

## Synthesis Cluster: High School Journalism

### Directions:

The following assignment is based on the accompanying seven sources. This question requires you to synthesize a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. When you synthesize sources you refer to them to develop your position and cite them accurately. *Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument. Avoid merely summarizing sources.*

**Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.**

### Introduction:

Recently the issue of how much freedom we should (or must) allow student newspapers was argued all the way to the Supreme Court. Read the following chronology of events:

1. The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."
2. In 1983 the principal of Hazelwood East High School objected to two articles in the proofs of the student newspaper (one story described three unnamed Hazelwood students' experiences with pregnancy; the other discussed the impact of divorce on students). The principal instructed the faculty advisor to delete the two pages on which these articles appeared. The students sued the school district on the grounds that their First Amendment rights had been violated.
3. The district court concluded that school officials may impose restraints on students' speech in activities that are "an integral part of the school's educational function."
4. The court of appeals reversed the district court's decision, arguing that the school newspaper was not only "a part of the school-adopted curriculum" but also a public forum, "intended to be operated as a conduit for student viewpoint." Accordingly, the court held that school officials had violated the students' First Amendment rights.
5. **The Supreme Court, in 1988, overruled the court of appeals, arguing in its majority opinion that a school need not tolerate student speech that is inconsistent with its "basic mission," and that Journalism II (the class that produces the newspaper) is a "laboratory situation" in which students apply the skills they have learned in journalism. The Court concluded that educators do not offend the First Amendment by exercising editorial control in school-sponsored activities so long as these actions are related to legitimate pedagogical concerns.**
6. In the dissenting opinion, three of the justices argued that the principal had violated the First Amendment, as the deleted articles neither disrupted class work nor invaded the rights of others. In addition, they pointed out that such censorship in no way furthers the curriculum purposes of a student newspaper, unless one believes that the purpose of the school newspaper is to teach students that the press ought never to report bad news, express unpopular views, or print a thought that might upset its sponsors.

**The Assignment:** The issue of how much freedom we should (or must) allow student newspapers was argued all the way to the Supreme Court. Read the following items carefully and then write an essay presenting a logical argument supporting, refuting or qualifying the Supreme Court decision as conveyed in point #5. **Synthesize at least three of the sources for support.** Refer to the sources by their titles (Source A, Source B, etc.) or by the descriptions in the parentheses.

Source A (Hazelwood)  
Source B (Colorado)  
Source C (Wynn)  
Source D (Cienfuegos)

Source E (Escamilla)  
Source F (Lattimore)  
Source G (Survey)

## **Source A**

**Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier (No. 86-836)  
795 F.2d 1368, reversed.**

Syllabus

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

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**484 U.S. 260**

Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier

ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE  
EIGHTH CIRCUIT

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No. 86-836 Argued: October 13, 1987 --- Decided: January 13, 1988

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Respondents, former high school students who were staff members of the school's newspaper, filed suit in Federal District Court against petitioners, the school district and school officials, alleging that respondents' First Amendment rights were violated by the deletion from a certain issue of the paper of two pages that included an article describing school students' experiences with pregnancy and another article discussing the impact of divorce on students at the school. The newspaper was written and edited by a journalism class, as part of the school's curriculum. Pursuant to the school's practice, the teacher in charge of the paper submitted page proofs to the school's principal, who objected to the pregnancy story because the pregnant students, although not named, might be identified from the text, and because he believed that the article's references to sexual activity and birth control were inappropriate for some of the younger students. The principal objected to the divorce article because the page proofs he was furnished identified by name (deleted by the teacher from the final version) a student who complained of her father's conduct, and the principal believed that the student's parents should have been given an opportunity to respond to the remarks or to consent to their publication. Believing that there was no time to make necessary changes in the articles if the paper was to be issued before the end of the school year, the principal directed that the pages on which they appeared be withheld from publication even though other, unobjectionable articles were included on such pages. The District Court held that no First Amendment violation had occurred. The Court of Appeals reversed.

