



OSMA

Open Forum Statement

As principal of _____ (school name),

I attest that the following student media at our school are open forums:

- _____ newspaper
- _____ yearbook
- _____ newsmagazine
- _____ broadcast
- _____ news website
- _____ other _____

Editors/station managers and student staff make all final decisions of content. I further attest neither I or any other adult in the school prior review or restrain student media and their materials before publication or broadcast. Advisers involved in coaching and teaching students are not involved in prior review as long as they are not changing student content.

Principal

Date

As the Journalism Education Association says, “Prior review by administrators undermines critical thinking, encourages students to dismiss the role of a free press in society and provides no greater likelihood of increased quality of student media. Prior review inevitably leads to censorship. Prior review inherently creates serious conflicts of interest and compromises administrator neutrality, putting the school in potential legal jeopardy.

“Without prior review, administrators retain better strategies that support journalism programs. Such approaches include: • Working with students cooperatively to be good sources for stories • Hiring qualified advisers and journalism teachers • Building trust in the learning and communication process in a way that also lessens liability concerns of the school system • Offering feedback after each publication • Increasing dialogue among school staff and students, thus encouraging outlets of expression that strengthens school safety • Expanding school and community understanding and appreciation of the value of free – and journalistically responsible – student media • Providing necessary resources to support and maintain publication programs, including financial support, master schedule preferences, development opportunities and time.