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**LINDBERGH SCHOOLS**

Board Meeting Date: 11/10/09  
Board Meeting No.: 1233  
Agenda Item No.: **12.01**

TO: Jim Simpson, Superintendent of Schools  
FROM: Rick Francis, Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Services  
SUBJECT: Policy Review – #'s INB, INC – First Reading

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

ITEM OVERVIEW: Attached please find new BOE Policies # INB and INC for your review. These items were drafted as a result of President Obama's recent speech to school children and the administrative decision made to not show the presentation during school hours.

COST: (If applicable, include duration, source of funds, competitive bids, and rationale.)

REQUESTED ACTION: For Information Only

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**SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS:**

These policies are presented as a first reading and for discussion purposes. They will return at the December 8 Board meeting as a second reading and for recommendation to approve.



## CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS

The Board 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 Lindbergh Schools education 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 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:

- A. The teacher/sponsor will discuss with administration the appropriateness of the speaker. The teacher/sponsor and school building administrator will investigate fully those proposed resource persons about whom questions may arise.
- B. The teacher/sponsor 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. The ideas presented and the resource person invited to present them shall have a demonstrable relation to the curricular or cocurricular activity in which the participating students are involved.
- D. 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.
- E. Parents may request alternative assignment if they hold strong objection to the controversial speaker.

In the event an issue may disrupt the educational process, the superintendent may with the Board consultation develop a process that will create guidance in dealing with the controversial speaker.

FILE: INC  
Basic

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***Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.***

Adopted:

Lindbergh Schools, St. Louis, Missouri

## TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

The Board of Education recognizes that controversial issues are an inherent part of our democratic tradition, and that knowledge and understanding of these issues are an indispensable part of education.

The Board further recognizes that because the teacher holds a position of authority and respect in the classroom and community, he or she has great influence in the formation of the values of all students. Moreover, although every teacher has a right to express personal views, every teacher also has a responsibility to refrain from an excessive expression of personal views during the instructional program.

Before launching a class in the study of an obviously controversial topic, **or deviating from the planned curriculum to discuss a current affairs item**, a teacher will discuss with the principal and the district Curriculum and Instruction department appropriateness to both the course and the maturity level of the students. The teacher will also discuss with administrator the approach to instruction and the teaching materials to be used.

The presentation and discussion of controversial issues in the classroom should be on an informative basis. Professional staff members have the responsibility to treat controversial topics as impartially and as objectively as possible in the following ways:

- Explore the possibility of alternative and/or divergent positions and opinions.
- Determine the degree and extent of consideration given to a specific issue based on knowledge, maturity and competence of the student and class.
- Ensure that an accurate, factual and balanced presentation of materials is readily available for the student.
- Help students to be tolerant of arguments in opposition to each individual's prejudices and biases, and to cultivate a habit of delaying decisions until all available facts have been considered.
- Parents may request alternative assignment if they hold strong objection to the controversial issue.

In the event an issue may disrupt the educational process, the Superintendent may with Board consultation develop a process that will create guidance in dealing with the controversial issues.

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FILE: INB  
Basic

*Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.*

Adopted:

Lindbergh Schools, St. Louis, Missouri