*Held:* Respondents' First Amendment rights were not violated.

(a) First Amendment rights of students in the public schools are not automatically coextensive with the rights of adults in other settings, and must be applied in light of the special characteristics of the school environment. A school need not tolerate student speech that is inconsistent with its basic educational mission, even though the government could not censor similar speech outside the school.

(b) The school newspaper here cannot be characterized as a forum for public expression. School facilities may be deemed to be public forums only if school authorities have, by policy or by practice, opened the facilities for indiscriminate use by the general public, or by some segment of the public, such as student organizations. If the facilities have instead been reserved for other intended purposes, communicative or otherwise, then no public forum has been created, and school officials may impose reasonable restrictions on the speech of students, teachers, and other members of the school community. The school officials in this case did not deviate from their policy that the newspaper's production was to be part of the educational curriculum and a regular classroom activity under the journalism teacher's control as to almost every aspect of publication. The officials did not evince any intent to open the paper's pages to indiscriminate use by its student reporters and editors, or by the student body generally. Accordingly, school officials were entitled to regulate the paper's contents in any reasonable manner.

(c) The standard for determining when a school may punish student expression that happens to occur on school premises is not the standard for determining when a school may refuse to lend its name and resources to the dissemination of student expression. *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School Dist.*, 393 U.S. 503, distinguished. Educators do not offend the First Amendment by exercising editorial control over the style and content of student speech in school-sponsored expressive activities, so long as their actions are reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns.

(d) The school principal acted reasonably in this case in requiring the deletion of the pregnancy article, the divorce article, and the other articles that were to appear on the same pages of the newspaper.

WHITE, J., delivered the opinion of the Court, in which REHNQUIST, C.J., and STEVENS, O'CONNOR, and SCALIA, JJ., joined. BRENNAN, J., filed a dissenting opinion, in which MARSHALL and BLACKMUN, JJ., joined, *post*, p. 277.

[http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC\\_CR\\_0484\\_0260\\_ZS.html](http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0484_0260_ZS.html)

## **Source B**

### **Colorado Student Free Expression Law**

**Citation:** *Colo. Rev. Stat. Sec. 22-1-120*

June 7, 1990

**Summary:** In addition to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, states can provide additional free speech protection their own citizens by enacting state laws or regulations. The Colorado Student Free Expression Law is such a provision and provides student journalists attending Colorado public schools with added protection against administrative censorship.

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## **Section 22-1-120 -- Rights of free expression for public school students**

(1) The general assembly declares that students of the public schools shall have the right to exercise freedom of speech and of the press, and no expression contained in a student publication, whether or not such publication is school-sponsored, shall be subject to prior restraint except for the types of expression described in subsection (3) of this section. This section shall not prevent the advisor from encouraging expression which is consistent with high standards of English and journalism.

(2) If a publication written substantially by students is made generally available throughout a public school, it shall be a public forum for students of such school.

(3) Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to authorize the publication or distribution by students of the following:

(a) Expression which is obscene;

(b) Expression which is libelous, slanderous, or defamatory under state law;

(c) Expression which is false as to any person who is not a public figure or involved in a matter of public concern; or

(d) Expression which creates a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts, the violation of lawful school regulations, or the material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school or which violates the rights of others to privacy or that threatens violence to property or persons.

(4) The board of education of each school district shall adopt a written publications code, which shall be consistent with the terms of this section and shall include reasonable provisions for the time, place, and manner of conducting free expression within the school district's jurisdiction. Said publications code shall be distributed, posted, or otherwise made available to all students and teachers at the beginning of the 1991-92 school year and at the beginning of each school year thereafter.

(5) (a) Student editors of school sponsored student publications shall be responsible for determining the news, opinion, and advertising content of their publications subject to the limitations of this section. It shall be the responsibility of the publications advisor of school-sponsored student publications within each school to supervise the production of such publications and to teach and encourage free and responsible expression and professional standards for English and journalism.

