

MIPA NEWSPAPER EVALUATION

School _____

City _____

Newspaper Name _____

To have your school's newspaper evaluated, your school must be a current member of MIPA.
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OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION

This Newspaper Evaluation Form is designed to provide a framework for the judge in evaluating the newspaper; to reward the staff for creativity and accomplishment and to provide suggestions for improvement for future issues. We have tried to make this guide as open-ended as possible to allow the judge to consider all aspects of the student newspaper.

We want to allow staffs as much latitude as possible in producing newspapers that fit their school and community as well as reflect sound journalism practices. This evaluation is designed to provide meaningful feedback and to recognize and reward excellence.

With this in mind, we award the following ratings:

Spartan Award

900 to 1,000

Gold Medal

800 to 899

Silver Medal

700 to 799

Bronze Medal

0 to 699

NOTE TO JUDGES:

Please rank each category according to the scale provided and assign the appropriate number of points. Please use the space provided for suggestions and comments that will help the staff understand concerns and problem areas and how they may be improved. Please use a pencil to score.

COVERAGE

OVERALL COVERAGE

- The publication attempts to reach the whole school community, is comprehensible to outside readers and emphasizes materials of interest and consequence to most students.
- The publication centers on school news, yet seeks to show how other information about the community, regional, national, and international events affect students.
- The publication appears lively, entertaining, enterprising and well-balanced.
- Minority groups and minority issues within a school or community are presented.
- Articles appear to be written following thorough reporting. When applicable, at least three sources have been used.
- Content shows diversity rich with news opinion, feature and sports and gives emphasis to advance coverage.

NEWS COVERAGE

- A balance of briefs and detailed accounts occur in the publication.
- A variety of news sources is evidenced.
- Student organizations are covered (government, clubs, activities, etc.).
- All aspects of on-campus student life—curriculum, interests, 'glamour' subjects, controversies—are thoroughly researched and presented to students.
- Aspects of off-campus news—local to international—are thoroughly researched and presented to students.

COVERAGE

FEATURE COVERAGE

- A variety of features is offered. Features are stimulating, interesting, entertaining and/or timely.
- Personality profiles offer realistic, newsworthy portrayals. Puzzles, jokes, horoscopes, and gossip columns are omitted.
- The publication covers students' interests and concerns, balanced with community-related activities.
- Polls/surveys emphasize summary results and indicate size and range of sampling and timeliness.
- Staff expands coverage of single subjects and special themes which reflect problems, actions and views of members of the school community.

SPORTS COVERAGE

- Content reflects diversity of competitive team sports, individual sports and leisure activities.
- The publication gives readers information about approaching events, recalls highlights of past events with emphasis on what students do not know and information about opposing teams.
- The publication provides for well-rounded season coverage and refrains from "glamorizing."
- May show materials about community, collegiate or professional competition geared toward informing students.
- Coverage is original and includes related interviews, personality profiles, surveys and other feature material.
- Some statistics and summaries are provided. Some briefs exist. Playoff, league and conference results are evidenced.

COVERAGE

Judge's Comments on Coverage:

Score for Coverage:

0 50 125 175 200
Needs Improvement Average/Good Very Good Excellent

Total

Judges, the numbers above are just markers. You may give any number of points up to 200.

WRITING/EDITING

BASIC PRINCIPLES

- Consistent, concise style appropriate to subject matter is utilized.
- Fairness is crucial. All sides of controversial issues are covered. Accuracy is stressed.
- People are completely identified in a consistent style.
- Paragraphs vary in length and are usually short. Successive paragraphs in a story do not repeat same words in the beginning. Sentences are clear, varied. Journalistic writing style is consistent.
- Attributions are used appropriately. Third person predominates.

STORIES IN GENERAL

- Leads vary in structure and catch reader's interest.
- Stories catch the reader's attention, are not padded with trite comments. Stories stick to central focus. Transitions are evident in stories. Quotes are used effectively. Objectivity is a major goal.
- Active voice verb dominates.
- Stories reflect sound interviewing techniques.
- Stories stress the "why" element.
- Stories avoid summaries of general circulation material and avoid copying previously published material.

NEWS STORIES

- Timely.
- Free of editorializing.
- Leads reflect a humanistic angle and appeal to the reader.
- Future events are alluded to in the story.

WRITING/EDITING

FEATURE STORIES

- Story topics are varied and original.
- Leads set tone and focus.
- Quotes enhance story.
- Stories develop a central idea.
- Anecdotes, when appropriate, add life to stories.

SPORTS STORIES

- How and why of action is emphasized.
- Seasonal coverage follows descending order of importance. Avoids chronological accounts.
- Colorful style but objective straight reporting. Columns are not preachy.
- Avoids clichés and jargon.

HEADLINES/CUTLINES

- Headlines attract reader attention, reflect information.
- Headlines avoid overuse of school name, abbreviations, repetitions, split-infinitives, separation of adverbs and adjectives from verbs and nouns, separation of preposition from object.
- Varied styles of headlines can be used.
- Cutlines have impact with challenging words, phrases. The first sentence in present tense and the remaining sentences in past tense. They avoid clichéd phrases. All people are identified. A cutline appears with each photo.
- All photos and art are credited.

WRITING/EDITING

Judge's Comments on Writing/Editing:

Score for Writing/Editing:

0	85	220	305	350
Needs Improvement		Average/Good	Very Good	Excellent

Total

Judges, the numbers above are just markers. You may give any number of points up to 350.

