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Student ID Cards Are a Good Idea

Proponents of schoolwide mandatory ID policies contend that those policies have far more advantages than drawbacks. Supporters generally assert that the IDs strengthen security on school grounds. Requiring students to display a badge is entirely legal, they insist, and constitutes only a minor inconvenience for students. Perhaps most importantly, parents around the country encourage mandatory ID policies, supporters claim.

Other backers explain their support for the measure by highlighting the valuable role of schools in American society as both a safe haven for kids and a center for learning. Because schools are so vital, proponents assert, school boards are justified in asking students to carry identification in order to boost security. "It's purely a safety issue," says Patricia Hansen, principal of Vista Grande School in Danville, Ca. "It also shows that school is an important place. You can't go into labs without badges, because they are important places. Well, school is an important place, too."

Indeed, many supporters who work in schools that have already adopted mandatory ID policies report that the badges have curbed rowdy behavior among students. The chief reason for the drop in unruly behavior, proponents assert, is that students wearing badges tend to think twice about doing something that will get them in trouble, since any fellow student or faculty member can easily identify them by name.

Proponents also defend the legality of mandatory ID policies, pointing out that they are permitted by both local and federal laws. As a result, they reject

some critics' claims that compulsory ID policies are illegal. Even some ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) official's acknowledge that a school board's decision to mandate schoolwide IDs does not break any laws. "Does the school have a right to know your name? Absolutely," explains Denise Lieberman, legal director for the organization's branch in St. Louis, Mo. "And does it have the right to require you to present it? Yeah, I think so."

Given the sturdy legal footing of ID policies, most proponents brush aside threats made by angry parents against local school boards concerning potential lawsuits. Even cautious critics of schoolwide ID policies, such as Lehigh University professor Perry Zirkel, contend that such lawsuits would have no real teeth in court. "I really don't think when you clear the smoke away from the current debate that there's any kind of viable legal claim," he says. "Experts may not agree that this is the proper use of education resources, but it's certainly not invasive in the scheme of things."

Proponents say that enhancing security is not the only benefit of ID cards. For example, supporters claim that a mandatory ID policy fosters a sense of community within a school, since badges allow students, faculty, and staff to easily recognize one another. The ID cards can offer technical assistance as well, supporters contend, by allowing students to quickly check out books from the library or pay for a meal in the school cafeteria.

Adapted from "Student ID Cards." *Issues & Controversies On File*. Copyright 2006 Facts On File News Services.

1) The writer is considering deleting the quote from Denise Lieberman in the underlined portion of lines 48–54. Should the writer make this change?

- A. Yes, because her comment offers no support for the essay's argument.
- B. Yes, because she is not a credible source of information on this topic.
- C. No, because her job title and opinion add credibility to the essay's argument.
- D. No, because the paragraph's main idea would be lost without her comment.

Answer Key

1) C