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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA STATEMENT

An Update Regarding School Newspaper Concerns in the Oshkosh Area School District

Oshkosh, WI - The Oshkosh Area School District (OASD) understands the importance of student-led organizations and is committed to supporting school newspapers and the learning opportunities they provide students. The following statements provide clarification and insight in regards to concerns, and inaccurate information, related to the Oshkosh Area School District's current school newspaper policies and guidelines.

The concerns stemmed from an article posted and removed from The North Star, the Oshkosh North High School student newspaper, in March 2019. The article was posted and removed by the newspaper's staff advisor. The advisor's perceived issue with the article in question was related to journalism guidelines. This action took place before school administration was aware of the article's existence, and as such, the decision to remove the article was not the result of administration - school or District - oversight or involvement.

The Oshkosh Area School District will not be pursuing disciplinary action for the students or staff advisor involved. The District and Oshkosh North High School value the educational opportunities that school newspapers provide students and hope that all are able to learn and grow from those experiences. Furthermore, the District is not pursuing the identification of the source used in the article in question. The request for this information was included as part of the school's initial review process; review of staff conduct and a need to maintain public records was all under the guidance of legal counsel. The information was never a condition of the District fulfilling an open records request. Once payment was received on April 11, the District started processing the request. After further consideration of the article in question, it was determined that the information would not impact the school's review. Additionally, District and school leaders regret the student's perception of intimidation when questioned. The intent was to gain factual information to protect all parties involved. The District and school are committed to acting professionally and in the best interest of students and staff at all times.

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“Building Community Through Education”



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The OASD Board of Education will be reviewing Board Policy 5722: School-sponsored Publications and Productions. The policy will be brought to the Board's Policy and Governance Committee for review in the immediate future. The purpose of this review process is to ensure that the policy supports the needs of both students and school communities, as well as journalistic growth and responsibility within the law regarding school newspapers.

There is no administrator oversight currently controlling The North Star. Student-authored articles are being published. Per the current Board Policy, the staff advisor continues to have the authority to review and/or determine what stories are published.

Once again, and most importantly, the Oshkosh Area School District values the educational opportunities that school newspapers provide students, including opportunities to develop their skills, career interests, and individual passions. The District also values the important role that school newspapers have in teaching students to understand and adhere to journalistic responsibilities and the rights of others. The OASD strives to create an environment that supports the growth and development of all students and as such will continue to act in the best interests of students and the entire school community.

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About the OASD: Building community through education. The Oshkosh Area School District is located in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, serving 10,000 students and operating 14 elementary schools, five middle schools, two high schools, two charter schools and an eAcademy. The mission of the Oshkosh Area School District is to create citizens who are critical, creative thinkers, responsible in their actions, and committed to learning for life by working together with families and communities. For more information visit www.oshkosh.k12.wi.us.

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