(b) For the purposes of this section, "publications advisor" means a person whose duties include the supervision of school-sponsored student publications.

(6) If participation in a school-sponsored publication is part of a school class or activity for which grades or school credits are given, the provisions of this section shall not be interpreted to interfere with the authority of the publications advisor for such school-sponsored publications to establish or limit writing assignments for the students working with the publication and to otherwise direct and control the learning experience that the publication is intended to provide.

(7) No expression made by students in the exercise of freedom of speech or freedom of the press shall be deemed to be an expression of school policy, and no school district or employee, or parent, or legal guardian, or official of such school district shall be held liable in any civil or criminal action for any expression made or published by students.

(8) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the promulgation or enforcement of lawful school regulations designed to control gangs. For this purpose of this section, the definition of "gang" shall be the definition found in section 19-1-103 (52), C.R.S.

### Source C

*The Quill*, April 2002 v90 i3 p40(1)

**Threat of censorship has 'chilling effect': High school journalists try to continue work after clash with administration. (Developing Minds).** (Omaha Central High School Register)(Brief Article) *Matt Wynn*.

**Full Text:** COPYRIGHT 2002 Society of Professional Journalists

Back in November, the Omaha Central High School Register was in a lot of trouble.

Our principal, Dr. Gary Thompson, took offense to several of the stories in the October issue of the student paper. Specifically, he took issue with a story about methamphetamine use by students and another story about a varsity football player who had a fairly lucrative season -- despite the fact that he wasn't eligible for play.

The linebacker had recently been charged with assaulting his ex-girlfriend, hitting her in the face on two separate occasions.

To Thompson, this kind of work was simply deplorable. As he saw it, the Register was hurting Central High School's reputation. He claimed that the paper was becoming little more than a supermarket tabloid. He said the school couldn't allow a publication like the Register to keep printing. He said the paper was too negative, and all of the journalism students spent too much time on something that was still only one class out of the day.

Those were his arguments. Had he simply communicated those worries to the staff, we might have listened to the criticism and perhaps even taken some of his advice. But he didn't do that. Instead, he started making changes that hindered the publishing of the paper. First, he made certain that the Register office be closed, with all students out, by 7 p.m. every day. Then, while the staff was attending a convention in Boston last November, he sent a letter to all journalism parents stating his firm belief that changes would have to be made to the journalism department.

After that, everything was kind of a whirlwind. Meetings were held, first between journalism parents and Thompson, then between Thompson, our adviser Matt Deabler, and a representative for the entire Omaha Public School district.

Luckily for us, Deabler was extremely supportive. I believe he took the attacks on the paper as a personal insult, but he was in a pretty precarious position. As a teacher, he was under the control of the district. But as a journalist, the whole concept of censorship and prior review was disgusting.

He decided that his best option would be to vocalize his displeasure with the recent series of events, but he was careful to follow all of Thompson's directions to a T, so as not to be let go for insubordination.

Obviously, his stance on the issue worked. He is still the adviser, and the Register is still being printed, exactly as it has for more than a hundred years.

The end of the entire dilemma was a little anticlimactic. After battling with the administration for over two months, going on countless news programs, being featured in dozens of newspapers and following every miniscule new rule that was applied, there was a final meeting between Thompson and the Register staff. Thompson said he had made up his mind not to censor or impose prior review on the Register. In fact, he said that had never even been an option, as he was proud of the Register's recent success and in no way wanted to hinder what we had started.

He outlined a few rules he hoped the publication would follow (don't hurt anyone, don't break the law, etc.). And then that was it. It was over.

Or at least we had moved on.

Since that final meeting was held at the end of December, the Register has printed four papers. The first, the one that was delivered while the hullabaloo was going on, was only 12 pages long with no color whatsoever. It was the logical thing to do at the time; we had no idea what was going to happen to our program, and all of our efforts were going into preserving what we had going, not putting together another first-class publication.

