

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Randy Bynum
CC: Rena Glaze
Date: Thursday - August 5, 2004 9:08 PM
Subject: Pebblebrook Newspaper

Mr. Bynum:

I wanted to thank you again for giving me the opportunity to teach at Pebblebrook. I'm truly excited to be working here. I'm sure you know that I will be reviving Pebblebrook's newspaper this year. Dan Pennick was unable to answer some of my questions and told me that you are who I should talk to.

I have been advising publications for four years at Berkmar High School in Gwinnett, and have been very successful (last year, my students' newspaper was named best in the state by the Georgia Scholastic Press Association). I expect to have similar success here at Pebblebrook (in a lot of ways, Pebblebrook is a very similar school to Berkmar). More importantly, many of my former students are pursuing journalism degrees at some of the country's most prestigious journalism schools.

The reason I tell you about these things is to illustrate what an asset quality publications can be for a high school. In order to make these publications successful, the students need some basic equipment. Right now, we have very little technology that can be dedicated to the new publication classes. Kirk Checkwood and Dan have been able to help me find a couple of old Apple computers that were used in the past by the newspaper staff. We could really use a couple of newer Apple computers that can run some current software. We also need copies of current desktop publishing software (Mac versions of Adobe InDesign or Pagemaker), photography software (Photoshop) and Microsoft Word for Mac.

Ideally, I would like to have a 3 new computers with large monitors for layout and design purposes. I'd also like to find out if any Cobb schools have replaced any Apple computers recently. In Gwinnett, I was able to acquire older computers as word processors for the student reporters. Is there someone I

could speak with who could help me find older (no older than 4 years) computers that may still be of use to my students? It might also be possible to find some software that is a version or two old that is no longer being used, but will serve our purposes. I do not have to have the latest and greatest to teach the skills necessary to publish a first rate publication.

We also need a few digital cameras, scanners and a laser printer for printing proofs.

It is my goal to make Pebblebrook's newspaper one of the best in the state. If you can help us get the equipment we need to get started, I can promise you that we will publish at least six 20-28 page papers a year. We will raise all the funds necessary for publication through advertising and patronships. We will not sell the paper. Every student and staff member of Pebblebrook High School will receive the paper free of charge and it will be read.

I'm sorry this is so long, but I hope to impress upon you how important quality publications can be to a high school. Journalism is my passion and I hope to continue passing that passion along to my students. Any assistance you can provide will be greatly appreciated. I promise we will be a worthy investment.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Stroud

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Randy Bynum
Date: 10/05/04 09:15AM
Subject: Pebblebrook Newspaper

Mr. Bynum,

My students are ready to conduct an interview with you whenever you are ready. Our class meets during 4th Block on Blue Days. We will send three students (Shadeed Miller, Meagan Maupin, and Marilyn Thomas) to conduct the interview. If it is okay with you, we will tape record the interview so my other students can also listen to the interview. We would like to conduct the interview as soon as possible, so please let us know a convenient date and time. I've attached a list of subjects and questions that you may preview. My students are also instructed to ask follow-up questions, so it is possible they will add or subtract questions during the interview.

We would also like to take a few pictures of you in your office if that is ok!

Thanks for your support!

Jonathan Stroud

[Note: The attachment has been lost]

From: Randy Bynum
To: Jonathan Stroud
Date: 10/05/04 10:31 AM
Subject: Re: Pebblebrook Newspaper

The 2:30 appointment is rescinded. I see this is going to be rather time consuming. To be honest I resent some of these questions. For instance I asked for stakeholder input back in the spring regarding the new schedule and it was minimal. I have a low tolerance for agenda oriented questions.

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Randy Bynum
BC: Daniel Penick
Date: Wednesday - October 6, 2004 9:50 AM
Subject: Re: Pebblebrook Newspaper

Mr. Bynum,

I'm sorry the interview is so long, but several of my students wanted to speak to you. I wanted to allow you to conduct one extended interview for this edition, so you would not have to sit through 5 or 6 individual interviews. If is still possible, please let me know a convenient day and time as soon as you can.

I spoke to the class about your concerns about some of the questions and they understand that straight news stories are not to editorialize; I told them that is why we have an opinion section. Please don't assume my students have an agenda. A few of them are new to Pebblebrook (so am I) and are not aware of things that have happened in the past. Please use the interview to set the record straight when you believe a question is unfair.

Using your example, I think students who are critical of the new schedule need to be informed about the research and thought that went into the change. The news article can make students (and the community) aware that there were ample opportunities for all to have input into the decision. My students are new to this, but I can assure you that I am teaching journalism ethics and accountability.

Thanks,
Jonathan Stroud

From: Randy Bynum
To: Jonathan Stroud
Date: Wednesday - October 6, 2004 2:23 PM
Subject: Re: Pebblebrook Newspaper

Mr. Stroud,

The school has published several newsletters that Ms. Dixon can make available regarding the new schedule. I thoroughly explained why we went to the new schedule. I suggest that the reporters do some research so they can formulate some questions with a little more substance based on some learned knowledge. I would have preferred that these questions be reviewed by the entire class in a teachable moment to determine the quality of a question.

Your ethics nor your ability are in question.

We will set up a time next week. Please contact Ms. Glaze about an appointment.

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: Rena Glaze (Principal Bynum's Secretary)
To: Randy Bynum
Date: 01/18/05 03:40PM
Subject: Newspaper Interview

Randy,

Ashley Springer who is a student working with the Brookspeak Newspaper would like to interview you. She asked to meet with you on Monday or Wednesday during 4th.... (Wed is Early Release and Monday you tentatively have court)..... How do you want to handle it.

