

A free and responsible student press defined

A free and responsible student press reflects the intellectual health of a vibrant school, creates respect for diversity, provides a voice for students and establishes a link between students, school officials and communities. Student journalists must follow rules guiding the professional media, strive to maintain the highest standards of journalistic ethics and remain accountable to their audiences. They do this while free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right – and need – to know.

Resources:

- **Student Press Law Center**
<http://splc.org>
 - **Journalism Education Association**
<http://jea.org>
 - **JEA's Scholastic Press Rights Commission**
<http://jeapressrights.org> and <http://jeasprc.org>
 - **National Scholastic Press Association**
http://www.studentpress.org/nsipa/pdf/wheel_modelcodeofethics.pdf
 - Professional Journalists**
<http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>
 - **High School Journalism Org.**
<http://web.archive.org/web/20080605161914/http://www.asne.org/kiosk/archive/principi.htm>
- <http://hsj.org>
 - **RTDNA**
http://www.rtnda.org/pages/media_items/code-of-ethics-and-professional-conduct48.php
 - **Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press**
<http://www.rcfp.org/index.php>
 - **Committee for Concerned Journalists**
<http://www.concernedjournalists.org/tools>
- JEA Scholastic Press Rights Commission**

Responsible student journalists strive for accuracy, completeness and balance in order to achieve and maintain credibility. In doing so, they bring to their various publics, as Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Walter Lippmann said, “a view of reality upon which citizens can act.”

Responsible scholastic journalists thoroughly gather and deliver coherent, accurate and complete content that serves their audience and its need to know no matter what media platform they use.

Within this pursuit, students practice the same standards that govern professional journalists. Responsible students avoid unprotected speech — libel, unwarranted invasion of privacy, copyright infringement and obscenity — and language that causes a material and substantial disruption of the school day or advocates illegal use of drugs.

Students learn to pursue and act on those standards by making final decisions of content, without review or restraint by adviser or those outside the student media staff.

In learning to carry out these standards, students, their teachers and their communities should have, and make use of, varied opportunities for ethical training. Organizations, professional and scholastic, provide advice on legal and ethical concerns and a range of learning activities. In addition, extensive online resources exist. School administrators are an

important link for student journalists as they seek to report vital school information. Administrators should improve their schools' learning environment by providing open access to information and the freedom to choose topics and sources essential to communities' various audiences. Responsible administrators empower their teachers to educate students on legal and ethical responsibilities, making prior review and censorship counterproductive and unnecessary.

As Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel say in “The Elements of Journalism,” journalists' first responsibility is to the truth, and their loyalty is to the citizens they report for.

“Journalism provides something unique to a culture,” the authors write. “Independent, reliable, accurate and comprehensive information citizens require to be free.”

Responsibility breeds freedom. Freedom creates responsibility. “A journalism asked to provide something other than that,” the authors say, “subverts democratic culture.”

“At stake,” they add, “is whether, as citizens, we have access to the independent information that makes it possible to take part in governing ourselves.”

Responsible scholastic journalism, as defined, provides the framework — and bulwork — for democracy.

A core value of being a journalist is to understand the role of the press in a free society. That role is to provide an independent source of information so that a citizen can make informed decisions. It is often the case that this core value of journalistic independence requires a journalist to question authority rather than side with authority. Thus, if the role of the press in a democratic society is to have any value, all journalists – including student journalists – must be allowed to publish viewpoints contrary to those of state authorities without intervention or censorship by the authorities themselves. Without protection, the freedoms of speech and press are meaningless and the press becomes a mere channel for official thought.”

Dean v. Utica Community Schools
345 F.Supp.2d 799 [E.D. Mich. 2004]

Legal and ethical sites

General

- Student Press Law Center
<http://www.splc.org>
- JEA press rights commission and blog
<http://jeasprc.org> and <http://jeapressrights.org>
- Panic button for live and Internet resources on legal issues-ethical issues
<http://www.jeasprc.org/panic/>
- Reporter's Committee for Freedom of Press
<http://www.rcfp.org/>
- Student expression
<http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/Speech/studentexpression/Index.aspx>
- The First Amendment Center
<http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/>
- Society of Professional Journalists
<http://spj.org>
- The Freedom Forum
<http://www.freedomforum.org/>
- ASCD articles on First Amendment and schools
<http://www.firstamendmentschools.org/news/mediacoverage.aspx>
- Key scholastic media decisions
<http://www.jeasprc.org/court-cases-of-interest-and-related-materials/>