OVERALL DESIGN

- Modular or mostly modular page makeup is used throughout the publication. Modular is characterized by rectangular shapes—horizontal and vertical—and some squares.
- Elements—text, headlines, photos, graphics, art—are coordinated to avoid a page that is off-balanced. Photos, rules, headlines, and screens are heavy black or black weight. Text is gray weight or medium. Blank space, such as column gutters, is white space. Use of screens is minimal.
- Design indicates the prominence of stories and focuses attention on a major story.
- A serif typeface for text is preferred. Text is often set in either 9 or 10 point type, with leading set at one or two between the lines. Captions are set in either a contrasting bold or medium face.
- Tombstoning and butting heads are eliminated except when deliberately designed in packaging stories.
- Folios contain date, section identification and page number.
- Creativity and innovative ideas are indicated.
- Layout stimulates reader interest.
- A photo or piece of art should not separate a story and its headline.
- A different font should be used for headlines and remain consistent throughout the publication.
- Restraint in font usage is evident in a publication.

DESIGN

FRONT PAGE

- Positive first impression sets stage for inside paper and has a strong center of visual interest.
- Nameplate is uncluttered. Includes name of publication, date, volume number and issue number, and address if it does not appear elsewhere.
- A page one with a photo or art as its only element (newsmagazine) should include a headline, caption and a reference to where the related story is printed inside the publication.
- A general consistency of design exists, yet front pages do not become repetitious or predictable.
- Balance should be struck between horizontal and vertical story packages.
- Teasers should complement, not distract the reader from focus of the dominant element.

INSIDE PAGES

- Design is built around a single element, major story, or dominant art element.
- Editorial/opinion pages occur in every issue, and may differ from other pages in the publication to signal a shift from objective to subjective writing.
- Editorial/opinion pages should include either a condensed or full masthead.
- Folios appear on all pages and include publication name, page numbers, and date. Section labels are condensed.

Judge's Comments on Design:

Score for Design:

0	50	125	175	200	
Needs Improvement		Average/Good	Very Good	Excellent	

Judges, the numbers above are just markers. You may give any number of points up to 200.

Total

PHOTOS & GRAPHICS

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Photos are carefully selected for maximum reader interest and reproduction quality.
- Photos are cropped to the center of interest and the center of interest is focused.
- Content of photos is newsworthy, significant or unusual and is of relevance to the audience.
- A variety of photos—action, mugs, groups, objects—is published. There is evidence that there is photo coverage of news and athletic events.
- Photos are free of scratches, dust, lint, water spots or other technical flaws.

GRAPHICS

- Graphics are planned extensively, not used for their own sake but to enhance the story.
- An infographic contains illustrations or graphics to represent and visually interpret the facts and figures within.
- Editorial/opinion cartoons convey the message simply with little text needed.
- Effects such as pull quotes and secondary coverage are well-executed and visually appealing.
- Colored or shaded boxes are not overused, and do not take away from information that is inside. Screens that are placed over copy are light enough that the text can still be easily read.
- Rules, dingbats, typographic devices are used to enhance or support content, not overwhelm or take away from information.

PHOTOS & GRAPHICS

Judge's Comments on Photos & Graphics:

Score for Photos & Graphics:

0	40	95	130	150
Needs Improvement		Average/Good	Very Good	Excellent

Judges, the numbers above are just markers. You may give any number of points up to 150.

Total

EDITORIAL CONTENT

LEADERSHIP

- Publication expresses concern for the well-being of the school, students, staff and faculty through commentary in editorials and opinion columns.
- Publication expresses concern for the well-being of the community through commentary relevant to student readers in editorials and opinion columns.
- There is evidence of thorough research covering all aspects of the topic being covered.
- There is a mix of coverage of non-school events and issues relevant to students that will make students well-informed citizens.
- Publication attempts to cover topics and issues of concern to its main audience.
- Page one of publication contains information that is most significant of the content within the publication.
- Publication furnishes students with information of immediate and long range effects on students' lives.

EDITORIAL/OPINION CONTENT

- Editorials/opinion provide leadership through responsible comment on a wide range of subjects. Issues include at least one editorial based on a timely and important topic covered elsewhere in the publication.
- Editorials reflect thorough research and suggest, when possible, solutions.
- Opinion coverage provides useful forums for letters to the editor, guest articles, columns, news analysis, editorial cartoons and photographs.
- A published editorial policy encourages readers to write letters and contribute guest articles and explains how to do so.
- The publication presents reviews of films, records, literature and electronic media of interest to students.

EDITORIAL CONTENT

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND ETHICS

- Students follow ethical practices, accept professional standards and adhere to press law in all aspects of work.
- Students use accepted journalistic forms and style. Any deviation is made because it is appropriate and valuable to readers.
- Fairness is crucial. All sides of controversial issues are covered. Accuracy is stressed.
- The newspaper reflects maturity and responsibility and is a leader in the development of student discussion and opinion.
- The publication is professional and journalistic in its approach to coverage, writing and leadership.

Judge's Comments on Editorial Content:

Score for Editorial Content:

0	25	60	90	100
Needs Improvement		Average/Good	Very Good	Excellent

Judges, the numbers above are just markers. You may give any number of points up to 100.

Total

THE FINAL ANALYSIS

CATEGORY	TOTAL POINTS	
Coverage (20 percent)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Spartan Award (900 to 1000)
Writing/Editing (35 percent)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Gold Medal (800 to 899)
Design (20 percent)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Medal (700 to 799)
Photos & Graphics (15 percent)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Bronze Medal (0 to 699)
Editorial Content (10 percent)	_____	
TOTAL	_____	

SUMMARY COMMENTS:

SCHOOL NAME _____

JUDGE'S SIGNATURE _____

Thank you for judging publications for Michigan Interscholastic Press Association!