



The Prior Review Peril



Empower students to be leaders

Definitions

- ▶ **Prior Review:** for student media, the term refers to the practice of school officials — or anyone in a position of authority outside the editorial staff including the teacher — demanding they be allowed to read (or preview) copy prior to publication and/or distribution
- ▶ **Prior Restraint:** Prior restraint, on the other hand, occurs when an administrator —often *after* he or she has read material (prior review) — actually does something to inhibit, ban or restrain its publication.
 - ▶ Source: [NSPA](#), SPRC



Q: The courts mandate prior review of all student media

▶ A. True

▶ B. False



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▶ ~~A. True~~

▶ B. False

- ▶ The courts do not mandate it, but they also don't explicitly prohibit it. Best practice in student media is to let the **STUDENT LEADERS** make editorial decisions.



Q: Prior review can teach students

A. How to make their own ethical decisions as leaders.

B. How to protect the school community.

C. How to navigate the politics of a school community

D. None of the above



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~~A. How to make their own ethical decisions as leaders.~~

~~B. How to protect the school community.~~

~~C. How to navigate the politics of a school community~~

D. None of the above: A well-trained adviser should be helping to establish ethical guidelines within a newsroom. When an administrator reviews content before publication, it can lead to self-censorship and/or protecting the school at the expense of truth.



Q: Prior review protects the school from legal liability

A. True

B. False



Q: Prior review protects the school from legal liability

A. True

B. ~~False~~

-It could actually expose the school to more harm. If a principal or teacher acting as an agent of the school has “allowed” an article to print after prior review, they and the school could be held to a higher liability should someone file a lawsuit.

Source: <http://www.splc.org/article/1997/12/fixing-the-blame>



Q: Students learn more when

- A. An administrator or teacher reads content first
- B. They make their own educated editorial decision
- C. They print something controversial and get in trouble for it.



Q: Students learn more when

~~A. An administrator or teacher makes the final decision because adults have more experience.~~

B. They make their own educated editorial decision

-When students are guided through an ethical decision making process and have established a code of ethics and editorial policy, which guides their decisions, they are empowered as leaders in their school. They can make decisions on the value of a story for their community in a more objective way than an administrator

~~C. They print something controversial and get in trouble for it.~~



Q: Prior review almost always leads to prior restraint.

A. True

B. False



Q: Prior review almost always leads to prior restraint.

A. True

-Even if the administrators or teacher doesn't exercise prior restraint, the threat of it is implicit in the practice of prior review. It makes prior restraint much easier, it will encourage self-censorship, and it will silence student voice. According to JEA's Adviser Code of Ethics, the adviser shouldn't prior restrain.

B. ~~False~~



Q: Who should read content before it is published as long as editors still make final decisions.

A. Advisers

B. Subjects of stories

C. Student editors

D. The assistant principal



Q: Who should read content before it is published as long as editors still make final decisions.

A. Advisers

Scholastic journalism organizations find it acceptable for advisers to read content prior to publication to help foster a discussion of ethics and empower the students to use a robust decision-making process in deciding the value of a news story for their community.

~~B. Subjects of stories~~

~~C. Student editors~~

~~D. The assistant principal~~



Q: Prior review allows the most accurate information to be published

A. True

B. False



Q: Prior review allows the most accurate information to be published

A. True

B. False:

-The administration's loyalties may lie more with protecting the school from bad press than with printing accurate information. Students should always robustly report.



Q: Prior review enables discrimination

A. Against students

B. Against viewpoints

C. Against truth

D. All of the above



Q: Prior review enables discrimination

- A. Against students
- B. Against viewpoints
- C. Against truth

D. **All of the above**

-Admin loyalties most often lie in protecting the school from bad press when it comes to student media. This means students who want to publish something that could make the school look bad could have their First Amendment rights violated, viewpoints with which the admin disagrees may be silenced, and truth which “harms” the school may be punished.



Q: Prior review instills

- A. A sense of how to be careful as a journalist
- B. A lack of trust in students
- C. A positive relationship between student journalists, journalism advisers, and administrators.



Q: Prior review instills

~~A. A sense of how to be careful as a journalist~~

B. A lack of trust in students

-It, in fact, undermines the very civic engagement and responsibility schools are expected to instill in students as a benchmark of our democracy. It also leads to a lack of trust in the educational programs of the school.

~~C. A positive relationship between student journalists, journalism advisers, and administrators.~~



Q: What benefits come from not exercising prior review?

- A. Working with students cooperatively to be good sources for stories
 - B. Hiring qualified advisers and journalism teachers
 - C. Building trust in the learning and communication process in a way that also lessens liability concerns of the school system
 - D. Offering feedback after each publication
 - E. Increasing dialogue among school staff and students, thus encouraging outlets of expression that strengthens school safety
 - F. Expanding school and community understanding and appreciation of the value of free – and journalistically responsible – student media
 - G. Providing necessary resources to support and maintain publication programs, including financial support, master schedule preferences, development opportunities and time
 - H. All of the above.
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Q: Where should I go for more resources?



Scholastic Press Rights Committee:
jeasprc.org



Student Press Law Center:
splc.org



Journalism Education Association:
JEA Adviser Code of Ethics: <http://bit.ly/1LdLDSt>
jea.org

