

This Week's Focus: FERPA

[According to the U.S. Department of Education](#), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act “is a federal law that affords parents the right to have access to their children’s education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records.” What that means for journalists is they can’t disclose protected information like health records, discipline records, etc., in a story without consent from a parent or guardian. If reporters want to use a source like that, there’s a procedure they must follow.

THE LESSON: CREATE A FERPA FORM

At our school, we have a procedure for using sources who choose to disclose that protected information. First, the law doesn’t prevent a student from simply asking around to find potential sources. However, once they’ve identified someone who is willing to go on record (and before they do the interview), my students must fill out this [FERPA Parent Permission Form](#). As you’ll see, it requires my students to get parent contact information as well as a space to define the story’s angle. (Why do we want to tell this story in the first place? What’s its news value?) I then call the parent and ask if it’s OK for my student to conduct the interview. If the answer is yes, then the reporter may proceed. If it’s no, then they must find a new source.

FIND IT AT JEA.ORG

Researching Essential Media Law Cases

Description

Students will research and report in groups on law cases pertaining to scholastic press rights. Students will evaluate and analyze a court case for presentation to the class. The presentation will include the following information: the background of the case, main points of the case, the court’s decision and its implication. This lesson is designed to take multiple days, half for research and half for presentations.

Objectives

- Students will analyze the case decision and its implication as it pertains to student expression or student media.
- Students will read the text of an assigned court decision.
- Students will evaluate the impact of the decision, which often includes the long-term changes created by the decision.

The link

The link to the full lesson is [HERE](#). NOTE: This lesson is available free to **everyone** during the dates listed at the top of this page. Want to have access all the time? If you’re not a member yet, consider joining JEA today for access to all of the resources.



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Team Building

Jonathan Rogers, MJE, Iowa City (Iowa) HS

GIANT TENNIS BALL GAME

The rules

Move a giant tennis ball 50 to 100 yards down a hallway. All members of the team must touch the ball.

Second round

All members of the team must run with the ball for 5 feet or more.

Classes can be divided or compete against different hours. The teacher records the times of each team. I gave prizes to the winning class.

Our mantra this year

Trust over anxiety and know your job ... do your job.

JEA members, I want YOU to share your awesome ideas with journalism teachers around the country. Fill out this [GOOGLE FORM](#) to be a part of this newsletter.



Jonathan Rogers, MJE, explains the rules of the game to members of his Iowa City HS Little Hawk news staff. Rogers’ best advice for advisers? “Celebrate your students’ good work.”

Photo courtesy of Jonathan Rogers

journalism team bonding :



Click the photo to watch a TikTok video of the game in action (@littlehawktiktok).

You've Got Style

Suggestions from Cindy*

AFFECT OR EFFECT?

In their most common usages, *affect* is a verb that means “to influence,” and *effect* is a noun that means “result.”

Examples:

The wind will affect the tennis match.

He couldn't overcome the negative effect of the accusation.

A helpful tip is to remember action words are verbs. “Action” starts with an “A” as does the verb “affect.”

* Style pro Cindy Horchem, CJE, is a retired adviser and the current JEA business and projects coordinator