

GREENWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NEWS

DISTRICT TO VIEW PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO STUDENTS

(For immediate release: Greenwich, CT – Friday, September 4, 2009)

President Barack Obama will address the nation's youth in a LIVE speech on Tuesday, September 8, 2009 at 12:00PM. According to the U.S. Department of Education's web site, the address will "challenge students to work hard, set educational goals, and take responsibility for their learning."

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Sidney Freund, said "This is a teachable moment, one that we will take advantage of as it supports the fundamental tenet of our work – the importance of education – a message we certainly want to reinforce with our students."

Greenwich Public Schools will view President Obama's address to students at a date to be determined, following the LIVE broadcast on Tuesday.

Having only recently received the request by United States Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, to air the address - the District will take the opportunity to properly plan for the logistics of viewing the speech:

- to ensure that the District has the proper viewing mechanisms in place,
- to plan discussions and activities appropriate for each grade level, and
- to provide an opportunity for schools to select the optimal time during the day to view and discuss the address.

Dr. Freund will meet with District and School-based administrators early next week to plan for the in-school viewing and reinforcement of the President's message about the importance of education.

Dr. Freund has planned a message to be delivered to parents this afternoon via telephone using the District's electronic home/school communications system. A transcript of the message follows:

"Good afternoon, this is Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Sidney Freund.

As you may be aware, President Obama is planning to address all students in the United States LIVE at noon on Tuesday, September 8th.

The advance notice states that the President will challenge students to work hard, set educational goals and take responsibility for their learning. President Obama is reinforcing the message that our Principals and teachers delivered on our first day of school.

I have received several emails and calls from parents and community members objecting to airing the speech during the school day. I have also received several calls encouraging me to show every student the President's address. After careful consideration of all perspectives I have decided on the following course of action:

At this time, we do not plan to view the President's speech live on Tuesday.

We will, however, make arrangements for all students to view the President's address at a later date.

This decision has been made primarily to provide adequate time for us to plan the viewing:

- to ensure that we have the technical capacity in place
- to ensure that an instructional team has time to engage in thoughtful dialogue to prepare age appropriate activities to accompany the viewing of the President's speech, and
- to ensure that every student has the opportunity to view the address

As a parent, you will be advised by your building principal of the date and time of the presentation.

I hope you view the President's message and discuss its importance with your child.

Thank you and I hope you enjoy your holiday weekend. Good-bye."

#

#

#