

# NSPA

## National Scholastic Press Association

in recognition of merit awards

### The Roundup, 2017

### Jesuit College Preparatory School

the honor rating of

***First Class***

*with One Mark of Distinction*

in the NSPA Publication Critique Service



LAURA WIDMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Critiques - Review and Scoring



### Coverage & Content

A good multimedia site can't survive on flashy graphics and cool video alone. It needs to have substance — good, solid content. And just as with a print publication, it needs to serve its readers, which may go beyond the traditional newspaper readership: students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, prospective students, community members and even people who land on the site from a Web search.

Students, advisers and judges should consider these criteria when judging quality of work:

- Coverage is comprehensive, focusing on many aspects of the high school community it serves, including academics, school activities, faculty and administration and student affairs.
- The site includes Web-exclusive content, such as blogs, interactive elements, video, audio and breaking news.
- Coverage reflects the diversity of the school population and aims to be inclusive.
- Content is well coordinated, with different media contributing different parts of the story rather than repeating the same information.
- Stories are thoroughly reported; multiple points of view are represented.
- Coverage is accurate, fair and balanced.
- Writing is engaging, informative, to the point.
- Opinion pieces, including columns, editorials and blogs, cover issues and events of interest to the school community.
- Opinion pieces are well researched and well argued, citing factual evidence to support views expressed.
- Special reports and in-depth coverage is well planned and includes multimedia components.
- The site maximizes the capabilities of the Web, making use of multiple media and interactivity.
- Controversial issues are included and reported thoroughly.
- All stories, except for editorials, opinion columns, blogs and analysis pieces, are free of the writer's opinions.
- Headlines, captions and teasers are accurate and engaging, drawing readers into the material.
- The site demonstrates a spirit of experimentation by taking risks and trying new things.

Strengths:

Provide strengths, supported with specific references. (Minimum 350 characters)

Staff's coverage is comprehensive and inclusive, delving into all areas of school and community life covering students, faculty and alumni alike. Web content is very interactive and includes something for readers, listeners, viewers. Well done here. Content does generally have different media contributing to each story. Stories are very thoroughly reported. It's clear staff has a focus on finding balance and representing all viewpoints. Staff does include lots of profiles and features, all of reader interest. They have an

emphasis on alumni and how those can impact student life and decisions. All writing is engaging and draws readers in.

Recommendations:

Provide recommendations, supported with specific references. (Minimum 350 characters)

Consider how you could layer coverage for an even richer experience. While you have photos included with most stories, video for stories like "Ranger Band Rocks Christmas Concert" would make it even better. And if not video, why not audio? Viewpoints section, while diverse, lacks the strong backbone of editorials and columns. It's admirable that you invite others to submit their views, but they cannot just be rants, and the strongest opinion pieces are grounded in research and data. Editorials are where you can make an impact with your school. You have a leader's voice, and it shows through your tweets and observations about what is going on your school. You really are covering every beat. So pick up on what needs to be changed or improved and take the reins on bringing about change. Learn to write in a more journalistic style and proofread carefully for it: Use shorter sentences, short paragraphs. Quotes should be a new paragraph. Omit exclamation points, which aren't used in journalism ("Ranger Band Rocks Christmas Concert," Super Mario review) Omit semicolons, which aren't used in journalism ("Jesuit Dallas Sends Sign of Solidarity to Colegio San Ignacio de Loyola"). Attributions should use said only (not explained, commented or similar), and they should be in active voice (Jones said, not said Jones). ("Senior Rangers to Play at Collegiate Level") It's great that you're using tons of quotes. However, you're embedding them like you would cite evidence in an essay. In journalism, you need to start a new paragraph for each quote, and you're often interrupting the flow of the story by using partial quotes in sentences instead of paraphrasing. It's ok to paraphrase the quotes. See "From Wrestler to Psychologist": Paraphrase the third and fourth paragraphs rather than quoting what are basic facts. Quotes should be the opinion, the emotion, not the straight facts. In the next paragraph, consider this, which would be more journalistic: Ashmore first became interested in psychology at Jesuit when he was asked what makes an athlete better than another if their physical attributes are the same. "I was always interested in what made people different, more than just physically," Ashmore said. In college, every class he took increased his interest in psychology. Abbreviate dates as follows: Oct. 18, not October 18th ("Ignatian Days: A Semester in Reflection") Include first name with faculty and staff (Coach Hill in "Basketball Takes on the Big Apple" -- notice, too, how the headline is capitalized).