Law

- Important resources on legal issues
<http://www.jeasprc.org/important-resources/>
- Legal/ethical terminology
<http://www.jeasprc.org/lifelines/>
- Analysis of Hazelwood's impact on the student press
<http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=4494>
- About the Tinker case
http://www.oblivion.net/oblivion/9/tinker_vs.php3

- Michigan article that drew censorship
<http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=2554>
- Websites to use to understand the First Amendment
<http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=13588>
- Journalism ethics, copyright and law
<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/ethics.html>

Ethics

- JEA board defines prior review and JEA issues statement on prior review
<http://jeapressrights.org/2008documents/2008newsupdate.html>
- Handling prior review
<http://www.jeasprc.org/handling-prior-review/>
- Experts stress ethical decision making
<http://my.highschooljournalism.org/fl/tampa/hsjinstitute/article.cfm?eid=715&aid=8783>
- Decoding moral values
<http://poynter.org/column.asp?id=36&aid=74255>

Codes of Ethics

- Society of Professional Journalists
<http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>
- Public Relations Society of America
<http://ethics.iit.edu/codes/coe/public.relations.soc.america.html>
- Ethics codes assembled and linked to by journalism.org
http://www.journalism.org/resources/ethics_codes
- Blogger's code of ethics
<http://www.cyberjournalist.net/news/000215.php>
- NPR code of ethics and practices
<http://www.npr.org/about/ethics/>

Tinker links:

- Tinker case in full
http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/comm/free_speech/tinker.html
- Findlaw report of the decision
<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=393&invol=503>
- First Amendment Center links Tinker related
http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/faclibrary/case.aspx?case=Tinker_v_Des_Moines_Independent_Community_School_Dist

- US Supreme Court media
http://www.oyez.org/cases/1960-1969/1968/1968_21/
- Landmark cases with downloadable materials
<http://www.landmarkcases.org/tinker/home.html>
- Lesson plan for Tinker
<http://www.freedomforum.org/packages/first/Curricula/EducationforFreedom/supportpages/L08-CaseSummaryTinker.htm>
- Participants look back at Tinker case
<http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=10386>

Hazewlood links:

- The case as reported on Findlaw
<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=484&invol=260>
- Scholastic Magazine's guide to Hazelwood
<http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=4721>
- ERIC digest on Hazelwood
<http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-9216/hazelwood.htm>
- Cornell Law School version of the decision
http://straylight.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0484_0260_ZS.html
- SPLC version of the decision
<http://splc.org/legalresearch.asp?id=4>
- First Amendment Center guide to Hazelwood
http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org/faclibrary/case.aspx?case=Hazelwood_v_Kuhlmeier
- Landmark cases materials on Hazelwood
<http://www.landmarkcases.org/hazelwood/home.html>
- US Supreme Court, Oyez link
http://www.oyez.org/cases/1980-1989/1987/1987_86_836/
- Reflections on the Hazelwood fight
<http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=15516>

Other issues from the decisions:

- Where do student rights start and stop
<http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=17709>
- Legal and ethical questions based on Tinker-Hazelwood issues
<http://www.milforded.org/schools/jlaw/mminichiello/freedomofspeech/freedomofspeech.htm>
- USCourts site
<http://www.uscourts.gov/outreach/topics/hazelwood.htm#discussion>

- Student free speech on the Internet and Columbine
<http://www.benton.org/publibrary/digitalbeat/db042000.html>
- Hazelwood and AUPs
<http://www.nheon.org/oet/tpguide/policy-aup3.htm>
- Hazelwood's impact on other cases
http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/edu/cp532/1999_cases/Dolores.html
- Teaching censorship
<http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=1226>
- FAQ on Tinker by John Tinker
http://schema-root.org/region/americas/north_america/usa/government/branches/judicial_branch/supreme_court/decisions/schools/tinker_v._des_moines/~jft/jft.faq.html
- Defining censorship
<http://courses.cs.vt.edu/~cs3604/lib/Censorship/Hawthorne.notes.html>

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Tenets of Responsible Student Journalism: Finding Common Ground

by Tom Eveslage, Temple University

When an administrator expresses support for responsible journalism, when an adviser expects students to produce a responsible publication, when the editor tells that staff how to act responsibly, what characteristics do all three have in mind? What common qualities do they expect from students practicing Responsible Journalism?