Rena

From: Randy Bynum
To: Jonathan Stroud
Date: 01/18/05 5:12 PM
Subject: Newspaper Interview

What is the topic??????????????

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Randy Bynum
Date: 01/18/05 08:03PM
Subject: Re: Newspaper Interview

We are preparing the questions on a variety of topics and should have them ready for preview by the end of the day on Thursday. If you can talk to a couple of my students any Blue 4th block next week, I'd appreciate it. Just let us know what works with your schedule. Thanks!

From: Randy Bynum
To: Jonathan Stroud
Date: 01/19/05 5:25 PM
Subject: Re: Newspaper Interview

OK. I would like some space to respond totwo commentaries in the last issue plus I would like to be able respond to the commentaries in the next edition if applicable.

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Randy Bynum
Date: 01/19/05 06:45PM
Subject: Re: Newspaper Interview

You may have as much space in the opinion section as you want. We will carve out a place for you that will appear in every issue. Please send me what you want to run as soon as you have it ready. We need to get a photo of you during the interview if that is ok. Thanks!

From: Randy Bynum
To: Jonathan Stroud
Date: 01/20/05 7:20 AM
Subject: Re: Newspaper Interview

OK

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Randy Bynum
Date: Friday - January 21, 2005 8:35 AM
Subject: Re: Newspaper Interview

Mr. Bynum,

Below you will find the questions that my students have prepared. Please let us know what day and time you will be available for the interview. Thanks!

> From: "Marilyn Thomas"
> Subject: Bynum Questions
> Sent: 20 Jan 2005 20:57:15

>

> RaceAdmissions

> 1. Do you believe that race should be considered for college admissions?
> 2. Do you believe that students of a minority race should be accepted over students of a majority race if all things are equal?

>

> PromUpdate

> 1. What role do you have in seeing that prom organization is on track?
> 2. Have you been informed of the location or date of prom?
> 3. Do a portion of every students dues go towards prom? (if yes-) Can students opt to refuse to pay dues in objection to prom?

> 4. How do you feel about prom (in general)?

>

> ASTPCancellation:

> 1. Can you tell us what's going on with the after school tutorial program this semester?

> 2. What happened to the funds that were used to support the after school tutorial program?

> 3. Where are you going to find a way to get funding to continue the after school tutorial program?

> 4. In your opinion, has the after school tutorial program been a success? Why and how do you know that?

> 5. If PHS is not able to continue the program, how do you think it will affect our students?

>

> StinesRetirement

> 1. When Coach Stines said he was going to resign, what went through your mind?

> 2. Coach Stines has been head coach for 15 years and has a certain coaching style, what are you looking for in a replacement?

> 3. Stines has built a very strong program, are you looking forward to a new coach taking the program in possibly a new direction?

> 4. How has Coach Stines influenced this school not only as coach, but as a teacher too?

> 5. Are new coaches interested in the position here at Pebblebrook?

> 6. Are you excited about the next football season?

> 7. What are you looking for in a new coach?

>

> GayDiscrimination

> 1. How do you feel about the discrimination of gay students at Pebblebrook?

> 2. Do you think what happened with Antonio and Luis at the Senior Walk was discrimination towards them being gay?

> 3. If girls can wear baggy pants and look like guys why can't guys wear girl clothing and dress like girls?

> 4. Why weren't Antonio and Luis allowed to dress the way they were and still walk?

>

> FireAlarmHazards

- > 1. What do you plan to do if the alarms keep going off involuntarily?
- > 2. What was the cause of the alarms going off?
- > 3. Alarms causes students to get off task, what is your plan to get students back on task?
- > 4. What if it was a real fire how could you let teachers and students know that it was real?
- > 5. Does the alarm going off recessivly break any laws?
- > 6. Is it a criminal offense for student to pull the alarms?
- > 7. Can you tell when a student pulled the alarm and when there was another cause for the alarm?
- > 8. How are students who pull the fire alarm punished?

>

> DressCodeViolations

- > 1. Do you think that we have a dress code problem?
- > 2. Do you think that the teachers are enforcing the rules of the dress code?
- > 3. If the punishment was harsher do you think that students would stop violateing the dress code?

>

> Gangs

- > 1. Do you think that PHS has a gang problem? if yes, why?
- > 2. What does administration do to prevent gang activity and protect students?
- > 3. Do you think over the past year that gang activity has increased or decreased?Why?
- > 4. Do you think that because students don't make a large effort to stop gang activity, they support it?
- > 5. What can students do to stop gang activity?
- > 6. What do you think of graffiti and vandalism by gangs?
- > 7. Are there many parents who complain about the gang acitvity at PHS?

>

> MomentOfSilence

- > 1. When and why was the moment of silence established?
- > 2. Is the Moment of Silence a replacement for a time set aside for prayer?
- > 3. Do you think the moment of silence is it helpful to student mentally?
- > 4. Will the lack of silence for a day effect anyone?
- > 5. Do you plan on getting rid of the Moment of Silence any time soon?

>

> ParentInvolvement

> 1. Do you think the lack of parental involvement is a fair representation of a child's academic success? and do you think this is a conflict that needs top priority in our school?

> 2. Do you know why the price for parking permits is not only expensive, but why the price has been raised as well?

>

> TeenPregnancy

> 1. Do you feel that girls at our school rush into pregnancies prematurely?

> 2. Do you think teen pregnancy has become a problem at Pebblebrook?

> 3. What do you advise for girls who become pregnant to do as far as their schooling?

> 4. Do you think teen pregnancy is more common in the community, opposed to more affluent areas?

> 5. If you recognize this as a problem, how do you think it should be solved?

> 6. Do you support abstinence or safe sex being taught at PHS?

> 7. Why aren't babysitting services provided for teen moms who want to stay in school at Pebblebrook?

