

speaking UNDERGROUND

BrookSpeak newspaper censored

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.

So, just to get this right, our school teaches students to speak their minds, and once they do, immediately takes away their freedom of speech. What does this say about the value of education at Pebblebrook High School?

US Constitution

First Amendment

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

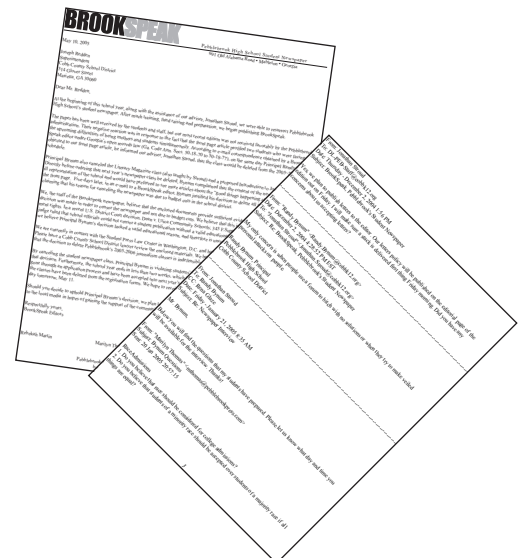
Cobb County School District

Administrative Rules

"[S]tudents who legally attend The Cobb County School District may express opinions and ideas, take stands and support causes, publicly and privately, orally or in writing. Such actions are regarded as 'protected activities.' There may be no interference with these protected activities based on the belief that any particular idea, opinion or position is unpopular or is contrary or offensive to community opinion or taste."

OCGA 20-2-50; 20-2-57; 20-2-59

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The BrookSpeak Staff

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