On the surface, each may put a premium on something different.

- The administrator may want a publication with content that shows the school in a positive light, that promotes the good news and overlooks the bad (e.g., low test scores or a poor football record). Is that the product of responsible journalism?
- The teacher may want a publication that reflects students' technical proficiency—such mechanics as spelling and punctuation—to quell criticism from peers or parents. But is that the measure of responsible journalism?
- And the editor may want to preserve tradition with a publication of predictable content free of controversy and sure to avoid administrative interference. Does a publication that pleases school officials reflect responsible journalism?

But Responsible Journalism must get below the surface. Instead of guiding a staff towards Responsible Journalism, these three concerns focus on Irresponsible Journalism, defining it as a grammatically sloppy story on a controversial issue that reflect poorly on the school. How many student media stakeholders—including administrators, advisers, student journalists (and their constituents—community members, parents, teachers and students) would agree that this will lead towards ethical decision-making?

The goal of responsible, ethical journalism is not met by simply identifying specific stories that cannot be written or reporting practices that should never be followed. Press responsibility is a layered, textured process, not one-dimensional challenge. And a satisfying resolution certainly will not come from a series of “don'ts” to shape the journalist. Guidelines are needed to lead journalists towards responsible publication.

A primary objective of journalists—whether they're professionals or students—is to thoroughly

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gather and fairly, accurately and completely deliver content that serves their audience. This quest requires finding common ground—shared values and ethical guidelines that all stakeholders can agree will help achieve this goal.

To that end, we propose a paradigm for responsible journalism, for ethical decision-making. A sound, workable model is neither infallible nor freestanding. It cannot assure free, effective, educationally-sound student media that serve the school community. Dedicated advisers, student journalists and school officials must aspire to perform professional in several related ways.

We choose to show that common threads of Responsibility connect school officials, student journalists and news-media professionals. The guidelines described here reflect the belief that student journalists and school officials share a commitment to the educational objectives of the school. Likewise, responsible student journalists are expected to comply with the sound practice of dedicated professional journalists. And the expectations of administrators have much in common with the aspirations of their faculty, students...and school publication staffs.

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Six principles of responsible journalism for advisers and school officials

Responsible media advisers and teachers:

1. Establish policies to aid thorough and effective reporting.

Advisers should teach and guide students as to legal and ethical principles of responsible journalism by working with them to develop effective policies as well as sound learning processes. In instilling professional legal and ethical standards in their students, advisers should follow JEA's Adviser Code of Ethics.

2. Provide opportunities through media to build better citizens who apply critical thinking and decision-making skills.

Advisers should counsel students to actively participate in the democratic process by making wise decisions based on critical thinking, analysis and other higher level skills. The best student journalists learn to lead others, to collaborate with others, to manage deadlines and budgets, to interview and interact with a wide range of sources and peers, to prioritize and resolve conflict. Prior review and prior restraint create an educational atmosphere in which students cannot learn from their decision-making, thus inhibiting the development of life skills that are the foundation of good citizenship in a democratic society.

3. Hire and rely on professionally educated advisers who use sound curricula.

Although some come prepared, other teachers and advisers develop a passion and skills as they grow with their students in journalistic media. Successful advisers know to include journalism ethics and instruction on First Amendment law as part of the curriculum. Such instruction instills responsibility in student staffers as they learn and practice standards of professional journalism. An adviser educated in the principles of responsible journalism becomes the expert in matters concerning student publications and can advise the administration in dealing with the public. Educated advisers also make significant contributions to the building of a strong program and sound curriculum by participating at the state, regional and national level through conferences, contests and critiques to ensure students learn from a wide and diverse range of competent journalists and knowledgeable advisers.

4. Ensure open lines of communication among students, teachers, administrators and community members.

It takes on entire scholastic community to build a successful student media program. When students, advisers, school and district administrators, professional journalists and community members understand the importance of practicing professionally oriented and ethical journalism, the program thrives through a positive exchange of ideas and concerns. The program also

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advances the citizenship missions of the school system through active student participation. This transparency means showing the process journalists used to gather information and why this information is essential to the reporting process.

5. Strengthen student media content through access to accurate, thorough and diverse sources.

Successful media content relies on nuts and bolts: correctly spelled names, properly identified people and accurate facts and figures. Through research, including use of credible Web sites, and through interviews, student reporters gather information to reflect multiple perspectives. Student journalists must have access to reliable and relevant resources, including school records and proceedings open by law to the public. Students also must learn to practice the expanded media roles of verification and synthesis as they make final decisions of content for their media.