>

> Dancer'sDiets

> 1. Do you think that a student's weight and physical maintenance should be included in their overall class grade?

>

> TextbookShortage

> 1. Do you think that the textbook shortage is a big problem at PHS?

> 2. Do you think that it is affecting students grades?

> 3. Is there anything that can be done to raise money to buy more books?

> 4. Do you think that a harsher punishment for lost textbooks should be established, to make sure that they are turned in?

>

> EvolutionUpdate

> 1. Do you agree with the court ruling to remove the stickers from the Biology books? Why or why not?

> 2. Would you encourage students to get involved in promoting/protesting this issue?

> 3. What do you think of the County's decision to challenge the court's decision?

From: Randy Bynum
To: Jonathan Stroud
Date: 01/24/05 9:46 AM
Subject: Re: Newspaper Interview

Jonathan,

Several points of interest. I would again like to point out that some of the questions show that the "reporters" lack initiative to do any prior research and editing. For instance under Prom questions 2 and 3 can be answered by the sponsors. Under Stines questions 2 & 7 are redundant. The questions about Gay Discrimination are written in a biased manner. They also violate the privacy act by talking about specific students with regards to policy/discipline. Fire Alarms-I have announced several times about the fire alarms going off by accident. They could do some research about the laws regarding the pulling of fire alarms. Moment of Silence- This law can be researched. What does parking permits have to do with parental involvement?

Teen Pregnancy- Have they talked to Guidance to get any data?

Dancer's Diet- The question is untrue and biased.

As I have stated in previous correspondence these questions should serve as teachable moments. What I see in far too many questions is a lack of preparation and advocacy of personal agendas. Rest assured I do not shy away from answering tough questions but I am concerned about the objectivity and maturity of some of the staffers we are giving a "pen" to.

Prior to the 2005 - 2006 course registration we need to sit down and do an assessment of the newspaper's future. Please review the questions again to gauge my concerns.

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Randy Bynum
CC: Daniel Penick
Date: Monday - January 24, 2005 11:54 AM
Subject: Re: Newspaper Interview

Mr. Bynum,

I appreciate your concerns, but do not agree that the reporters show a lack of initiative to do any prior research. Any story that is turned in without quotes and research will not be published. I do admit, that in order to cut down on the number of interviews we conduct with you, some reporters are asked to submit questions very early in their process of writing the articles. Many of the reporters are asked to juggle up to three stories at a time.

Many of the reporters questions are being asked in order to get "an official statement" from you. I understand that some of these issues have have been addressed by you in the past, but I require my reporters to use exact quotes. Most of the time my reporters don't even know yet that they will be writing about a particular story when you speak about a given subject. They are asking "obvious" questions often just in order to get an accurate quote from their principal about the subject. I'm sure you'd rather have them quote you exactly instead of trying to remember what you said and paraphrasing you. Please remember that these are just students. They are not professional journalists.

They will make mistakes, and I assure you that I help them correct their mistakes every chance I get.

I do agree that some of the questions you cited are information that the reporters could have gathered from another source. I will do a better job of filtering these questions in the future. I wanted to get them to you as soon as possible so the students could conduct the interview.

I had hoped to begin the recruiting process for next year's staff as soon as possible. Am I allowed to begin, or do we need to speak about the newspaper's future first?

Below you will find an edited version of the the questions. I hope you can allow the students to conduct the interview this week.

~Jonathan Stroud

> From: "Marilyn Thomas"
> Subject: Bynum Questions
> Sent: 20 Jan 2005 20:57:15

> RaceAdmissions
> 1. Do you believe that race should be considered for college admissions?
> 2. Do you believe that students of a minority race should be accepted over students of a majority race if all things are equal?

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- > 3. Where are you going to find a way to get funding to continue the after school tutorial program?
- > 4. In your opinion, has the after school tutorial program been a success? Why and how do you know that?
- > 5. If PHS is not able to continue the program, how do you think it will affect our students?

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> StinesRetirement

- > 1. When Coach Stines said he was going to resign, what went through your mind?
- > 2. Coach Stines has been head coach for 15 years and has a certain coaching style, what are you looking for in a replacement?
- > 3. Stines has built a very strong program, are you looking forward to a new coach taking the program in possibly a new direction?
- > 4. How has Coach Stines influenced this school not only as coach, but as a teacher too?
- > 5. Are new coaches interested in the position here at Pebblebrook?
- > 6. Are you excited about the next football season?

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- > 1. How do you feel about the discrimination of gay students at Pebblebrook?
- > 3. If girls can wear baggy pants and look like guys why can't guys wear girl clothing and dress like girls?

> FireAlarmHazards

- > 1. What do you plan to do if the alarms keep going off involuntarily?
- > 2. What was the cause of the alarms going off?
- > 4. What if it was a real fire how could you let teachers and students know that it was real?
- > 7. Can you tell when a student pulled the alarm and when there was another cause for the alarm?
- > 8. How are students who pull the fire alarm punished?

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> DressCodeViolations

- > 1. Do you think that we have a dress code problem?

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> 1. Do you think that PHS has a gang problem? if yes, why?

> 2. What does administration do to prevent gang activity and protect students?

> 3. Do you think over the past year that gang activity has increased or decreased? Why?

> 4. Do you think that because students don't make a large effort to stop gang activity, they support it?

> 5. What can students do to stop gang activity?

> 6. What do you think of graffiti and vandalism by gangs?

> 7. Are there many parents who complain about the gang activity at PHS?

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> Parent Involvement

> 1. Do you think the lack of parental involvement is a fair representation of a child's academic success? and do you think this is a conflict that needs top priority in our school?

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> Teen Pregnancy

> 2. Do you think teen pregnancy has become a problem at Pebblebrook?

