



**The Importance of the Roosevelt Order  
(Further Case Against Prior Review)  
By Chris Waugaman, teacher, Prince George High School (VA)  
For the JEA Constitution Day Committee, 2011**

**Objectives:** Students will use their understanding of the Seattle Public School case to demonstrate how to apply this ruling to other cases and situations they may encounter. It will also help establish a rationale for the elimination of prior review when communicating with administrative members of one's school.

• COMPREHENSION	• PRACTICE	• APPLICATION	• REFLECTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sisley Case</li><li>• Case Law</li><li>• Argument</li><li>• Precedent</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation</li><li>• Decision-Making</li><li>• Documentation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use court findings</li><li>• Make decisions on similar cases</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe the process of applying 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment related cases</li></ul>

Lesson Time: Two 90-minute block classes

Class one: 30-minute instruction/45-minute activity preparation/15-minute review

Class two: 90 minutes for presentations)

Lesson materials:

- This teacher's guide
- Sisley v. Seattle School District article and video link
- Prior Review background

**Lesson – Understanding the Importance of the Roosevelt Order**

**Resources/Equipment:**

Handouts/Internet/Computer with PowerPoint

**Part 1:** (30 minutes) Introduction & Instruction

The instruction aspect of this lesson includes instruction on *Sisley v. Seattle School District*. Using the attached article and video link, students will learn facts about the case, key language that concerns the verdict and what the Roosevelt case means.

Prior to discussing the Roosevelt Order, the teacher should review the term “prior review” with the students to make sure they understand what is meant this term. The Journalism Education Association recently issued its definition of the term. According to the JEA, “Prior review occurs when anyone not on the publication/media staff requires that he or she be allowed to read, view or approve student media before distribution, airing or publication.” <http://www.splc.org/wordpress/?p=693>

Read the article to the students (or have them read it) that is found at the SPLC’s website:

<http://www.splc.org/news/newsflash.asp?id=2253>

and watch the video of Frank LaMonte:

<http://vimeo.com/27065896>

Outline the major points on the board for students to take notes on while reading and viewing the video.

- a. Public high schools are not liable for the content of their publications.
- b. The Seattle ruling involving *The Roosevelt News* is the first to explicitly state liability protection.
- c. School districts commonly fear this and thus implement prior review to protect themselves.
- d. This ruling actually reinforces the idea that editorial decisions made by students can help schools in such cases protect themselves against libel suits.
- e. *The Roosevelt News* published an article that criticized local landlords. The article accused the brothers of practicing, “racist renting policies.”
- f. The school’s lawyer argued that the students are not “agents or employees’ of the district.”
- g. The judge dismissed the case.

**Activity** (45-minutes)

Review: Students will respond to the following questions initially on their own, then together as a class:

1. How often do schools get sued for their publications?
2. Why were the Sisley’s suing the school district in this case?
3. What was the result?

4. Why is this important for advisers and staffs?
5. How would prior review hurt the school's chances of winning this case?

**Application:** Students in groups of three will select an article from the following links. Students will read the article and develop a further rationale, in addition to this case, for not having prior review at their school.

Students should select one from the following articles:

[http://www.splc.org/news/report\\_detail.asp?id=1078&edition=29](http://www.splc.org/news/report_detail.asp?id=1078&edition=29)

<http://www.splc.org/news/newsflash.asp?id=1902>

<http://www.splc.org/news/newsflash.asp?id=2090>

<http://www.splc.org/news/newsflash.asp?id=1954>

Students will present the information in a PowerPoint presentation the following class period. The PowerPoint should have a minimum of eight slides including the following information: title of article, summary of major points of article, explanation of how prior review is involved, the points against prior review.

**Part 3: Review (15 minutes)**

Have students write in their logs details about the process of finding information about prior review. It can be as structured as you would like or as open as “what did you learn during the process of researching your topic that you did not realize would happen simply by reading the example I explained at the beginning of the lesson.”

**Assessment:** Credit for participating in the practice questions. Credit for creating the presentation and giving the presentation for class. Credit for reflection in daily log. Each assignment is worth 33 percent of the total unit grade.

**See RUBRIC ON NEXT PAGE.**

**Rubric:** Credit for completing questions on researching topic. Credit for hypothetical scenario. Credit for reflection in daily log. Each assignment is worth 33 percent of the total unit grade.

Grade	A (100)	B (90)	C (80)	D (70)
Notes and review	All questions are answered.	Most questions are answered.	Less than half of the questions are answer.	One question is answered.
PowerPoint	The information on the case must be on topic with a great amount of detail included about case and sources.	The information on the case must be on topic with enough details to show understanding.	The information on the case is adequate with enough details to show understanding.	There is some information on the case and it must be on topic with enough details to show understanding.
Reflection	The reflection includes details about the process of online research and classroom presentation. Some details are included. It reflects an understanding of the process &	The reflection addresses the process of online research and classroom presentation. It reflects an understanding of the process and a response to the activity.	The reflection shows an understanding of the process and a response to the activity.	It responds to the activity.

	response to the activity.			
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