6. Encourage student-directed media that report information in verbal and visual context, enhancing comprehension and the greater good for all communities.

Student journalists need to write and edit clear, concise and accurate articles, scripts and related text; to create strong photos, videos and illustrations to accurately convey the content's message; and to package these elements in a way that maintains the completeness of the information. Advisers provide access to updated approaches and materials so students can synthesize and verify information, demonstrating that journalism's first loyalty is to citizens of the various communities it serves.

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Six principles of responsible journalism for student journalists

Responsible student journalists:

1. Follow established policies and adopt new ones to aid in thorough and effective reporting.

Student journalists practice their First Amendment rights and responsibilities when reporting as a designated public forum. Students will follow and adapt a code of ethics based on professional standards such as those of the Society of Professional Journalists or of the Radio Television News Directors. Students understand their free speech rights and responsibilities and work to uphold them. When they adhere to professional, legal and ethical standards, student journalists enhance their credibility and build public trust.

2. Apply critical thinking and decision-making skills now to become more productive future citizens.

In addition to understanding guiding legal and ethical principles, students consume and create media content conscientiously. Student journalists collaborate, think critically, engage in thoughtful decision-making, and manage conflict effectively. Students also grasp the importance of media literacy: responsible media use and critical assessment in a democratic society. Prior review and prior restraint create an educational atmosphere in which students cannot learn from their decision-making, thus inhibiting the development of life skills that are the foundation of good citizenship in a democratic society.

3. Seek the advice of professionally educated advisers.

Student journalists demand excellence in education from their journalism educators and advisers. They ask for teachings in media law and ethics, responsibly reporting, and advisers who have been trained professionally. Students require an active commitment to excellence from their publications advisers but they do not expect or encourage advisers to do their work for them or to make decisions for them. The professional adviser, they know, demands students embrace the total learning process.

4. Maintain open lines of communication with other students, teachers, administrators and community members.

Through coverage, students command response from fellow students, teachers, administrators and community members. They accept and publish signed letters to the editor and respond to suggestions from the school community. Students clearly show their decision-making processes used to gather and report information. They also listen to community concerns and seek community input toward this learning process. Their reporting engages all community segments in a learning experience.



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5. Report accurately and thoroughly, using a range of diverse and qualified sources.

Identification of a variety of perspectives within a school and its surrounding community is essential to the exchange of ideas in the student media. Students research stories, using relevant, credible sources, live and non-live. Further, student journalists do not ignore any segment of the school's population. Student journalists must have access to reliable and relevant resources, including school records and proceedings open by law to the public. Student journalists also take on the growing roles of verification and synthesis of information.

6. Operate media that report information in verbal and visual context, enhancing comprehension and the greater good for all communities.

Students are empowered to practice journalism with visually appealing, clear and concise elements that allow audiences to appreciate and understand information accurately and clearly. Such programs also increase audience interdependency and involvement demonstrating the fact journalism's first loyalty is to citizens of the various communities it serves.

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Talking points for scholastic journalism:

Functions for a responsible student press:

- To educate
- To inform
- To provide diversity between people and of ideas
- To involve people so they can make intelligent decisions (in school and about school as an informed community)
- To encourage discussion

Schools should

- 1) Emphasize the value of teaching students to take responsibility for the choices they make, and
- 2) Instill in students the values of democracy, including how to express themselves in effective ways and be tolerant of views they disagree with.

Thoughts on education

- A responsible school system will:
 - Empower students to be effective citizens;
 - Practice what it pretends to preach;
 - Demonstrate the viability and dynamics of the evolving nature of democracy in our society;
 - Guarantee the continuation of more than 200 years of American history;
 - Encourage growth and change in American culture;
 - Recognize students need to be partners in their education because their actions and words do have an impact;
 - Create a belief in the relevancy of our constitutional freedoms.
- At stake is whether, as citizens, we have access to independent information that makes it possible for us to take part in governing ourselves. Citizens cannot verify, interpret or act successfully on information limited by control. Journalism provides something unique to a culture: Independent, reliable, accurate and comprehensive information citizens require to be free.
- (Schools) must develop in the young not only an awareness of this freedom but a will to exercise it and the intellectual power and perspective to do so effectively. This is necessary so society may continue to change and modify itself to meet unforeseen threats, problems and opportunities. Those who have been censored and not encouraged to think for themselves – or carry out research for themselves–will see no need for tomorrow’s media to do so. Those who have been censored and told democracy’s tenets exist only in textbooks and only for those over a certain age may come to believe it.
- Students lose belief in the educational system when they see they cannot practice what they are taught; thus because of a misinterpretation of Hazelwood they get a civics lesson that as “citizens” they can only practice their citizenship skills as long as they don’t write or say anything their “government” (school officials) decides independently is not “responsible” or consistent with the educational goals and values of the school. Hence students feel they can only get an education outside of school walls. And we wonder

