

2024 State Journalism Championship



#4 Newspaper Editorial Writing

Time Limit – 1:15

Directions: You are a reporter for the student newspaper. From the given information, write an editorial in the collective voice. Remember that as an editorial writer you should support or oppose policy or action; you should not sermonize. Entries will be evaluated on presenting a clear idea, convincing reasoning, supporting evidence, and quality of writing.

When you are finished:

1. Type or print your name on your entry.
2. Save your document as a PDF using a filename of your choice. ****Remember where you saved the file.**
3. Go to this link <https://secure.nsaahome.org/nsaaforms/jo/login/student/index.php>
4. Complete the form, hit LOGIN
5. Choose file. **MUST BE A PDF FILE**
6. Click UPLOAD
7. When done, please raise your hand for the proctor to confirm the upload was successful.

Robertson High School, located in Riverside, has 2400 students enrolled in grades 9-12. The Board of Education and Dr. Jennifer Johnson, Robertson Superintendent, introduced an updated graduation requirement. This new requirement will go into effect next school year. The policy states: “All students will study cursive handwriting in at least one quarter of their English classes each year of high school and be able to read and write cursive prior to graduation. Doing so will help students build fine motor skills and create synergies between different hemispheres of the brain involved in thinking, language, and working memory.”

THOSE SUPPORTING THE POLICY

Particularly in an age when Artificial Intelligence gives such easy access to plagiarism, the ability to write one’s own thoughts down in handwriting (sans computer technology) seems important. More teachers are going back to handwritten, in-class assessments for this very reason. The ability to write fluently on paper will never be obsolete.

THOSE OPPOSING THE POLICY

Student’s curriculum is already packed and learning cursive is less important in an increasingly digital world. Handwriting is becoming obsolete. Students should not be required to practice an obsolete artform.

Missy Curry, Principal

“We have students who do not yet know how to sign their names in cursive. We are teaching them a life skill they will use for the rest of their lives.”

Dr. Jennifer Johnson, Superintendent

“The Board of Education has challenged themselves with finding new courses that will help students navigate life after high school. Learning cursive, along with other important courses like budgeting, will be added to next year’s curriculum. A survey sent to last year’s students brought forward a discouraging statistic – only 11% of our student body had ever written in cursive before. We must do better. We owe it to our students.”

Ron Callaway, parent

“Cursive is like calligraphy--good to teach in art class, but harmful to force for all assignments.”

Pat Porter, parent

“I think this is a great step in the right direction. Today’s kids have it easy and I think technology has a lot to do with that. Kids need structure. They need to learn the ways of the world. I remember learning cursive in junior high. My own kid doesn’t know how to sign his name. Hopefully this new curriculum will help him learn.”

Bobby Thomas, student

“I feel like we just took a giant step back about fifty years. Has our administration ever heard of technology? Why does cursive even matter? The answer is it doesn’t. What a ridiculous requirement. I can type so much faster than I can write by hand.”

Ricky McCoy, student

“I am pretty sure I already know how to read and write cursive. I guess I don’t really care if we have to do this or not. Everyone will just do it for the grades and then continue to use technology to communicate.”

Anonymous English Teacher

“I can’t make it through the curriculum this district already expects me to teach. Now we are adding something new, but what have we taken away is the question.”

A concerned parent

“This just seems like a huge step in the wrong direction. What a waste of time.”