



QUILL AND SCROLL

International Honor Society for High School Journalists

Encouraging Scholastic Journalism Excellence

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Addendum to page 7 “First Amendment and the School Media” and page 48 “State Codes.”

Dear administrator:

Five years has passed since the last publication date of Quill and Scroll’s “Principal’s Guide to Scholastic Journalism.” And while the basic ideas behind the book’s thesis remain true — journalism teaches students to think critically, research thoroughly and write clearly — much progress has been made in protecting students’ First Amendment rights.

In 2013, only seven states had passed anti-Hazelwood laws that negated the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1988 decision in *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*. Those laws granted students the ability to assume the rights and all responsibilities for choosing content in their student media. Thanks to the Student Press Law Center and committed students and advisers from around the United States, the list of states with specific anti-Hazelwood statutes has grown from seven to 13. A 14th state, Pennsylvania, guarantees students First Amendment rights through the Pennsylvania Public School Code. In each of those 14 states, public school officials are not legally permitted to exercise prior restraint of student work unless the work crosses a legal line, such as libel, invasion of privacy or obscenity. Additionally, if school officials don’t practice prior restraint, they will not be held liable for student expression in student media.

Here are the 14 states that guarantee First Amendment rights for public school students: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Washington.

If you have any questions regarding your state and your legal rights and responsibilities, please don’t hesitate to call or email. I would love to talk to you about scholastic journalism. It has been my life’s calling.

Sincerely,

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