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why young citizens feel little kinship with the government after they graduate from high school.

• Kovach and Rosenstiel, In *Elements of Journalism*, the authors emphasize 10 points they say underlie all journalism:

1. The primary purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self-governing.
2. Journalism's first obligation is to the truth.
3. Journalism's first loyalty is to citizens.
4. The essence of journalism is a discipline of verification.
5. Journalists must maintain an independence from those they cover.
6. Journalists must serve as an independent monitor of power.
7. Journalism must provide a forum for public criticism and comment.
8. Journalists must make the significant interesting and relevant.
9. Journalists should keep the news in proportion and make it comprehensive.
10. Journalists have an obligation to personal conscience.

• Instead of referring to terms like “consumer,” “reader” or “listener,” we should refer to “citizens” charged with the challenge of making democracy work. This concept adds new levels to our reporting, ones intolerant of censorship and information control and aimed at empowering an informed citizenry.

By empowering student journalists, educators do several things:

- They tell students their work, views and beliefs mean something as they think for themselves;
- They reinforce students' work as having an impact, which reinforces the idea students can make a difference;
- Publishing the truth, or as close to it as possible, demonstrates educators' belief in what they preach, so communities must be informed so they can make reasonable decisions.

• *Breaking Ranks: Changing on American Institution* stated, “Just one example of student leadership can be seen in student publications, where editors practice analysis, critical thinking and decision making.... They also learn the importance of such democratic principles such as open, public examination of current issues, fairness and respect for a variety of viewpoints. In fulfilling the demands of leadership, students apply the judgment and reasoning their teachers try to teach them.”

• Franklin McCallie, former principal at Kirkwood (Mo), High School, wrote for *Quill and Scroll's* 1990 February-March magazine.

“If my commitment is to a quiet high school, to a nice high school, to an always-enjoyable place to be, then let there be no student press,” he wrote. “If I want all mandate and no probing, let there be no student press. If I seek to have sour students enter the arena of world battle over vital issues and be several years behind in their struggle, let there be no student press. If our commitment is to face the same problems again and again with no answers, let there be no student press. If we are committed to complacency, let there be no student press.

“And worse than all of these, if we want to perpetuate the facade of an energetic, inquisitive school but maintain an apathetic foundation, then establish the student press—then stifle it. ...”

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Censorship:

- ♦ Restricts the public's right to know and to make informed decisions.
- ♦ Limits student experience in decision making, critical thinking and analysis.
- ♦ Bestows on authority the power to deem the truth, or at least to withhold information for the public to make a reasoned decision.
- ♦ Creates a vacuum for free expression, so if students do not experience it while they are young, they will not expect it as adults.
- ♦ Prevents freedoms from being seen as real and viable.
- ♦ Encourages viewpoint discrimination, hence an informed voting group.
- ♦ Means the government being reported about makes the decision about what that reporting should be.
- ♦ Betrays a disregard for the intelligence of others. To mistrust the judgment of others is to question, ultimately, society's ability to think for themselves.

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Practicing responsible journalism means:

1. Establishing policies to aid in thorough, accurate and effective reporting.

Student media policies and processes allow all media to operate as open forums where students practice their First Amendment rights and responsibilities. A code of ethics for students and advisers, based on professional standards such as those of the Journalism Education Association and Society of Professional Journalists, supplement these policies.

Professional journalism organizations (THE JOURNALISM EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, THE CENTER FOR SCHOLASTIC JOURNALISM, THE BLACK COLLEGE COMMUNICATION ORGANIZATION) urge administrators to support and reinforce these policies as a way to encourage student journalists, and to recognize ethical codes as a guide to student behavior. When they adhere to professional, legal and ethical standards, student journalists enhance their credibility and build public trust.

