

EXAMPLE SHORT FICTION STORY BASED ON RESEARCH

Prompt: Write a story about a topic of interest to you that focuses on an issue in current events. Show the challenges that were faced and how they were resolved. Make sure that the story contains at least five paragraphs and all the elements of a story. Also include at least three pieces of dialogue. Provide at least three references in a reference list and three footnotes. Use the MLA style.

TITLE OF THE STORY: To Suspend or Not Suspend?

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Civics & Government

13 November 2018

To Suspend or Not Suspend?

As the district superintendent, Stanley Robinson could see that the student protest on cyber bullying was a no-win situation for him. Hocker Bluff High School (HBHS) had always been a lightning rod for student protests, and today was no exception.

Unfortunately, he was caught in a dilemma. Stan had to choose to side with the kids sitting in the cafeteria protesting cyber bullying, or he had to choose to side with the school football team. To make the situation worse, Stan assumed that most of the sports fans in town would side with the football team. Deciding either way was likely to get him fired. Certainly, the cyber bullying issue was a relatively new headache for Stan, so he was not sure what to do. The situation had only surfaced a couple of days ago.

On Monday, to get the cyber bullying started, certain students, including members of the HBHS football team, had logged into a chat room and made "inappropriate comments" about certain other students. In fact, they had threatened and belittled these other students. These other students were members of the LGBT-Q population of the high school. LGBT-Q is an abbreviation for lesbian, bisexual, transgender, gay, or questioning people. For the last 20 or 30 years or so, persons in this category had remained quiet about their gender preferences, but they were no longer quiet.¹ Stan had read that the LGBT-Q group now

¹ "GLAAD," 2018, p. 1

comprised around 20% of the average student high school population nationally.²

Understandably, the LGBT-Q students were both angry about and frightened by the cyber bullying. "Thanks, Internet!" Stan thought to himself.

Now, as Wednesday's school day was getting started, Stan was not sure how much he could do or should do about the cyber bullying. The chat room comments had been circulated outside of class time and were not associated with any school activity. Certainly, some people would not agree with the protesters' demands that he suspend football players from their upcoming game against the cross-town rival Xavier. On the other hand, should he? For some time, Stan had feared that it was only a matter of time before something like this blew up at Hocker Bluff. Being serious about his job, Stan was well informed. He had read countless articles about the challenges posed by student access to social media. He had learned that cyber victims reported higher levels of depression than victims of physical, verbal, and relational bullying.³ He had read that the same problem had been going on in New York City for at least a year.⁴ According to one article, "Boys are more likely to be cyber bullies, whereas girls are more likely to be cyber victims."⁵ Indeed, life had been so much simpler before the Internet. Stan just wished he could shut the whole thing down.

Later in the day, Coach Bud Gibson stopped by the office and asked Stan for a few minutes of his time to chat about the cyber bullying. He began by saying, "You know we really need those boys for the Xavier game. However, I know you have to show your, you know, your kindness or whatever to those kids in the cafeteria. You could suspend two or

² Gonella 2017, p. 1

³ Wang et al., 2011, p. 416

⁴ Algar, 2016, p. 1

⁵ Wang et al., 2009, p. 370

three players from the following game at East Heights. We haven't lost to East Heights in 15 years." At first, this new idea seemed like a good compromise to Stan. The players would be punished... eventually. After considering it, though, he knew that the LGBT-Q protestors would see right through it. Feeling pressured by the coach, he knew that he didn't have any more time to make his decision. He might as well tell the coach right away. In a strong voice, he said, "Bud, I'm sorry, but I'm suspending Todd, Skip, and Rusty from the Xavier game." Coach Gibson was incredulous. He exclaimed, "You've got to be kidding! You might as well hand the game over to Xavier on a silver platter!" With that, he stomped out of the office without closing the door.

As the week wore on, Stan knew in his heart that he had made the right decision about the cyber bullying. He also knew that he would be accused by the football fans of caving in to the protestors' demands. As the coach predicted, Hocker Bluff lost the game to Xavier. As a result, the parents of the suspended players threatened to sue the school district for "reverse discrimination" if Stan was not fired. He resigned when he realized that he did not have the support of the school board. To his surprise, Stan had become a hero to groups like the PFLAG organization (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).⁶ However, that recognition did not pay the rent, so Stan finished out the school year by selling real estate. He applied to other school districts for a job. For the next school year, he was hired by a school board that was interested in supporting all students groups and had strict policies about cyber bullying. All in all, he was happy that he had followed his conscience and found a better job match for his belief that everyone should be treated with respect.

⁶ "About PFLAG," 2018, p. 1

References

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- Algar, Selim. "'Milk' Club: Cruel Male Clique at Top High School Rated Girls, Bashed Gay Students." *New York Post*, 1 Nov. 2016.
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- Wang, Jing, Tonya Nansel, and Ronald Iannotti. "School Bullying Among Adolescents in the United States: Physical, Verbal, Relational, and Cyber." *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Oct. 2009, pp. 368-375, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1054139X09001384>.
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