

STUDENT ASSEMBLIES

Generally, school administrators will determine or substantially control the content of what is expressed at student assemblies. In such cases religious expression will not be permitted as the religious expression may be attributed to the school or seen as an endorsement of a particular religious belief or expression. However, in the instances where students are selected to speak at assemblies based upon neutral selection criteria and where the student speaker has primary control over the content of the oral presentation, the school will not restrict the student speech because of its religious or anti-religious content. In such cases, school authorities will publicly clarify that the content of the student's speech is the speaker's opinion and not the school's.

For the purposes of this policy, primary control is defined as authority by a student to include any content in a speech so long as it is not profane, sexually explicit, defamatory, disruptive, and/or does not infringe on the rights of others. Students may speak on individual religious views and experiences but prayer and proselytizing shall be prohibited because such speech may infringe on the rights of the audience.¹ Administration shall review student speeches prior to delivery. In the event that a speech contains potential prohibited content, administrators should contact legal counsel to seek guidance before asking a student to remove such content.

End of Yellowstone Policy FFG Adopted: 11/16/2020

¹ The eighth circuit court has yet to rule on this matter, and other circuit courts have ruled inconsistently in this regard.