After winter break, we were all a little rested up, and we put out two 24-page, three-section newspapers (the first one even contained a 20-page insert magazine). It was a step up from what we had just released, but still not back up to what we were used to: 40-page, five section newspapers and 32-page magazines.

The past issues have been different than the two we put together at the beginning of the year. All in all, the staff just seems wearied and downtrodden, like we know we aren't really wanted or appreciated at Central High.

After every issue, Deabler and Thompson have a meeting where they discuss the content of the last paper -- specifically, what Thompson thought of it.

I think this and the events of the past few months have led the Register to be a prime example of the "chilling effect" at work. Now that the issue of censorship has been raised, the staff seems to be implementing self-censorship in an attempt to keep the publication going. I can almost say without a doubt that if a spring sports athlete beats up his girlfriend, it will not be reported in the Register.

That is not to say we regret our actions in the past. In fact, I stand firmly behind our decision to run that story. But the chance of losing the Register is just too great, too much of a risk. Unless we are writing stuff of almost Watergate-level, I doubt many of our most controversial stories will ever see any amount of time in print.

The Register still prides itself on hard-hitting news and interesting investigations, though. Our January and February issues feature in-depth looks at race and diversity at Central High, and the school's dropout rate. The March issue will even include a six-page special section about the effects of ending forced desegregation in Omaha Public Schools.

The Register has changed. Whether it is for better or for worse, I am not sure. All I know is that we will never allow the paper that we love to be muzzled. And if that means swallowing our pride on some issues, than so be it.

The Register is bigger than anyone on it. It will always be at Central High, and hopefully, it will always carry a reputation as one of the most decorated high school newspapers in the nation.

I refuse to be responsible for letting it die.

*Matt Wynn is a senior at Omaha Central High School and editor in chief of the Register.*

[http://infotrac-college.thomsonlearning.com/itw/infomark/433/718/100066138w5/purl=rc1\\_WAD\\_0\\_A85011130&dyn=12!xrn\\_24\\_0\\_A85011130?sw\\_aep=olr\\_wad](http://infotrac-college.thomsonlearning.com/itw/infomark/433/718/100066138w5/purl=rc1_WAD_0_A85011130&dyn=12!xrn_24_0_A85011130?sw_aep=olr_wad)

## Source D

***"Let's git us some Mexicans!" "Remember, women and children are only worth two points."***

- Dialogue on a cartoon published in an Oregon high school student newspaper  
(April 15, 2005) -

by Ernesto Cienfuegos

La Voz de Aztlan [http://www.aztlan.net/kill\\_mexicans\\_cartoon.htm](http://www.aztlan.net/kill_mexicans_cartoon.htm)

Los Angeles, Alta California - April 20, 2005 - A pro-Minutemen vigilante cartoon advocating the killing of Mexican immigrants, including women and children, that was published in the Oregon City High School student newspaper "The Elevator", continues to anger Mexican-Americans in the state of Oregon and across the nation. There are now a large number of parents of Mexican-American students at the school that are asking for the "firing" of the newspaper teacher advisor that approved the "criminal" cartoon for publication. There have been a series of parent meetings with school Principal Carol Kemhus and Superintendent Roger Rada concerning the matter and another meeting has been scheduled for tonight.

The vicious cartoon, shown at the bottom of the page, shows two vigilantes with Minutemen t-shirts on the Mexico/Arizona border. One of the vigilantes says to another, who is armed with a rifle, "Let's git us some Mexicans!". The armed vigilante answers, "Remember, women and children are only worth two points." There is no question what the cartoon intends to communicate. The teacher who approved the cartoon for publication should be dismissed immediately. The school and district administration has refused to release the name of the teacher after La Voz de Aztlan telephoned the principal and superintendent this morning.

The lives of Mexican-Americans and Mexican immigrants are being increasingly placed in jeopardy by anti-Mexican propaganda in the printed media and by the constant alarmist rhetoric heard on national radio networks. This situation should initiate a massive response by all Mexicans, both here and in Mexico. We should not just be "sitting ducks" for vile bigots who want to kill us.

