

CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS AND PROGRAMS

A goal of education is to prepare our students to participate constructively in a democratic, pluralistic society, a society in which many different 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, files, 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 district educational staff to speak to or to meet with groups of students as part of the educational process.

The Board, 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.

The teacher/sponsor and the building principal are expected to exercise judgment and to investigate fully those proposed resource persons to whom questions may arise.

When appropriate, 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 and balanced understanding of the topic/issue.

The ideas presented and the resource person invited to present them will have demonstrable relation to the curricular or co-curricular activity in which the participating students are involved.

Prior to the speaker's appearance or participation, he or she will agree to abide by the following board regulations.

- a. Profanity, vulgarity, and lewd comments are prohibited;
- b. 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.

Legal References:

Windham School Board	Policy Code: IMC
Revised: July, 1998 Adopted: October 4, 2005	