

POLICY

NORTHERN HIGHLANDS REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

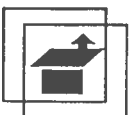
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School Sponsored
Publications

2432 SCHOOL SPONSORED PUBLICATIONS

The Board of Education permits and encourages the preparation and distribution of school sponsored publications under staff direction in order that pupils learn the rights and responsibilities of the press in a free society.

No school sponsored publication may contain materials that:

1. Are prejudicial to an ethnic, national, religious, or racial group or to either gender;
2. Libel any person or persons;
3. Infringe rights of privacy protected by law or regulation;
4. Seek to establish the supremacy of a particular religious denomination, sect, or point of view over any other;
5. Advocate the use or advertise the availability of any substance or material that is unlawful and constitutes a direct and substantial danger to the health of pupils;
6. Contain obscenity or material otherwise deemed to be harmful to impressionable pupils;
7. Incite violence, advocate the use of force, or urge the violation of law or school regulations;
8. Solicit funds for non-school organizations when such solicitations have not been approved by the Board;
9. Promote, favor or oppose any candidate for election to the Board or the adoption of any bond issue, proposal, or question submitted at any school election; or
10. Except as may be required for literary purposes, do not conform to acceptable standards of grammar, clear expression, and responsible research.



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Issues on which opposing points of view have been responsibly promoted may be introduced in a school sponsored publication provided that all proponents are given an equal opportunity to present their views.

In order to ascertain that school sponsored publications do not violate the standards established by this policy, the Board requires that each publication be submitted to the Principal for review in advance of its distribution. A publication that contains material in violation of this policy may not be distributed.

Where the Principal cannot show, within two school days, that the publication violates the prohibitions of this policy, the publication must be released for distribution. The Principal's determination, if any, that the publication violates this policy must be supported by references to specific material in the publication. Material cannot be censored merely because it is personally offensive to the reviewer or may tend to embarrass the Board. Pupils must be offered the opportunity to modify or delete any material that violates this policy.

The Principal's determination may be appealed to the Superintendent and the Board.

The Board requires that the distribution of school publications take place only at the places and during the times established by regulation in order that the instructional program is not disrupted.

N.J.S.A. 2C:34-3
N.J.S.A. 18A:42-4

Adopted: 27 November 2000



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R 2432 SCHOOL SPONSORED PUBLICATIONS

A. Introduction

The Highland Fling is designed to serve as a vehicle for instruction and as a means of communication. It is student-operated and supported by the Board of Education. The following guidelines have been promulgated pursuant to Policy No. 2432 dealing with School Sponsored Publications.

A school publication can best function when it provides a full opportunity for students to inquire, question and exchange ideas. Content should and may reflect all areas of student interest, including topics about which there may be dissent and controversy. However, legal standards must be considered and observed. Emphasis will be placed on adherence to sound principles of journalism, including accuracy of information, fairness, standards of decency and constructiveness of purpose.

B. Purpose of The Highland Fling

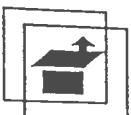
To serve as an instructional device for the teaching of writing and other journalistic skills. To provide a forum for the opinions of students, and school staff.

To serve Northern Highlands by reporting and recording matters of interest to students.

C. Rights and Responsibilities

1. Faculty Advisor(s)

The Board provides for a paid faculty advisor(s). It is the responsibility of this advisor to call to the attention of the high school principal any articles proposed for publication which the advisor feels violate the law or the guidelines set forth herein. The Principal shall have the right to call for a pre-publication review of any article the advisor has brought to his or her attention.



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2. Student Journalists

Student journalists are protected in their exercise of freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In exercising such rights, student journalists are obliged to observe the same legal standards and responsibilities as those imposed upon all journalists, including professionals. If student journalists fail to comply with applicable legal standards and responsibilities, they (and their publications) may be held liable, as may possibly be the administration and the Board of Education. Student journalists may be personally subject to legal action, instituted by any party or parties who allege to have been injured or damaged as a result of the publication by student journalists of any material

- a. Which is alleged to be legally obscene,
- b. Which is alleged to be legally defamatory, or
- c. Which, in any other respect, is alleged to have failed to conform to all applicable legal standards and responsibilities.