> 3. What do you advise for girls who become pregnant to do as far as their schooling?

> 5. If you recognize this as a problem, what role should the school serve in solving the problem?

> 6. Do you support abstinence or safe sex or both being taught at PHS?

> 7. Why aren't babysitting services provided for teen moms who want to stay in school at Pebblebrook?

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> Dancer's Diets

> 1. Can classes make a student's weight and physical maintenance part of his or her overall class grade?

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> Textbook Shortage

- > 1. Do you think that the textbook shortage is a big problem at PHS?
- > 2. Do you think that it is affecting students grades?
- > 3. Is there anything that can be done to raise money to buy more books?
- > 4. Do you think that a harsher punishment for lost textbooks should be established, to make sure that they are turned in?
- >
- > EvolutionUpdate
- > 1. Do you agree with the court ruling to remove the stickers from the Biology books? Why or why not?
- > 2. Would you encourage students to get involved in promoting/protesting this issue?
- > 3. What do you thing of the County's decision to challenge the court's decision?

From: Randy Bynum
To: Jonathan Stroud
CC: Daniel Penick, Gayle Johnson
Date: Monday - January 24, 2005 12:36 PM
Subject: Re: Newspaper Interview

Jonathan,

You can continue your plans to recruit. I will reserve final judgement to see if the quality of questioning gets better. The lack of initiative in some of the questions is apparent. It is also obvious that personal agenda questions were included. While they are students they should be encouraged to do some research where applicable to formulate good questions. Some of the questions remind me of the student who writes down the problem and waits for someone else to work it out for hi. The District website, under your supervision, is an excellent plan to do policy research prior to the interview.

You are right I would rather be quoted than paraphrased. I will look to see that is the case from now.

You have a good heart and want to do the right thing. That has been apparent to me from the beginning. That is not the case with some of your staff. However, as you learn the terrain you will be able to recruit better staff in the future. I will be available for an interview this week. Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday. Let me know which day is better...

From: "Randy Bynum"
Date: March 23, 2005 9:54 AM EST
Subject: Happenings

Please be reminded that the Happenings are to be read everyday during 2nd period. The information for the current day and the prior day are to be reviewed. If you have a class during 2nd please make sure you are complying with this directive. Thank you.

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Randy Bynum
Date: Wednesday - March 23, 2005 11:47 AM
Subject: Suggestions...Re: Happenings

My students are constantly telling me that they never hear the Happenings. I can understand even the best teachers losing track of time and forgetting to

read them. It happens to me all of the time despite my efforts to budget time for them. I believe every teacher forgets from time to time.

Is there a reason why the announcements cannot be read over the intercom? Why have all 100 or so teachers read them at the same time when one person can accomplish the same thing over the intercom? Not to mention, we will guarantee that our students hear the the announcements.

I'd love to talk to you sometime about the possibility of having a multimedia class that produces Power point announcements (as one part of the requirements of the class) that could be broadcast constantly on one of our closed circuit channels. I helped with something similar to this at my former school in Gwinnett.

I'd also like to suggest that you consider forming a public relations committee. I again helped with something similar at my former school. The committee was responsible for making sure our good news was disseminated to the professional press, realtors and our community. I think a lot of good things we do here go unnoticed by our community. A good P.R. team can help.

If you are interested in any of these suggestions, I'd love to talk to you about it at your convenience.

Thanks!

From: "Randy Bynum"
Date: March 23, 2005 12:17:57 PM EST
To: "Jonathan Stroud"
Subject: Suggestions...Re: Happenings

We want 100 teachers(or a student) to read it in hopes that some personalization or a teachable moment will happen. After BrookSpeak reaches my expectations we will address your other suggestions.

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Randy Bynum
Date: Friday - April 29, 2005 8:29 AM
Subject: Editorials and Opinions

Here are the subjects for Pebblebrook related opinions/editorials for the upcoming edition of BrookSpeak:

Editorials

- Prom (students need to be responsible).
- School Calendar (Mostly positive, but critical of beginning school next year in the middle of the week).
- Juveniles receiving the Death Penalty.

Opinions:

- Locked Bathrooms/Vandalism (critical of need to lock P.A. restrooms. Critical of students who vandalize).
- Point/Conterpoint dealing with the "real" perceptions of prom.

Letters to the Editor

- More security needed
- Parenting/Sex Ed. classes needed

From: "Randy Bynum"
Date: May 2, 2005 7:34:57 AM EDT
To: "Jonathan Stroud"
Subject: Re: Editorials and Opinions

How many stories will talk about the good things going on at Pebblebrook? Do any positive editorials get submitted? Is this the last edition for the year?

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Randy Bynum
Date: Monday - May 2, 2005 8:33 AM
Subject: Re: Editorials and Opinions

Three editorials are published in each edition. The editors choose and write the editorials. They are unsigned and written to reflect the majority opinion of the editorial staff. I would not consider any of the editorials in this edition negative. One editorial urges students to make prom an enjoyable and safe evening. One takes a wait and see attitude toward next year's county school calendar (it list pros and cons) and the final one takes exception with a recent Supreme Court ruling that says minors cannot face the death penalty (I happen to disagree with my students on this one). At my count, 14 out of 30+ stories in this edition will highlight positive thing going on at PHS (another 6 are neutral).

The class is still working on new stories, but it will be up to the staff if we are able to get an additional paper out by the end of May.

From: "Randy Bynum"
Date: May 2, 2005 9:37:38 AM EDT
To: "Jonathan Stroud"
Subject: Re: Editorials and Opinions

Good. Thanks for the info.