The constant hate talk against Mexicans by radio jockeys like Sean Hannity, Roger Hedgecock, Al Rantel, John and Ken, Bill Handle, Bill O'reilly [sic], and many others has already resulted in a series of vicious hate crimes against Mexicans. The latest occurred on Sunday when a Mexican flower girl, Pasquala Hernandez, was kidnapped by three Anglos from a corner in Wheaton, Maryland. She has not been located as of today. The state of Maryland also saw the decapitation of three Mexican children in the month of May 2004. In Fremont, California in the month of February 2004, a Mexican mother and daughter were bludgeoned to death on the street by what witnesses described as an Anglo. Yet another

recent case occurred last September in Columbus, Ohio when ten Mexican immigrants from Leon, Guanajuato were burned to death when arsonists set their rented apartment building on fire in the early morning hours. None of these cases, nor many others in prior years, have been solved by police authorities.

Hate rhetoric against Mexicans broadcasted across the USA by racist radio jockeys (and cartoons like the one published in the Oregon City High School newspaper) lead [sic] to hate crimes against Mexicans. We must act before the situation gets any worse. One strategy is to boycott the products and services that are advertised on the anti-Mexican radio talk shows. We must gather a list of the advertisers and their contact information. We should than [sic] inform them that we will boycott their services and products if they continue to support anti-Mexican radio programming. As Mexican-Americans, we have immense purchasing power that we should learn to direct intelligently.

These radio talk bigots are also lending direct service to the vile border vigilantes. Sean Hannity for example has interviewed, on his program, the vile Minuteman vigilante Chris Simcox on six separate occasions but has never allowed any Mexican-Americans with an opposing view. Yesterday, he broadcasted [sic] from the US/Mexico border and defended the actions of the vigilantes. In addition, Al Rantel of KABC radio in Los Angeles, recently undertook a money raising campaign for Chris Simcox and the vigilantes utilizing the ABC radio station. Al Rantel, by the way, is an out of the closet homosexual and a practicing sodomite. With the millions of Mexicans in Los Angeles, it should be an easy matter to kick the sodomite off the air for being a hate monger.

With the increasing hostile political atmosphere that hate radio is creating against Mexicans across the USA, it is easy to understand why the vicious cartoon, at the bottom of the page, was published in a student newspaper at an Oregon state public high school. We are not condemning the two junior bigots that created the cartoon. We are, however, condemning the teacher advisor of "The Elevator" who approved the vile cartoon for publication and the school district administration that is supporting and protecting the teacher. This teacher must be fired! La Voz de Aztlan is asking our readership to contact the school and district administration and urge them to dismiss the teacher immediately.

**Published in the Oregon City High School student newspaper on 4/15/05**





## Source E

### **SEX ARTICLE IN WELLINGTON HIGH PAPER CENSORED**

by *Palm Beach Post Staff Writer*

Tuesday, February 22, 2005

When Wellington High students get the latest issue of the school newspaper, they won't know what they're missing.

Principal Cheryl Alligood sequestered copies of *The Wave* last week because she doesn't want her 3,300 students to read a story about sex. The papers had been printed already.

"Anytime you do a topic that could be somewhat controversial, I have to step back and say, what are the possible reactions to this?" Alligood said Monday.

Junior Amanda Escamilla's opinion piece appears inside the paper under the headline "Let's talk about sex." Escamilla said she decided to write about virginity and how sacred it is - and isn't - to teens, after reading magazine articles, watching a television show that addressed the topic and hearing her friends talk about it.

Her approach was to the point and read in part:

"High school students think 'turning in their v-card,' teenage code for losing one's virginity, is the popular census and see no harm in it. Our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents definitely wouldn't agree with this lax attitude towards this defining moment."