2. Applying critical thinking and decision-making skills so students become more productive future citizens.

In addition to the skills specific to journalism programs, producing their own media teaches students to participate actively in the democratic process. In addition, students learn to make wise decisions through critical thinking, to lead others, to collaborate with others, to manage deadlines and budgets, to interview and interact with a wide range of sources and peers, to prioritize and resolve conflict. Prior review and prior restraint create an educational atmosphere in which students cannot learn from their decision-making, thus inhibiting the development of life skills that are the foundation of good citizenship in a democratic society.

A strong scholastic journalism program helps schools do a better job of educating citizens. The results of a strong journalism program extends beyond the classroom and positively affects the entire school community, modeling the media's role in a democratic society as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas essential to the process of informed decision making.

3. Empowering advisers using professionally oriented and substantive curriculum.

Although some come to the profession planning to advise, equipped with training in journalistic writing and production, media law, and publication management, others develop a passion for journalism through learning as they teach and advise student media. It is imperative for advisers of all backgrounds to have access to educational opportunities for professional development.

A responsible student media program implements a curriculum that provides practical experiences in developing the civic responsibilities of all journalists, preparing students to have a career in media and/or to be critical consumers of the media.

Successful advisers know to include journalism ethics and instruction on First Amendment law as part of the curriculum. Such instruction instills responsibility in student staffers as they learn and practice standards of professional journalism. An adviser educated in the principles of responsible journalism becomes the expert in matters concerning student publications and can advise the administra-

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tion in dealing with the public. Educated advisers also make significant contributions to the building of a strong program and sound curriculum by participating at the state, regional and national level through conferences, contests and critiques to ensure students learn from a wide and diverse range of competent journalists and knowledgeable advisers.

4. Maintaining open lines of communication between students, teachers, administrators and community members.

If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes an entire scholastic community to build a successful student media program. When students, advisers, school and district administrators, professional journalists and community members understand the importance of practicing professionally oriented and ethical journalism, the program thrives through a positive exchange of ideas and concerns. The program also advances the citizenships missions of the school system through active student participation.

Practicing the concept of transparency also expands communication, which helps the school accomplish its goals and objectives and advance its educational mission. Transparency means showing the process journalists used to gather information and why this information is essential to the reporting process. Such reporting depth engages all community segments in a learning experience.

5. Reporting accurately and thoroughly, using a range of diverse and qualified sources.

Successful media content rely on nuts and bolts: correctly spelled names, properly identified people and accurate facts and figures. Through research, including use of credible Web sites, and through interviews, student reporters gather information to reflect multiple perspectives. Student journalists must have access to reliable and relevant resources, including school records and proceedings open by law to the public.

Accurate information is the basis for creating a democratic community and making human connections. But accuracy without perspective is not enough. Although others can spread information, sometimes more quickly than journalists, scholastic journalism takes on expanded roles of verification and synthesis.

6. Operating media that report information in verbal and visual context, enhancing comprehension and the greater good for all communities.

Student journalists demonstrate the ability to write and edit clear, concise and accurate articles, scripts and related text; to create strong photos, videos and illustrations to accurately convey the content's message; and to package these elements in a way that maintains the completeness of the information. Because today's audiences initially scan rather than read, these first impressions are important in perceiving the overall story. Audiences must see themselves in media coverage, and in proportion to overall society.

Such journalism programs would empower students to practice journalism consistent with the highest and most ethical professional standards of print and electronic journalism. Empowered programs also increase audience interdependency and involvement through reporting, learning, understanding and educating, demonstrating the fact journalism's first loyalty is to citizens of the various communities it serves.

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Model High School Student Media Editorial policy

Approved by the JEA Board April 19, 2006, and by the Scholastic Journalism Division of AEJMC Aug. 6, 2006.

While this model is specifically designed for newspapers and newsmagazines, advisers can adapt it for other scholastic media and to fit local needs.

As preservers of democracy, our schools shall protect, encourage and enhance free speech and the exchange of ideas as a means of protecting our American way of life.

NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION is the official student-produced medium of news and information published/produced by JOURNALISM/PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION NAME students. The NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION has been established as a designated public forum for student editors to inform and educate their readers as well as for the discussion of issues of concern to their audience. It will not be reviewed or restrained by school officials prior to publication or distribution. Advisers may – and should coach and discuss content – during the writing process.