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: Randy Bynum
To: Jonathan Stroud
Date: Wednesday - May 4, 2005 10:11 AM
Subject: Observation

Previously we talked about getting out the good things happening at Pebblebrook. So I am dumbfounded that the Pebblebrook Star student's story merited less consideration for the front page instead of teen motherhood.

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: "Jonathan Stroud"
Date: May 4, 2005 11:49:24 AM EDT

To: "Randy Bynum"
Cc: "Daniel Penick"
Subject: Re: Observation

Mr. Bynum,

I'm sorry you are unhappy with the front page, but I allow the editors to make those decisions. I thought the teen pregnancy article was well done and neither glorified nor condemned the two girls who were profiled. They chose the articles that they thought would be most important to the Pebblebrook student body.

From: Ashley Hosey
To: Jonathan Stroud
Date: Wednesday - May 4, 2005 11:02 AM
Subject: newspaper

Mr. Stroud

I was perusing the Brookspeak and I have a question. There are two very good articles about student achievement: the Star student and the student going to Africa this summer. Why are these articles not on the front page instead of the article on teenage pregnancy? I'm not saying that the article on teenage pregnancy is not a valid topic but it would seem to me that we would want our frontage to highlight our student achievement and successes .

Ashley B. Hosey
Assistant Principal/Athletic Director,
Pebblebrook High School
[\(770\) 819-2521](tel:7708192521)
fax(770) 819-2523

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Ashley Hosey
CC: Daniel Penick
Date: Wednesday - May 4, 2005 11:34 AM
Subject: Re: newspaper

I teach my students that they are to be impartial reporters when producing the newspaper, not cheerleaders. Most of my students love Pebblebrook and only want to make this school better. I must admit, when the students generate story ideas, problems within the school often rise to the top. I don't think it is much different from any professional paper.

My students are very conscious of the need to write stories about the positive things going on at Pebblebrook, but that is not their primary purpose as journalists. Public Relations publications should be produced for that purpose. I would not be doing my job as a teacher of journalists if I taught them how to produce a P.R. student newsletter.

The student editors make all editorial decisions for BrookSpeak. I stand behind their decision to run the article on teen pregnancy on the front cover. I do not always agree with their decisions, and I often ADVISE them to reconsider, but I don't believe we should treat them as if they will earn their first amendment rights along with their diploma.

I agree that we (the administration and faculty) would rather see articles about student achievement and successes on the front page, but the paper is not ours, it belongs to the students.

Thanks for your input. I would like to use your comments in a class discussion if you don't mind. Please feel free to write or speak directly to the student editors; their email addresses are in the newspaper. Perhaps you might even consider writing a letter to the editor.

Jonathan Stroud

BrookSpeak Adviser

From: "Randy Bynum"
Date: May 4, 2005 1:02:10 PM EDT
To: "Ashley Hosey" , "Jonathan Stroud"
Cc: "Daniel Penick"
Subject: Re: newspaper

Mr. Stroud,

If this is your Attitude then I suggest you look at having your needs met elsewhere. He asked you a simple question and got attitude.

I will be speaking with Ms. Johnson about deleting this class from the 2005-2006 class schedule.

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: "Ashley Hosey"
Date: May 4, 2005 2:16:47 PM EDT
To: "Jonathan Stroud"
Cc: "Daniel Penick"
Subject: Re: newspaper

Mr. Stroud

It is apparent by the tone of your response that you miss my point. No one has asked your reporters to be "cheerleaders" and contrary to your opinion the school paper IS different from a professional paper.

I am disturbed by and I have a problem with the fact you let the students make ALL of the FINAL decisions. This will not be a defensible position to the community, Mr. Bynum, or Mr. Redden if something was printed that was inappropriate. As advisor, YOU are the Chief editor of the paper and more than that YOU are the teacher over the classroom. The final decision on editing and layout should be yours NOT THE STUDENTS. As long as the paper says Pebblebrook High school and is distributed from Pebblebrook High School the paper belongs to Pebblebrook High School and the administration and staff are responsible for what appears in it.

And furthermore regardless of your perception a school newspaper released to the students, parents, and the community at large IS a Public Relations publication.

Ashley B. Hosey
Assistant Principal/Athletic Director,
Pebblebrook High School
(770) 819-2521
fax(770) 819-2523

From: "Jonathan Stroud"
Date: May 4, 2005 2:25:12 PM EDT
To: "Randy Bynum"
Cc: "Ashley Hosey", "Daniel Penick"
Subject: Re: newspaper

Mr. Bynum,
I certainly did not mean for my response to offend. I was sincerely trying to answer the question. If you or Mr. Hosey interpreted it as attitude then I apologize. Am I impassioned about this topic? Absolutely! If you think I would ever be disrespectful to a coworker, then you do not know me very well.

I would ask you to reconsider taking the class away from the students. I have over 50 students who have signed up and are looking forward to taking the classes next year.

Jonathan Stroud

From: "Jonathan Stroud"
Date: Wednesday - May 4, 2005 2:39 PM EDT
To: "Ashley Hosey"
Cc: "Randy Bynum" , "Daniel Penick"
Subject: Re: newspaper

Mr. Hosey,

First, I'd like to apologize for the tone of my response to your question. I certainly did not mean to sound disrespectful. I'd love to talk about this with you if you have the time. I think it would be better to speak face to face rather than by email so nothing will be misunderstood by either of us.

I'd like for you to read an article that your email reminded me of. It was written by a principal and a newspaper adviser and appeared in the March 2001 issue of Principal Leadership, published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. I pasted the article below.

What is the Role of a Free Press?

The Voice of Freedom

We thought that we knew how big the alcohol problem was among students at Westport High School. We thought it was not as bad as national surveys made student alcohol use out to be. And we had implemented a breathalyzer policy to guarantee that all school social events, at least, were alcohol free. But then

the Villager, our high school newspaper, did a survey on drinking. It showed us just how wrong we were.