"We're supposed to be able to write about what we want to write about," Escamilla said. "They can censor us if it's going to cause rioting or injure our school."

School board rules say just that, and Alligood believes the article would be disruptive, especially the week before students tackle the reading, math and science sections of the FCAT.

The Miami-Dade County School District is one of the few in the nation that protects student journalists' freedom of speech and expression in any school publication.

Escamilla's article suggests that students think twice before having sex, but Alligood said that message doesn't come until the last line, and many won't read that far.

The final sentence reads:

"Make sure, when that time comes, you truly want to swipe your v-card, because this purchase is non-refundable."

"I serve students from ultraconservative families and ultraliberal families," Alligood said. "I have to walk the middle of the road. I also expect we have kids in ninth grade whose maturity level isn't ready to handle this."

Besides, there is enough chatter about sex at school.

"I watch the young people here talk and gossip about who slept with whom, how many guys she slept with," Alligood said. "I don't need an article to create more controversy about this."

Last month, Escamilla and newspaper editor Katherine Freniere came to Alligood with the story and a request to do a sex survey at school. Alligood said she rejected both.

The girls say they were waiting for a final answer about the article. When they didn't hear anything, they went with the story. Typically, they don't give the principal advance copies of stories; a teacher oversees the paper and OKs stories.

For this edition, the newspaper staff sold \$650 worth of ads to pay for printing and had 3,000 copies made with their teacher's blessing. Alligood said it is teacher Kristi Gibbins' first

year overseeing the paper and that the story should never have been printed. The principal offered the students half the cost to reprint pages.

That is the least of the students' concerns.

"If she makes us do that, I want to take my name off the staff list," Freniere said.

"We're very fluffy as a newspaper," Escamilla said. "That's what every person tells us: We don't write about real topics."

As of late Monday, the article was going to be replaced with an ad.

Escamilla said she hopes to become a professional journalist. Alligood hopes this experience doesn't discourage her.

"You have to learn that you can't just write whatever you want," Alligood said. "I did what was best for the student body - to ensure student learning."

## **The controversial article:**

### **Let's talk about sex**

by Amanda Escamilla, *The Wave* [Wellington High School, Palm Beach FL]

"If you have sex, you'll get pregnant and die." Okay so maybe this line from the popular movie *Mean Girls* is exaggerating just a tiny bit. But sex is a bigger deal than most kids make it.

These days fessing up to not yet having experienced that magic moment is something kids don't know whether to be proud or ashamed of. Over the past few years losing one's virginity has become a nonchalant and casual act.

Many teenagers have thrown out most of the moral values that their parents attempted to instill in them.

Prom night, Valentine's Day and graduation night are all cliché days that somehow undermine the moral thought process of teenagers, causing them to feel more compelled than usual to give up the "big V."

Then again it also doesn't help that every time one turns on the television or go to the movies your celebrity role models are in the middle of a steamy love scene.

There is no way that 50 years ago one would have seen Lucy and Ricky Ricardo even sleeping in the same bed.

The value of a person's virginity has been decreased over the last couple of decades tremendously.

High school students think "turning in their v-card," teenage code for losing one's virginity, is the popular census and see no harm in it. Our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents definitely wouldn't agree with this lax attitude towards this defining moment.

The average percent of teenagers who are still virgins is less than it was twenty years ago when our parents were going through their blooming high school years.

Present day teenagers spend a lot less time courting before doing the deed. Of course some teens may be "emotionally" ready to embark on that mature journey, but most kids definitely are not. Many teens felt one's virginity shouldn't be taken lightly.

"Your virginity should mean something to you, considering that once it's gone you can never get it back," Jane Doe\*, a junior from Wellington High School said.

Others felt sex wasn't a big deal. "Virginity isn't a big deal," John Doe said, "People make such a big deal over nothing."

Make sure, when that time comes, you truly want to swipe your v-card, because this purchase is non-refundable.

## Source F

*The Quill*, April 2000 v88 i3 p36

**Journalists, protect our young.** LAURIE A. LATTIMORE.

**Full Text:** COPYRIGHT 2000 Society of Professional Journalists

High school journalism curriculums need support from the professional world.

A 17-year-old girl was found dead of carbon monoxide poisoning in a Berkeley, Calif., apartment building last November. The San Francisco Chronicle headline - "Malfunctioning heater leads to tragedy in Berkeley; carbon monoxide kills girl, hurts sister" - indicated an accidental death until some reporters did some deeper investigation.

They wondered why they could not find the young girl's name in any high school records. Curiosity and solid reporting led to a breaking story about the exploitation of illegal Indian immigrants thriving in the Berkeley community.

While this slave trade is newsworthy enough, the most impressive aspect is that the story was uncovered by student journalists writing for *The Jacket*, Berkeley High School's newspaper. *Jacket* editor Steven Barrie Anthony said the student staff wondered why the young victim was not registered in any local high school. Because of the students' inquisitiveness, several people from the Indian community, including a teacher at Berkeley High, went to the student newspaper staff to reveal the reality of the highly rumored "slave ring."

"They just trusted us more than the local papers," Barrie-Anthony said, noting that once *The Jacket* ran the breaking story in its Dec. 10 issue, the local professional press picked up on the investigation. Currently, reporters are looking into possible sex servitude as well. *The Jacket* is continuing to investigate the death of the young girl.

Without the assertive reporting by this student newspaper staff, the tragic death of the teenager could have been just another routine crime report. Instead student reporters have reminded their professional counterparts how important a journalist's job can be if taken seriously. Thanks to the newspaper reports, Lakireddy Bali Reddy and his son, Lakireddy Vijay Reddy, have since been indicted by federal authorities for using high-tech fake visas to bring thousands of Indian immigrants to Berkeley. The Reddys own more than \$70 million worth of real estate in the Berkeley community.

Unfortunately, success stories such as this risk extinction unless journalism education is taken seriously in our nation's high schools. Rick Ayers, in his fifth year as adviser for *The Jacket*, is most certainly taking his job seriously. Before students serve on *The Jacket* staff, they must take his semester-long Journalism I course. Understanding rights as well as responsibilities of the press are emphasized in his course, which focuses on the fundamentals of choosing newsworthy topics, reporting facts and writing concise reports. Students learn the power of the First Amendment but also the tremendous amount of responsibility that must accompany such freedom and power in self expression.

It is this model we must seek to emulate in our high school journalism programs - a trained adviser with a curriculum plan aimed at teaching student reporters to consider themselves members of the professional press.

Censorship grabs most of the headlines when it comes to student press issues, but the reality is that a stronger emphasis on training of advisers and students will improve the chances for a hands-off policy by school administrators. An adviser well versed in basic journalistic

principles, access to public information and legal limitations on the First Amendment's guarantee of a free press will more easily earn the respect of his or her student staff and the trust of the school administration. A staff that believes its adviser understands First Amendment rights and will fight for them will trust the adviser when controversial legal issues arise. Likewise, a principal who believes the adviser is operating within the law and for the benefit of the students is less likely to interfere in the production of the newspaper.

For these two reasons, the need for a journalism curriculum and well-trained advisers could never be more necessary. As professional journalists and/or journalism educators who reap the benefits or suffer the consequences of the backgrounds of our young reporters, it should be a priority to train our high school students well.

One of the main problems in scholastic journalism programs is that no preliminary course is required before serving on the newspaper staff. Even if the newspaper is an extracurricular activity, a journalism course as an elective in English should be a prerequisite. Students need a venue to learn the principles of good reporting, writing and editing. The "newspaper production" class is bombarded with deadlines that prevent solid instruction and mentoring in the basics. Furthermore, students need a class to discuss legal and ethical issues before being given the power of voice in their newspaper. Serving on the staff should not be a class or activity any student can sign up to take without proper orientation. Otherwise, the newspaper staff becomes nothing more than "that free period after lunch where you get to sit around and write controversial columns."

