

Newspaper/News Magazine Judging Form

School: _____

Classification (circle one): 1A 2A 3A 4A

Type of publication (circle one): Newspaper News Magazine

Rating Scale: 10 = All-Around Excellence 8 = Solid, but unimaginative 6 = Needs Minor Improvements 4 = Needs Major Improvement

I. Content and Coverage (80 points)

- _____ A. Is there a good mix between school news, teen interests, and community affairs that influence the school?
- _____ B. Is there a good balance within the news about the school? Does the paper cover sports, school personnel, co-curricular activities, classes, school board decisions, and student personalities?
- _____ C. Does the paper carry both straight reporting on simple stories and longer analytical, background articles on articles on complicated matters that need perspective and explanation?
- _____ D. Is there emphasis on issues as well as people?
- _____ E. Is the content weighed so that the important stories get more space and bigger headlines? Can reporters tell trivia from important issues?
- _____ F. Do upcoming events receive careful reporting on facts? Are past events followed up with results and reactions?
- _____ G. Does the paper cover important issues?
- _____ H. Is there occasional wit and humor in good taste?

_____ **SUBTOTAL SECTION I.**

GENERAL COMMENTS:

II. Writing and Editorial (90 points)

- _____ A. Are sentences crisp and easy to read? Do writers use well-constructed English?
- _____ B. Is the paper free from gross errors in mechanics?
- _____ C. Is the paper consistent in style?
- _____ D. Is the copy paragraphed frequently so it is easy to read?
- _____ E. Are leads inviting? Short? Unique to the story?
- _____ F. Are statements attributed? Are sources identified? Are quotes used to liven up the story and provide authenticity and depth?
- _____ G. Are news stories written in inverted pyramid style? Are features colorful? Unified? Without clichés? Do editorials take positive stands and argue logically?

- _____ H. Are headlines unique to the story? Or could they fit several stories?
- _____ I. Are headlines creatively written? Do they use good verbs and show flair? Do they reflect the story's mood?

_____ **SUBTOTAL SECTION II.**

GENERAL COMMENTS:

III. Editorial Leadership (90 points)

- _____ A. Does the paper have a policy about it will or will not print?
- _____ B. Does the paper express its own opinions on controversial topics with unsigned editorial that represents a consensus of the staffs' or editors' opinions?
- _____ C. Does the paper carry spirited dialogue with the school community through letters to the editor?
- _____ D. Does it editorialize only on the editorial page and keep the news and features free of editorial content?
- _____ E. Are editorials good pieces of reasoning? Are opinions backed by facts?
- _____ F. Are editorials related to the news on the front page, and/or cover a wide range of topics?
- _____ G. Does the paper editorialize about the topics which it has some sort of effect?
- _____ H. Does it editorialize visually with cartoons?
- _____ I. Does the paper carry other forms of opinion-columns, reviews, etc?

_____ **SUBTOTAL SECTION III**

GENERAL COMMENTS:

IV. Photography (80 points)

- _____ A. Are photos technically correct, with story-telling ability?
- _____ B. Are pictures printed large for impact and cropped close?
- _____ C. Are faces large enough to recognize?
- _____ D. Are group shots avoided in favor of action shots?
- _____ E. Does each picture have a cut-line?

- _____ F. Do outlines start with all-caps lead-ins or boldface type to serve as a visual transition between picture and copy?
- _____ G. Are photo essays used?
- _____ H. Are photos separated from advertising by copy?

_____ **SUBTOTAL SECTION VI.**

GENERAL COMMENTS:

V. Physical Appearance (130 points)

- _____ A. Does the paper use one kind of type achieving variety in appearance by using the bold or italic version of that type?
- _____ B. Does the paper have a simple, but commanding, nameplate? Is it free from gimmicky drawing?
- _____ C. Are the biggest headlines used at the top? The bottom anchored with smaller, strong heads? The heads in the middle of the page are lighter?
- _____ D. Are headlines on the opinion page quieter, smaller, as befits their approach to news?
- _____ E. Do photos look toward the story? Do photos look off the page?
- _____ F. Is more space left between the bottom of a story and the head to a second story than is left between that head and the story it goes with?
- _____ G. Are pictures placed above the story or on a level with the beginning of the story?
- _____ H. Are headlines as wide as the stories they go with?
- _____ I. Is there a consistent policy about placement of bylines and photo credits?
- _____ J. Does the paper have a consistent headline style?
- _____ K. Are related items juxtaposed? Do pictures touch the stories they accompany?
- _____ L. Are gray areas broken up with subheads, bold lead-ins, pull quotes?
- _____ M. Is 9 pt. type used for regular columns? 10 pt. type for columns wider than 15 inches? Are editorials set in bigger type than regular news materials?

_____ **SUBTOTAL SECTION V.**

GENERAL COMMENTS:

TIE-BREAKING CRITERIA (30 points)

- _____ A. Does it show any signs that it is aware of the major changes occurring in newspaper layout? Does it use innovative graphics, white space, cutout photos, heads in the middle of stories, etc?
- _____ B. Do articles show signs of real intelligence, more than average insight, or more than the average amount of research and reporting skills?
- _____ C. Is it a unique publication with a personality all its own?

TOTAL SCORES:

| CATEGORY: | Content 80 pts | Writing 90 pts | Editorial 90 pts | Photography 80 pts | Appearance 130 pts | Tie Breaker 30 pts | Grand Total (x2) |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| YOUR SCORE: | | | | | | | |

GOLD PONY = 850-1000 pts

SILVER MERIT = 700-849 pts

BRONZE STAR = 500-699 pts

GENERAL COMMENTS ON TOTAL PAPER: