



Town of Apex

P. O. BOX 250
APEX, NORTH CAROLINA 27502

KEITH H. WEATHERLY
MAYOR

February 8, 2008

Dr. J. Del Burns
Superintendent
Wake County Public School System
3600 Wake Forest Road
Raleigh, NC 27609

Dear Dr. Burns:

Recently I was asked to speak to students at one of our Apex schools. I enjoy doing this and find it helpful for me to visit classrooms from time to time. I have been pleased to accept a number of these invitations in the past.

However, shortly after I accepted my most recent invitation I was notified by the teacher that in order for me to make the presentation, I must enter into an "Agreement and Guidelines for Guest Speakers", required by the central office. You must be aware of how offensive this requirement is on several levels.

Clearly, this policy indicates a total lack of confidence in our teachers to invite appropriate speakers. Furthermore, the very idea that WCPSS management believes it must lecture elected officials and other potential speakers on what is considered appropriate behavior is unbelievable. I have never met a teacher in the WCPSS who is not eminently qualified to select appropriate and responsible outside speakers for their classrooms.

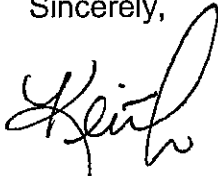
I am certainly mindful of recent controversy involving an outside speaker whose views were deemed objectionable by a vocal interest group. However, the imposition of this policy is a clear overreaction. It communicates to potential school guests that the WCPSS believes it must counsel us before we would be acceptable speakers and clearly indicates the presumption we might not otherwise be mindful of appropriate common sense class behavior and dress.



I might also ask if you have observed the dress of certain students and teachers in Wake County schools lately and whether it meets the standard suggested in your guidelines. If so, I don't think there should be any concern about outside adult speakers. Also, your admonition that information presented must be accurate and factual certainly brings into question whether the school system is in compliance considering topics taught to my children recently. I dare say the "accuracy" of some of the politically correct issues taught in the schools would be passionately questioned by a large number of parents and others on a regular basis.

In order to avoid offending and embarrassing potential guests in Wake County classrooms, I request your reconsideration of this policy. A more reasonable approach might be to suggest some general guidelines to teachers and principals in selecting appropriate speakers rather than assuming we have to be instructed on how to dress, behave and that we must avoid intentionally spreading falsehoods to our students. I assure you I do not require instruction on how to conduct myself in a classroom or elsewhere. I would appreciate your thoughtful consideration of my request and concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith", written in a cursive style.

Keith H. Weatherly
Mayor