

**TO: Joseph Charter School 7th - 12th Grade Parents**

**FROM: Jason Gorham, Principal**

**DATE: November 22, 2021**

**SUBJECT: Speaking Day**

On Wednesday, December 8th we will be holding our annual Speaking Day event. If you are not familiar with this event, it is a day where we have all of the 7th-11th grade students give a speech to a panel of judges (consisting of a community member, a teacher, and a senior). Students are split into small groups, so there are between 8 and 10 students per room. This is our 10th year of the event, and we are beginning to see great gains in the speaking abilities of students! The main goal of this day is to provide all students with the opportunity to get comfortable with speaking in front of a small group, as well as meet graduation requirements (one of which is passing a speech according to the state speaking scoring guidelines). In addition, it prepares them for their senior project capstone presentation that happens their senior year.

We wanted to send information out to all parents/guardians so that you know what is expected of students on this day, as well as what happens leading up to the event. The writing portion of their speech will be completed in English class, and is a regular class assignment. Final drafts of speeches should be submitted in English class by Monday, November 22nd. Then, a very important expectation is that students memorize their speech for this day. Junior high students, and students on an IEP, will be allowed to use a notecard if they wish, and they will not lose points or be counted down for doing so. All students will be given class time, help, and support in designated classes for memorization. The list below lets you know what class your student will be practicing their speech in.

**- 7th grade: Hite**

**- 8th grade: Strickland**

**- 9th grade: Hayes**

**- 10th grade: Crenshaw**

**- 11th grade: Weaver**

The second expectation is that students dress professionally for this event. We expect them to dress as they would for a game day, or sporting event. We commonly suggest slacks and a nice button down shirt for boys. They can feel free to add a tie or sport jacket if they choose. For girls, we also suggest nice slacks, a skirt, or dress. Skirts and dresses should be tasteful, and not too short or too low. They can feel free to wear high heels, but we suggest wearing shoes and clothing that look nice, but that are also comfortable. In general, jeans should be avoided. If dress is an issue, we have lots of items here at school! Students just need to let us know before Speaking Day and we can help ensure they are prepared and proud of their appearance. Again, just let us know! We are happy to help.

Next, we want to ensure that parents know about the topic and length that their student is required to do a speech on. Topics are chosen by students, but have to fall within the parameters below:

- **7th and 8th graders** will give a 3-5 minute informative speech on a topic of choice
- All high school students will give a 4-7 minute speech, topics as follows:
  - **Freshmen:** Personal Narrative
  - **Sophomores:** Persuasive
  - **Juniors:** Senior Project idea
  - **Seniors** are judges! They have been through this event before and should be familiar with the scoring guide and process.

Attached to this letter is the scoring guide that judges will use for each speech. It is a simplified version of the state speaking scoring guidelines, and highlights the areas where students must meet in order to “pass” their speech. To pass, students must receive a 4 in each area - Ideas and Content, Organization, Language, and Delivery. Students often tend to focus wholly on the Delivery portion, but they must also pass the other areas as well. If students do not score a four or higher in each category, they will then have to redo their speech individually the following week after school in front of a teacher. The purpose of the redo is to ensure students have an opportunity to pass their speech and gain confidence in speaking, as well as meet those graduation benchmarks. We want this to be a positive experience for students, and know that sometimes nerves get in the way, so having an option to redo is not punishment, but rather a way for them to pass and be proud of doing so.

Any questions or concerns, please feel free to communicate with us and, again, please encourage your student to put in the work to make this a positive experience!