Because school officials do not engage in prior review, and the content of the NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION is determined by and reflects only the views of the student staff and not school officials or the school itself, its student editorial board and responsible student staff members assume complete legal and financial liability for the content of the publication.

Electronic media (including online, broadcast and podcast media) produced by NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION students are entitled to the same protections – and subjected to the same freedoms and responsibilities – as media produced for print publication. As such they will not be subject to prior review or restraint.

Student journalists may use print and electronic media to report news and information, to communicate with other students and individuals, to ask questions of and consult with experts and to gather material to meet their newsgathering and research needs.

NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION and its staff are protected by and bound to the principles of the First Amendment and other protections and limitations afforded by the Constitution and the various laws and court decisions implementing those principles.

NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION will not publish any material determined by student

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editors or the student editorial board to be unprotected, that is, material that is libelous, obscene, materially disruptive of the school process, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, a violation of copyright or a promotion of products or services unlawful (illegal) as to minors as defined by state or federal law.

Definitions and examples for the above instances of unprotected speech can be found in Law of the Student Press published by the Student Press Law Center.

The editorial board, which consists of the staff's student editors, OR HOWEVER THE DECISION IS MADE will determine the content, including all unsigned editorials. The views stated in editorials represent that of a majority of the editorial board. Signed columns or reviews represent only the opinion of the author.

NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION may accept letters to the editor, guest columns and news releases from students, faculty, administrators, community residents and the general public. We ask that letters to the editor, guest columns or other submissions be 300 words or less and contain the author's name, address and signature. All submissions will be verified. (THIS COULD BE MODIFIED BY ANY PUBLICATION OR OMITTED IN PUBLICATIONS/PRODUCTIONS THAT DO NOT ACCEPT LETTERS)

The NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION editorial board reserves the right to withhold a letter or column or other submission and/OR return it for revision if it contains unprotected speech or grammatical errors that could hamper its meaning. Deadlines for letters and columns will be determined by each year's student staff, allowing sufficient time for verification of authorship prior to publication.

Staff members will strive to correct errors prior to publication; however, if the editorial board determines a significant error is printed, the editorial board will determine the manner and timeliness of a correction.

The staff of the NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION will strive to report all issues in a legal, objective, accurate and ethical manner, according to the Canons of Professional Journalism developed by the Society for Professional Journalists. The Canons of Professional Journalism include a code of ethics concerning accuracy, responsibility, integrity, conflict of interest, impartiality, fair play, freedom of the press, independence, sensationalism, personal privacy, obstruction of justice, creditability and advertising.

The adviser will not act as a censor or determine the content of the paper. The adviser will offer advice and instruction, following the Code of Ethics for Advisers established by the Journalism Education Association as well as the Canons of Professional Journalism. School officials shall not fire or otherwise discipline advisers for content in student media that is determined and published by the student staff.



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The student editor and staff who want appropriate outside legal advice regarding proposed content – should seek attorneys knowledgeable in media law such as those of the Student Press Law Center. Final content decisions and responsibility shall remain with the student editorial board.

NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION will not avoid publishing a story solely on the basis of possible dissent or controversy.

The NAME OF PUBLICATION/PRODUCTION editorial board reserves the right to accept or reject any ad in accordance with its advertising policy.

Electronic manipulations changing the essential truth of the photo or illustration will be clearly labeled if used.

The duly appointed editor or co-editors shall interpret and enforce this editorial policy.



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Journalism Education Association

Adviser Code of Ethics

Media Advisers will:

- Model standards of professional journalistic conduct to students, administrators and others.
- Empower students to make decisions of style, structure and content by creating a learning atmosphere where students will actively practice critical thinking and decision making.
- Encourage students to seek out points of view and to explore a variety of information sources in their decision making.
- Support and defend a free, robust and active forum for student expression without prior review or restraint.
- Emphasize the importance of accuracy, balance and clarity in all aspects of news gathering and reporting.
- Show trust in students as they carry out their responsibilities by encouraging and supporting them in a caring learning environment.
- Remain informed on press rights and responsibilities to provide students with sources of legal information.
- Advise, not act as censors or decision makers.
- Display professional and personal integrity in situations which might be construed as potential conflicts of interest.
- Support free expression for others in local and larger communities.
- Counsel students to avoid deceptive practices in all practices of publication work.
- Model effective communications skills by continuously updating knowledge of media education.