It wasn't that the overall numbers were that bad – albeit worse than we expected. But the paper also asked how often people drank. And that's where the shock was. Some of the students surveyed said they could not get through a day without a drink.

The Villager ran the piece as its cover story that week and later ran an interview with a student who clearly had an alcoholism problem. At Westport High School, we could no longer pretend we didn't have an alcohol problem. Our high school newspaper has seen to that.

Many administrators might see that last bit as a problem. After all, no one wants to see negative news items about their school in any newspaper, let alone in a student publication. Isn't the school newspaper supposed to be a public relations tool that showcases the good things that happen?

We don't do that. We don't censor the paper. We don't engage in any form of prior review. The students own the newspaper. They are responsible for what it says and what it does. What they decide matters to them and the students who read it.

As a result, the Villager has become something much more than a public relations tool that no one either reads or believes. First, it has had a dramatic impact on school climate. There are student cliques at Westport High School, like every other high school. The difference is ours get along with each other. In part, that's because over the course of the year, members of every subgroup become the topic of some news or feature story in the paper. Part of the Villager's mission statement -- a statement that students decided they needed and developed on their own -- is to build a greater sense of community within the school. The result is the staff constantly tries to find ways to remind students of their classmates' humanity.

Many of the paper's editorials appear to have a similar aim. They constantly urge all of us to become more respectful of one another. And they are as quick

to point out our successes as our failures. Further, they reveal the issues that students confront. After reading an interview with a teenage alcoholic, a girl who has recently had an abortion, a boy who has tried to commit suicide, or a student who works 40 hours a week and doesn't get home before 11 p.m. most nights, it is difficult for any of us to ignore that students live complicated lives that have a direct effect on their ability to function in the classroom.

With stories such as these, the Villager forces school staff members to take steps toward improving students' lives. Equally important, the Villager is an avenue for open and clear communications about where students are coming from. More than once, items in the paper have made both teachers and administrators rethink decisions that have been made.

Not that the students' opinions always make sense. Sometimes their ideas are ridiculous. Sometimes a writer's opinions are so negative or idealistic that we wonder what galaxy the writer lives in. But even the most far-out columns serve positive purposes. Sometimes a writer just needs to blow off steam. Sometimes a column is part of the process of growing up -- a moment of public adolescent rebellion that eventually leads to greater maturity. Regardless, we'd rather have the ideas in print in the school newspaper where the students can learn to harness their energy, anger, and intensity, than in an underground publication where that emotional angst just feeds on itself and creates greater negativity in the long run.

In addition, the staff of the Villager is more concerned with responsible action than with rights. Students spend as much time exploring the ethics of their stories as they do creating them. Every student understands that with his or her right to freedom of the press comes the responsibility to use those rights ethically. And they will tell you that any school can have this type of newspaper if they have the courage to give students ownership of their newspaper.

This article, written by Harry Proudfoot and Alan Weintraub, appeared in the March 2001 issue of *Principal Leadership*, published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. To read the full text of the article online, visit the Student Press Law Center's web site.

From: Daniel Penick
To: Randy Bynum, Ashley Hosey, Jonathan Stroud
Date: Wednesday - May 4, 2005 3:04 PM
Subject: Newspaper

Middle management has a suggestion: let's have a brief meeting to address all the areas of concern. Email can (and obviously does) lead to misinterpretation of purpose and tone. As the go-between who knows everyone involved, I can say that each of us has the best interest of the school in mind, and together we can do what's best.

I urge each party to postpone a final decision on this matter until we get a chance to meet.

Dan Penick
English Department Chair
THE Pebblebrook High School

From: Randy Bynum
To: Ashley Hosey, Daniel Penick, Jonathan Stroud
Date: Thursday - May 5, 2005 7:30 AM
Subject: Re: Newspaper

I sincerely appreciate your efforts Dan but there was no misinterpretation in any of the correspondence. The best interest of the school can be served by increasing the number of 9th grade Lit classes by eliminating the newspaper and literary mag from the course selections. This will allow us to have smaller 9th grade classes. As you are aware they are our largest and most needy grade level.

The newspaper and magazine can apply to me to become afterschool extracurricular activities with an approved sponsor and by-laws. Ms. Johnson will make the appropriate changes to the master schedule.

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From : mwatkins
To : randy.bynum@cobbk12.org Add to Addressbook
Sent : 09 May 2005 8:35:34
Subject : Newspaper Interview

Good morning Mr. Bynum,

I just heard the news about your recent decision to cancel the upcoming journalism classes next year, and on behalf of the Brookspeak staff, I would be greatly obliged to get your further perspective for an upcoming article on this subject. Please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Michaela Watkins

From : Randy Bynum
To : mwatkins@pebblebrookpress.com
Sent : 09 May 2005 1:09:32
Subject : Re: Newspaper Interview

Ms. Watkins,

Due to budget cuts in the school district we will lose three teacher allotments next year. That is a drastic cut to a school where smaller class sizes due affect student learning. When cuts of these types are made principals must look at which programs must be cut and/or realigned based on the number of students served and seniority of the program. Based on those criteria a decision was made to move the journalism from class status to club status.

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: "mwatkins"
To: Randy Bynum
Date: Monday - May 9, 2005 2:32 PM
Subject: Re: Newspaper Interview

Mr. Bynum,

In regard to writing an upcoming article, I would like to know when you would be available to take part in a face to face interview. Thank you again for the speedy response to my last post.

Michaela Watkins

From: Randy.Bynum@cobbk12.org
Subject: Re: Newspaper Interview
Date: May 9, 2005 2:38:01 PM EDT
To: mwatkins@pebblebrookpress.com

I provided all the necessary information on the subject. What additional questions do you have?

