



W E D N E S D A Y
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Obama speech wasn't 'censored'

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District 90 Superintendent Thomas Hagerman wasn't surprised to get a call from the local media Friday morning. He'd already heard complaints that the River Forest school district had not allowed some students to watch President Obama's televised speech to the nation's school kids.

He had two things to say about the controversy: First, there are only so many minutes in a school day. Second, the decision to interrupt class was left up to individual teachers. "We didn't consciously deny anyone," he said. The matter was left up to teachers to fit into their day plans or not.

Schools, he said, "can't take on every social and political issue."

"We don't do all-school presentations and displays as a general rule," he said. "We let our teachers make the choice as to whether or not it fits into their curriculum. We gave them the flexibility."

Hagerman said administrators were hearing from both sides about the Obama speech issue.

"There's definitely two camps," he said. In classes where the teachers viewed the speech as related to the class curriculum, students were required to watch the speech.

"We did not give the option of opting out," Hagerman said, "if the teachers chose to show it and it was part of the core curriculum." The only types of programs where parents are allowed to pull their children are sex education and drug education programs, he said.

Many Dist. 90 students, Hagerman noted, did not view the speech - but they can do so anytime they want, which led to his second point.

"It's on the Internet right now," Hagerman said. "If parents want their kids to see it, they can sit down with them and watch."