

WYLIE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents,

Speaking and listening are basic to a child's overall ability to communicate and understand ideas. In order to help improve these skills in our students we've established a speaking and listening period. **Each student in the class is expected to make a brief, formal talk, lasting two to three minutes, once every nine weeks. We will assign a general theme, (current events, books, holiday traditions, etc.) and children are free to speak on a topic of their choice within that theme. The theme for the first speaking assignment is local current events.** We encourage students to gather information for this presentation from a variety of sources, including newspapers, magazines, radio and T.V. broadcasts, and the Internet.

We've developed a form which your child will use to prepare for his/her speaking day. One of these forms is attached to this letter along with a schedule of each student's assigned speaking date (**please save this calendar for quick reference**). The form is generic in nature and some of the questions on it may not "fit" a child's topic perfectly, so we encourage children and/or parents to rephrase the questions as needed. It is important that children complete the form neatly and bring it to school on the day of their presentation. This is a required homework assignment, and will be evaluated based on preparation and presentation.

Your child may be anxious about this assignment at first, but we work hard to make each speaking experience a positive one. **You can assist your child by encouraging him or her to prepare well in advance, by helping with research and recording of information, and by listening to several practice presentations.**

Each child has only about five minutes to present his/her topic, including the time allowed for questions from the audience, so presentations should focus on main ideas. While it is not necessary, some students enjoy including original posters or other objects related to their topic as part of their presentations. In addition we encourage students to prepare index cards with a few key points on each card. This helps speakers stay on track during their speeches.

This format has evolved over many years, and we've found that children and families respond to it very positively. We look forward to hearing your child's speech!

Sincerely,

Narda Black and Peter Smith