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

[A letter and emails were given to Joseph Redden on May 10, 2005]

From: Joseph.Redden@cobbk12.org
Subject: Student Newspaper
Date: May 12, 2005 10:02:55 AM EDT
To: brookspeak@pebblebrookpress.com

TO: Rebekah Martin; Marilyn Thomas; Michaela Watkins; Meagan Maupin:

Thank you for attending the Open Office Hour on Tuesday, May 10, 2005. We have asked the Board Attorney for an opinion regarding your issue; we will notify you as soon as possible as to the legal opinion; hopefully before the end of the school year.

Joe Redden
Cobb County School District
joseph.redden@cobbk12.org
7704263453

From: Paul Gritz
To: Randy Bynum
Date: Monday - May 16, 2005 8:53 AM
Subject: Power 2 Learn

Sir:

I have been approached by the school newspaper about an article on the laptop initiative. They are wanting to know about the date of our application, the chances of us being a demonstration site, the sequence of events if selected, and our impressions of Alan November. The question is am I at liberty to disclose that information at this time or in the future?

Thanks,
Paul

From: Randy Bynum
To: Daniel Penick
Date: Monday - May 16, 2005 8:55 AM
Subject: Fwd: Power 2 Learn

Whay are they trying to publish this week when they should be concentrating on exams???? Let him know that there is to no publication this week!!

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: Daniel Penick

To: Jonathan Stroud
Date: Monday - May 16, 2005 9:02 AM
Subject: Fwd: Power 2 Learn

Boss says no paper this week. See attached.

Dan Penick
English Department Chair
THE Pebblebrook High School

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Randy Bynum
CC: Daniel Penick
Date: Monday - May 16, 2005 9:17 AM
Subject: Re: Fwd: Power 2 Learn

Mr. Bynum,
The newspaper is 85% complete and we were going to mail it to the publisher this afternoon. Are you saying we cannot finish it?

Jonathan Stroud

From: Kevin Daniel (Associate Principal)
To: Jonathan Stroud
CC: Randy Bynum
Date: Monday - May 16, 2005 10:54 AM
Subject: Newspaper

Please send me the editorials and front page articles as soon as possible.

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Kevin Daniel
Date: Monday - May 16, 2005 11:36 AM
Subject: Re: Newspaper

Here they are. One editorial has not been turned in yet. I should have it by the end of the day.

Front page articles:

Graduation

Rebekah Martin

Students are eagerly waiting for the last day of school, but even more importantly, seniors are holding their breath and counting down the seconds to graduation. With senior week far behind and changing of the chairs a distant memory, there is one final act which will end seniors' high school lives: walking down the aisle and receiving the diplomas which symbolize all of the work they done the past four years of their lives.

Graduation will be held at the Kennesaw State University Convocation Center on Saturday, May 21, at 2:00 p.m.

"The venue this year is great. It's so simple to get to, there is plenty of parking, parking is free, and it's right next to the Convocation Center. I'm hoping that we have good weather because the center is right next to the campus green which would be great for the graduates to take pictures," said Assistant Principal Andrew Smith.

This is the first year that this location will be used for a graduation.

Pebblebrook will be one of the first schools that will use the facility.

Although graduations don't change very much from year to year, there has been one change that has been made which will impact all seniors. This year, seniors are required to attend a mandatory practice rehearsal at the location of graduation, and if students choose not to attend, those students will not be able to walk at graduation.

One thing that isn't changing is the awards and scholarship ceremony. Every year, special scholarships and awards are given to seniors who have been selected. This year, the scholarships that will be recognized are the Paul Hope Memorial Scholarship and the Atlanta Journal Cup scholarship. Other awards that will be given include the Principal Medallion awards and the Ray A. Kroc youth achievement award.

While there are no invited speakers, there will be several special guests to attend Pebblebrook's graduation that include school board member Betty Gray and Superintendent Joseph Redden.

The moment that will end a chapter in the seniors' lives is quickly approaching, and the staff and school hope they have done everything in their power to make sure that this day will be a day seniors will never forget.

Budget Cuts

Brittney Middleton

Cobb County Schools announced a budget cut last week. Teachers will get small raises, but student parking fees will be raised and class sizes are expected to grow.

"Cobb County School District is making a \$22.3 million budget cut for reduced funding from the State of Georgia," said Chief Financial Officer Robert Morales. Among the new proposal's are: 1.7% teacher and employee raises, a \$10 increase for parking fees and fewer teacher allotments per school.

"Due to budget cuts in the school district [Pebblebrook] will lose three teacher allotments next year," said Principal Randy Bynum.

Fewer teachers will mean larger class sizes. The larger class sizes not only affect the teachers, but students as well. With at least three fewer teachers, students will be dispersed amongst the other classes.

All schools have been asked to propose budget-saving ideas to help tolerate the new budget cuts for the new school year.

"The new budget cuts will not become official until July 1, 2005, pending School Board approval," said Morales.

Most teachers are not thrilled with the new raises for faculty.

"The 1.7% raise is not enough because it will be eaten away with taxes, some may not even see it because of the tax rate rising," said English teacher Graylyn Lee.

" It is better than nothing, but I wish teachers were more appreciated. People don't understand how hard teachers work," said social studies teacher Karen Staker.

Students are also unhappy. The higher parking fee is not popular with students that already feel they are paying too much.

" The money shouldn't go to the county; they need to use money correctly," said sophomore Quintez Holt.

"That's ridiculous, it's even worse that the price is up, they aren't making our school better, but the money is going to the county," said freshman Micah Ducre.

Some students are concerned about the prospect of larger class sizes.

