



National Press Photographers Association

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VIA EMAIL rmcdaniel@mckinneyisd.net

Dr. Rick McDaniel
Superintendent
McKinney ISD
1 Duvall St
McKinney, TX 75069-3211

RE: Seizure of Student Journalist's Camera

Dear Dr. McDaniel,

I write to you as the general counsel for the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA), to express our deep concerns over an incident that took place on October 4, 2021, at McKinney High School involving student journalists from the school's yearbook and media website.

Allegedly, one of the faculty, Jesse Abel, told those journalists to leave, even though they were gathering information, images and recordings for their class and had a legal right to be present in their school. At some point after being told to leave, Mr. Abel seized/confiscated the camera of one of the student photographers, Alyssa Ford. It is also alleged that the school principal, Alan Arbabi, also was involved in this incident. Although no specific charges were made against any of the student journalists the camera was held until later that day when it was eventually returned.

If indeed you truly wish to live up to the District's Vision of being a "a cohesive, diverse community providing engaging learning experiences for all" with a Mission to "provide engaging learning experiences so students can become effective communicators, quality contributors, and socially responsible citizens" with the Belief that "meaningful relationships enrich learning," we request that you respect the First Amendment rights of your school's journalists. It should also be noted that the alleged seizure/confiscation of the camera is a violation of the Privacy Protection Act of 1980 which was enacted to protect the work product of journalists resulting from a 1978 case involving the search of a student newspaper at Stanford University (see: *Zurcher v. Stanford Daily*, 436 U.S. 547).

In order to avoid a repetition of this incident, we believe meaningful discussions with your journalism students and the entire faculty/staff regarding such rights and responsibilities rather the alleged arbitrary and possibly illegal actions should take place and we encourage you to transform this into a positive teachable moment for future journalists and all students.

Please let me know if and how NPPA can be helpful in this matter.

Very truly yours,

Mickey H. Osterreicher

Mickey H. Osterreicher, General Counsel