise.
- B. Teachers/sponsors should encourage the use of resource persons representing various approaches or points of view on a given topic in order to afford the students a more comprehensive understanding of it.
- C. An appropriate record shall be made of each resource person utilized and of his/her presentation. Opposing points of view shall be equally explored.
- D. The ideas presented and the resource person invited to present them shall have a demonstrable relation to the curricular or co-curricular activity in which the participating students are involved.
- E. Prior to his/her appearance or participation, the resource person shall be given in writing and shall agree to abide by the following School Committee regulations:
 1. Profanity, vulgarity, and lewd comments are prohibited;
 2. The teacher/sponsor responsible for inviting the resource person, or any member of the school administration, has the right and duty to interrupt or suspend any proceedings if the conduct of the resource person is judged to be in poor taste or endangering to the health and safety of students and staff.

Adopted by the Wells-Ogunquit C.S.D. School Committee: 01/07/87
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