

# Irvington High School

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May 30, 2008

Jeffrey Deskovic  
c/o Nerrad Enterprises  
P.O. Box 189  
White Plains, NY 10606

Dear Mr. Deskovic,

I would like to thank you for your recent visit to Irvington High School and your wonderful contribution to our annual Law Day observance. Your speech contained an impassioned plea for legal change that encouraged the audience to consider the function and purposes of the law, a touching story of personal loss that resonated with everyone in the theater, and a broad reminder of the importance of the law and decision-making in the lives of teenagers. The standing ovation and the praise I have received from students, faculty and staff illustrates how effective your speech was at achieving those goals.

Faculty reported that a person could hear a pin drop during your speech, which is high praise indeed for a speaker at a high school assembly. Perhaps your speech received most of its effectiveness from your very touching story. Students felt the urgency of your pleas and the emotional depth that you expressed. Perhaps they also felt the relevancy of your story to their own lives. As students they face not only school requirements and high expectations for college, but also the adult world of police officers and laws and so forth; finally, they also have their whole lives ahead of them. Thus, your story was not only an important critique of the legal system and a reminder that teens need to be aware of their legal rights, but also more broadly a reminder for teens about making good, informed decisions at a pivotal moment in their lives.

Perhaps most important in making the making the speech effective with a high school audience, besides the touching content and sage advice, the speech proceeded without "talking down" to students. It is often too easy when dealing with teenagers and the law to simply tell teens their rights and the importance of knowing the law. Even when spoken with their interests at heart, adults speaking about teens and the law often fail to communicate their knowledge and empathy, with students tending to get defensive. Your speech, however, showed none of the typical pitfalls, instead communicating directly to the audience. As a frequent organizer of Law Day assemblies, I personally appreciate your ability to speak to the students without "talking down" to them. The

result, as the standing ovation and the continued praise of students, faculty and staff shows, was that the students heard and embraced your message.

From the moment the assembly concluded through the writing of this letter, I have received praise from students, faculty and staff. Students have shown interest in and out of classes, following up in impromptu discussions of legal issues, psychology, the justice system and other issues. Faculty have discussed the assembly with students, with each other in the copy room, and beyond. Guidance counselors and non-teaching staff have even expressed their appreciation to me. As the organizer of the event for our school, I have also received significant praise, as one email from a colleague states, "Just wanted to congratulate you on a wonderful assembly." Another one reads, "Just wanted to say thank you for organizing the law day assembly. I found Mr. Deskovic's speech extremely informative and thoroughly enjoyed the assembly."

Thank you again for your presentation, and best wishes to you!

Sincerely,



Dr. Erik Weiselberg  
Social Studies Teacher

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