

# Local schools vary on Obama's speech

BY JANE KRIENKE  
Staff Reporter

Students across the country listened to President Barack Obama's broadcast of his back to school speech on Sept. 8. But Kirksville High School won't be tuning in until sometime in the near future.

Not all the classrooms in Kirksville High are equipped with cable, so the students were unable to watch the President's speech live.

"We weren't able to show it primarily for logistical reasons," Patrick Williams, Kirksville R-III School District Superintendent, said. "We were also given late and sketchy notice as to the airing of the broadcast. The likelihood is very high that students will see it as a part of a planned curriculum in the future."

An e-mail was sent Aug. 25 to more than 100,000 public and private schools inviting them to watch the address, according to the U.S. Department of Education Web site. Accompanying this e-mail were links to lesson plans meant to aid in class discussion after the speech.

Williams said he was given

notice only a few days before the broadcast. Because most teachers make lesson plans several weeks or months in advance, this made it difficult to incorporate the speech into the curriculum, Williams said. Jim Morris, the director of the Public Information Office for the Department of Secondary Education for the state of Missouri, confirmed the office also did not receive advance notice about the broadcast.

Schools were not required to have students watch the President's address. Instead, individual schools and districts had the opportunity to decide for themselves.

Brashear High School Superintendent Don Wilburn let the teachers decide whether they wanted to incorporate the address into their classrooms. Wilburn said he was not aware of any teacher that chose to use the speech in their lesson plan. However, the option was available.

"We do a daily news broad-

cast and had the speech showing through it if anyone had wanted to tune into it, they could," Wilburn said. "We did a little research on our own and looked at the speech outline ahead of time. It looked more like a rah-rah type of speech. There

were lesson plans available through [Secretary of Education] Arne Duncan. If teachers had spare time and wanted to use the material, they could. If students wanted to watch it, they could. It was never required, though.

Wilburn was surprised to witness a lot of controversy surrounding the dress.

"Presidents have broadcast to schools in the past, that's why I was surprised at all of the concerns parents had," Wilburn said. "Reagan and Bush have both done it. It's not out of the ordinary. However, this was the first time they supplied lessons plans. The Secre-

tary of Education tried to do lesson plans, so that probably made it look like they were trying to teach us instead of hear, listen to the President's speech."

Parents battled on either side of the decision to air Obama's speech to the students, leaving schools caught in the middle.

"We have received calls from parents that are supportive of the showing and that are critical because we didn't show it and calls from parents that do not want their children viewing it at all," Williams said.

Williams said this was the first time in recent years in which schools were given an opportunity to house an airing by the President. He thinks President Obama shared a helpful message with students.

"I think any message from a public figure, especially the President of the United States, that talks about staying in school and setting goals is important," Williams said. "I think it is very unfortunate that public schools have been put in the crossfire of partisan politics. It is a good solid message regardless of who it comes from. I'm really discouraged and disappointed that public schools have been put in this decision and criticized from

both sides of the issue."

One day after the White House publicly announced that the President would deliver a national address, George Henry, superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of St. Louis, released information encouraging Catholic schools not to air the broadcast. According to the press release, parents and teachers contacted the Catholic Education Office and several Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of St. Louis to express their desire that parents be given the opportunity to request that their children be excused from viewing the address.

The Jefferson City Archdiocese, which has jurisdiction in the northeastern portion of the state, took a different approach to the address. Mary Immaculate Catholic School chose not to broadcast the speech.

"We did receive the information that was sent to us from the United States Secretary of Education," said Don Novotney, Superintendent of Schools for the Jefferson City Archdiocese. "We left it up to each school if they wanted to show it. I don't know of any schools in our diocese that did, but we let the schools handle it individually."

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Patrick Williams  
Kirksville R-III School District  
Superintendent

# Alumni return to speak about smoking



Photo Illustration by Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

BY ALEX DALECKI  
Staff Reporter

Homecoming isn't the only time alumni return to Truman.

Alumnae Brittany Camacho and Nancy Johnson recently returned to Kirksville on behalf of the Campus-Community Alliance for Smoke-free Environments (CASE) in an effort to educate the public and the campus about the dangers of secondhand smoke as part of their required work on a tobacco prevention grant from the Missouri Foundation for Health. Both Camacho and Johnson are Certified Health Education Specialists.

Strategies for educating the public primarily involve informative presentations for classes and groups, as well as continuation of the "Cold Turkey" tobacco cessation classes, originally started in the fall 2007 semester.

Camacho stresses that they

are not for an all-encompassing smoking ban.

"We're not anti-smoking — we're pro-smoke free," said Camacho. "Smokers, if they want to smoke, can. If they're 18, it's a legal drug to use in America. It's just when it impedes on somebody's health that it's a fine line."

The impetus for the education is primarily to push new research from the Surgeon General describing the effects of secondhand smoke, Camacho said. The report, released in 2006, definitively found that secondhand smoke causes lung cancer, heart disease and acute respiratory effects, among other problems.

Carolyn Cox, Health and Exercise Science professor, has coordinated the efforts so far, including inviting Camacho and Johnson back to campus. Cox also is not pushing for a campus-wide ban.

"Our job is to educate, and the rest is up to your Student Sen-

ate," said Cox. "You're allowed to smoke, but if you want to quit, and most college students want to quit, we've got free classes."

CASE has successfully implemented the "Cold Turkey" program at a number of Missouri universities, including the University of Missouri-Columbia, St. Louis University, and Missouri State University. Some universities, such as A.T. Still, Washington University and Northwest Missouri State University, have instituted 100 percent smoke-free campus policies.

"Cold Turkey" classes are free and will be offered to Truman students, faculty and staff from 8 to 9 p.m. every Thursday night in the Pershing Building, room 301, from Oct. 22 to Dec. 3, except for Nov. 26. Classes are offered for any Kirksville community members from 7 to 8 p.m. every Tuesday night at Kirksville Church of Christ from Oct. 20 to Dec. 1.

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