



Draudt v Wooster, (2002) ruled that the *Blade*, a Wooster, Ohio student paper, was a public forum and so enjoyed greater protection from censorship than the Hazelwood case allowed. The judge identified nine factors that courts should use to decide whether the paper was a nonpublic forum and could be restrained under Hazelwood, or whether it was a public forum and enjoyed the broader First Amendment rights under the Tinker standard.

The *Blade* attempted to publish an article about the district's alcohol policy. They quoted two student athletes by name who admitted off-campus drinking. One was the school board president's daughter, who reported both her drinking and that she was punished by the school for drinking. School officials confiscated the entire press run because the story was "potentially defamatory."

School officials later stated the student had never admitted wrongdoing and that she was never punished. The student reporters maintain the *Blade* reporter quoted the student accurately, though they acknowledge the girl was not punished.

The judge ruled the *Blade* was a public forum and so could only be censored if the content was illegal—obscene or libelous--or likely to create a serious, physical disruption to the school. The school district agreed out of court to pay \$5,000 to charities designated by the students and \$30,000 to the students' attorneys. They also agreed to avoid confiscating the student newspaper in the future without talking with the student editors.

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