A lecture-driven course using a textbook and requiring writing assignment in various journalistic forms will prepare future journalists for their first deadlines. Discussions on the ethics and legality of using certain photos, sources, information, names, etc., will prevent a lot of hindsight mistakes when some go on to the newspaper staff.

It is no wonder we have some paranoid school administrators who will jump at the chance to take advantage of the 1988 Hazelwood vs. Kuhlmeier Supreme Court decision and censor their student publications. They understand -- perhaps better than we give them credit for -- the potential good or harm student journalists can invoke through their freedom of the press. If we convince high school administrators to strive for an informed staff trained in ethics and legal responsibilities, we will go a long way in developing a trusting relationship that will lead back to a student-controlled scholastic press.

Of course, the underlying factor for a planned curriculum and a well-trained newspaper staff is a journalistically inclined adviser. It is unrealistic to think all newspaper advisers are coming in with a journalism background. Many are the newest English teachers assigned the newspaper because they have the least amount of power to refuse. Sometimes the advisers are teachers in other disciplines who have an interest but no real knowledge of the student press. Unfortunately, unfounded fear of student newspapers too often prevents a school from allowing one.

But the low number of journalism majors or minors teaching in our schools does not mean seeking trained advisers is a lost cause. The Journalism Education Association has worked hard toward legitimizing the student press in the eyes of administrators and school board members through two adviser certification programs -- Certified Journalism Educators and Master Journalism Educators. Since starting these programs in 1990, 553 teachers have earned their CJE while 97 have gone on to receive the MJE. Becoming certified involves taking an exam or completing a certain amount of coursework. (For more information about the certification programs, check out JEA's Web site at [www.jea.org](http://www.jea.org).)

As professional journalists and/or journalism educators, we should offer more opportunities to help local advisers -- hosting workshops and seminars (for continuing education credit if possible) on various aspects of journalism, newspaper production, publication design, Web site development, etc.; talking to student journalism staffs about our experiences; critiquing their newspapers to give tips for improvement and inviting constructive criticism from them about the local newspaper; teaching a beginning journalism class if none exists at the local high school; and providing a teen page of some sort in the local paper.

Journalism education at the collegiate level is well developed, but we need the same consistency in instruction at the high school level. Kudos to Rick Ayers, Steven Barrie-Anthony, The Jacket staff and all other student newspapers that have accomplished similar feats. We need to encourage that as the norm in scholastic press, not the exception.

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[http://infotrac-college.thomsonlearning.com/itw/infomark/433/718/100066138w5/purl=rc1\\_WAD\\_0\\_A62360839&dyn=16!xrn\\_42\\_0\\_A62360839?sw\\_aep=olr\\_wad](http://infotrac-college.thomsonlearning.com/itw/infomark/433/718/100066138w5/purl=rc1_WAD_0_A62360839&dyn=16!xrn_42_0_A62360839?sw_aep=olr_wad)

## Source G

### **Excerpt: “Future of the First Amendment” 2006 Student Survey Update**

19e. High school students should be allowed to report controversial issues in their student newspapers without the approval of school authorities.

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>
. Strongly agree	13%	13%
. Mildly agree	26%	27%
. Mildly disagree	27%	28%
. Strongly disagree	33%	31%
. Don't know	1%	1%

20. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “Americans don't appreciate First Amendment freedoms the way they ought to.”

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>
. Strongly agree	30%	32%
. Mildly agree	43%	47%
. Mildly disagree	14%	12%
. Strongly disagree	5%	4%
. Don't know	7%	5%

21. Are the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment something you personally think about or are they something you take for granted?

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2006</u>
. Personally think about	50%	49%
. Take for granted	46%	47%
. Don't know	4%	4%

From: [http://www.firstamendmentfuture.org/survey\\_update91806.pdf](http://www.firstamendmentfuture.org/survey_update91806.pdf)