In addition, if, as a result of the publication and distribution of any material which directly and proximately results in the disruption of normal school activities, student journalists may be subject to appropriate disciplinary proceedings instituted by an appropriate representative of Northern Highlands, pursuant to the policies and practices governing student discipline.

Other rights and responsibilities include:

- a. To determine the content of the student publication,
- b. To research and publish material dealing with topics of interest to the journalists, student body, school staff or community,
- c. To check and verify all facts, whether published as news or as the basis for opinion,



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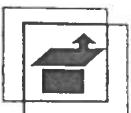
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- d. To ensure that editorials are based upon reported news,
- e. In the case of editorials or other statement of opinion, to allow space for rebuttal opinions in the same issue, if possible; but, in any event, no later than the following issue,
- f. To submit material that conforms to good journalistic style,
- g. To rewrite material when needed to improve journalistic structure, sentence structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation,
- h. To ensure that material to be published conforms to all legal standards and responsibilities.

D. Appropriate Legal Standards

Student journalists will avoid publishing and distributing any material which:

1. Is untrue or misleading;
2. Is obscene;
3. Is libelous;
4. May create a material and substantial disruption of normal school activities or of the ability to exercise appropriate discipline in the operation of the school;
5. Purposely advocates the breaking of any federal, state or local law, ordinance or regulation or Board Policy, where such advocacy is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and/or disruption of normal school activity; this does not include articles which question or disagree with the validity or justice of current laws;
6. Has, as its intended purpose, the commercial advertisement of any product which students are forbidden, by school regulation or by law, to use or consume on school property.



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E. Definitions

"Disruption" means a material and substantial interference with normal school activities or with the ability to exercise appropriate discipline in the operation of the school. Such disruption would include, for example, student rioting, unlawful seizure of property, destruction of property, threats or acts of violence, widespread shouting or boisterous conduct, substantial student participation in a school boycott, sit-in or walk-out.

Material that stimulates discussion or debate does not constitute the type of disruption prohibited.

"Distribution" means dissemination of the student newspaper to students, employees and members of the Board of Education free of charge. The newspaper will be available to others at a nominal charge.

"Libel" means false and unprivileged publication, by writing, printing, picture, effigy or other fixed representation to the eye, which exposes a person or group to public hatred, contempt or ridicule, or which causes a person or group to be shunned or avoided, or which has a tendency to injure a person or group in their occupation(s). For those persons classed as public figures, in order to be libelous, the defamatory falsehood must be published with knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not.

"Minor" means any person under the age of eighteen years, unless the person has been declared an emancipated minor by a court of law.

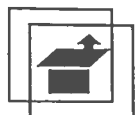
"Obscene" as to minors means:

1. The average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the publication appeals to the prurient interests of minor; and/or
2. The publication depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way to minors, sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable New Jersey law.

F. Appendix

1. Choice of Editors

At the end of the academic school year, the present editors and publication staff, with the approval of the faculty advisor(s), will make selections for the editorial staff of the upcoming year.



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2. Editorial Policy

Editorials represent the opinions of the majority of the editorial staff. To ensure this, the editors will meet as a group immediately prior to the publication of each issue and discuss the editorials.

3. Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor express the opinion(s) of members of the student body, school staff and the community.

Letters to the Editor must:

- (a) Have a signature that has been verified by the Highland Fling staff,
- (b) Be printed with the writer's name, and
- (c) Be approved by the editorial staff.

The editors will use sound journalistic principles in selecting those letters that will appear and may edit letters for space, clarity or other practical reasons.

Issued: 27 November 2000