"That will make the learning environment harder, and students need more one-on-one attention; grades will more than likely go down," said Ducre.

"Classes are already too big, we need more teachers because this cut takes away from our learning experience," said junior Erika Brown. "Next year is my senior year. I don't want 30 people in [each of] my classes."

Student Rights Threatened

Staff Editorial

At the onset of the creation of BrookSpeak's final edition this year, the administration has decided that it would be best to cancel all journalism classes, the literary magazine and the newspaper itself.

While the administration claims the classes have been canceled due to budget cuts, the newspaper staff believes the real reason is in order to censor the opinions of the student body.

From the beginning of the creation of BrookSpeak, it has been said that our reporters, who are also students attempting to learn the art of journalism, have had an agenda to tear down the reputation of Pebblebrook. To put it simply, our reporters convey the events that occur and cannot conveniently ignore the fact that many of the events worthy of reporting in the newspaper are not reflective of a peaceful and harmonious environment.

This newspaper's goal was not to intensify the negativity of events that have surrounded Pebblebrook throughout the year, but to simply inform the student body of the events that encircle them daily, and we believe that we have accomplished our goal.

The administration has ordered that, should BrookSpeak wish to continue to publish, that we would have to form an after-school club with an approved adviser. This year the newspaper class met every other day, which made it difficult enough to publish a newspaper. For those who are involved, it is clear that making the newspaper an after-school club, would literally kill the newspaper.

The BrookSpeak staff has contacted Joseph Redden, who is the Superintendent of Cobb County Schools and the Student Press Law Center in Washington, D.C., in hopes that we will be able to save BrookSpeak, but with school quickly coming to a close, our hopes are swiftly diminishing.

To all students of Pebblebrook High School: these recent events are an example of the power of the authorities at this school. This newspaper is something that this school should be proud of, but it is obvious that the efforts that we have made this year do not meet our administrators' standards.

If this newspaper is to be saved, students and parents need to contact Principal Bynum, Superintendent Redden and members of the Cobb County School Board. While we understand that the administration wants Pebblebrook portrayed in the best light possible, that does not give them the right to silence the voice of this school. It shouldn't be a secret that we have students who bring guns on campus or that we have teen mothers trying to juggle family responsibilities and school.

We shouldn't have to hide the truths which we face everyday; by taking away the newspaper, the administration is directly violating students' First Amendment rights.

A second editorial about graduation was completed over the weekend, but has not been turned in yet. I expect to have it immediately after school today.

From: Randy Bynum

To: Jonathan Stroud

Date: Monday - May 16, 2005 12:12 PM

Subject: Re: Fwd: Power 2 Learn

That is correct. This week is about final exams and graduation. That is what the focus

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: Jonathan Stroud
To: Randy Bynum
Date: Monday - May 16, 2005 12:16 PM
Subject: Re: Fwd: Power 2 Learn

Thanks, I'll let my students know.

From: Randy Bynum
To: Pebblebrook Faculty
Date: Wednesday - May 18, 2005 7:21 AM
Subject: MDJ Article

Today many of you will read or hear about the article concerning the school newspaper. As you read it many of you will form opinions and take sides. That is your right, especially those of you who have invested so much in this school. However I ask that you keep keep your focus on why we are really here and that is to facilitate student achievement. As I have said before nattering nabobs of negativity, regardless of how they are cloaked, cannot stop us on our journey to excellence.

We are losing three teacher allotments next year. In addition the pupil-teacher ratio is rising. That means less teachers and larger class sizes. There was a choice to be made with regards to what classes to keep and what to dissolve. The classes that were looked at were new classes first. They were Graphic Arts, Cosmetology, and the Journalism classes. Of these three Journalism served the least number of students by far. I then decided to move it to an afterschool activity. This didn't seem like a stretch since it only produced 3 to 4 issues this year whereas the Sprayberry paper publishes every two weeks.

With regards to the quality and balance of the paper, yes i did have concerns as many of you did. The bottom line is that course listings at any school are reviewed for quality, student interest, and graduation/college requirements.

This year we have moved mountains in so many ways. The agenda of a few can not overshadow the herculean efforts demonstrated in our successful test scores, the accolades students have received , the facility upgrades we have received, or the heart and soul pored into this school by the committed professionals here.

I told the MDJ reporter the essence of what I've said here. He chose to take another road. I only take the high road, especially when it has to do with what is in the best interest of Pebblebrook. I ask ,sncerely and heartfelt, that rather than be angry at anyone that has tried to tarnish the great year the Pebblebrook School Community has had, you stay professional, focused, and committed to Soaring to Success!

Thank you for all you do for our students, school, and community.

Randy Bynum, Principal
Pebblebrook High School
Cobb County School District

From: "Joseph Redden"
Date: May 20, 2005 1:01:55 PM EDT
To:
Cc: "Jill Kalina" , "Randy Bynum"
Subject: Pebblebrook HS Journalism Class

As promised, I sought a legal opinion regarding the cancellation of the Journalism class and recently received a reply.

The issue is whether canceling the journalism class and removing it from the 2005-06 schedule violates the First Amendment Rights of the journalism students.

Legally, there is not a violation of the First Amendment Rights of the journalism students. Educators are entitled to exercise control over the school schedule. Cancellation of the journalism class for legitimate educational purposes is an example of the school Principal's authority.

The Principal wishes to remove the Journalism class from the school schedule so that the number of 9th grade literature classes may be increased. This plan will permit Pebblebrook H.S. to have smaller 9th grade literature classes. The Principal plans to provide the opportunity to students to participate in an after-school journalism program which would publish a newspaper.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. Good luck in all your future endeavors.

Joe Redden
Cobb County School District
joseph.redden@cobbk12.org
7704263453