***LESSON***: How can journalists help the greater public hold the powerful accountable? It begins with keeping an eye on the powerful through investigative work. In this lesson, students will read about the importance of watchdog journalism and its impact.

***READ:***

* [Watchdog Culture: Why You Need it, How You Can Build it](https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2005/watchdog-culture-why-you-need-it-how-you-can-build-it/)
* [Amid Criticism, Support for Media’s ‘Watchdog’ Role Stands Out](https://www.people-press.org/2013/08/08/amid-criticism-support-for-medias-watchdog-role-stands-out/)
* [2017 IRE Award winners and finalists](https://www.ire.org/awards/ire-awards/winners/2017-ire-award-winners) (Investigative Reporters and Editors)

***CLASS ACTIVITY***

* What is watchdog journalism?
  + Have students discuss the definition of watchdog journalism and the role it could play in their school.
    - Who would students hold accountable in the school?
      * Administrators? Superintendent? Principal? City Council?
* What does watchdog journalism look like?
  + READ: [2017 IRE Award winners and finalists](https://www.ire.org/awards/ire-awards/winners/2017-ire-award-winners)
    - Have students work in small groups to pick their favorite story.
      * What did you like about it?
      * What information did you learn and how was it important to the public?
      * Have students be prepared to discuss their thoughts in class.

***INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY***

* Brainstorming
  + What stories could surface as a watchdog journalism piece in their school district? (work in small groups.)
* Develop a possible story idea you would work on in your school district.
  + Write about what makes the idea a form of watchdog journalism.
  + What are you looking for? Public records request? Data? Interviews?
  + Why is this important?

***ASSESSMENT:***

* Students will prepare a written explanation of their story idea and how they plan to develop, research and execute. Students will be asked to explain why this idea is a form of watchdog journalism and its importance.