Total points:

75

/ 100

Mark of Distinction:

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## Critiques - Review and Scoring



### Interactivity & Community

Interactivity is an essential element of 21st century journalism. It's no longer simply about giving information to the reader; it's about creating a dialogue between the publication and its readers.

Students, advisers and judges should consider these criteria when judging quality of work:

- Readers are able to interact with the publication in numerous ways, which may include comment functions, discussion boards and polls.
- Social networking and community tools, such as links to other information and guides to community services, are used to empower the reader.
- Games, polls, quizzes, interactive maps and other interactive tools are used to engage the reader with the news.
- Readers are invited to submit story ideas and given a way (either a story submission form or an e-mail address) to do so.
- Contact information is provided for readers who want to write a letter to the editor, buy an ad or contact the adviser and staff.
- The publication makes use of reader-generated content, which may include stories, photos and videos.
- Links on stories direct readers to other sites with useful and credible information that enhances the story.

Strengths:

Provide strengths, supported with specific references. (Minimum 350 characters)

Readers can leave comments, submit story ideas and even submit "Viewpoints." Well done in the interactivity arena. Staff is using social media, especially Twitter and Facebook to reach out to readers and keep them involved. Posts are frequent. Home page has editor's pick featured story as well as links for submitting stories or commenting. Contact information is available for staff .

Recommendations:

Provide recommendations, supported with specific references. (Minimum 350 characters)

Consider adding links to individual staff members' email addresses for readers to contact them directly. Consider embedding Twitter feed on home page. Consider adding polls for reader engagement. Anything you can add to the home page to get readers there daily expands your audience. Include links in stories so readers can get additional information. Whether these are for links to professional media for news pegs you've used and are localizing or links to school or community sites that allow readers to sign up for something or get more information, this interactivity is key.

Total points:

**85**

/ 100

Mark of Distinction:

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## Critiques - Review and Scoring



### Breaking News

Since high school print publications generally come out infrequently, the Web offers students the opportunity to report important news events in a timely manner. Online student publications may be updated on a daily basis, even if the print edition only comes out a few times a year.

Students, advisers and judges should consider these criteria when judging quality of work:

- The site is updated regularly, daily if possible.
- Important news events are reported in a timely way.
- Multiple media — which may include photos, graphics, text, audio, video and interactive elements — are used to report breaking news events.
- Breaking news reports are updated as information comes in.
- News is covered in a fair and balanced manner.
- Coverage includes useful information for readers, such as notification of school closing in the event of bad weather or an emergency.
- News coverage includes stories of interest to the school community.
- Coverage of national and international events is related to the school community.
- News is accurate, even if the information is incomplete.

Strengths:

Provide strengths, supported with specific references. (Minimum 350 characters)

Staff is updating site regularly -- often daily. News is covered in a timely fashion and appears to be thorough in content and facts. Media includes photos, graphics, text, audio (sometimes) and video. News is fair and balanced with multiple perspectives included. Coverage of national news is analysis that is clear and thoughtful or localized to show impact on students and school community.

Recommendations:

Provide recommendations, supported with specific references. (Minimum 350 characters)

Consider how you can be the go-to news source for your school in terms of breaking news. You use Twitter, so embed that in your home page so readers can see a real-time stream of news you're reporting. You have the ability to really break news, so be sure that lands on your site and not just your social media. Consider embedding a sports ticker to update readers on scores daily.

Total points:

70

/ 100

Mark of Distinction:

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## Critiques - Review and Scoring



### Design & Navigation

A Web site should be attractive and easy to navigate, steering the reader toward the newest and most important information. Content should drive design, not the other way around.

Students, advisers and judges should consider these criteria when judging quality of work:

- The site is visually appealing, drawing readers into stories.
- Navigation is easy; readers can effortlessly find what they are looking for.
- The home page is simple and uncluttered.
- The site provides links to relevant resources, such as the high school Web site.
- A dominant piece of art, at least twice as big as anything else, anchors each page.
- Visual elements, such as photos and graphics, are used to enhance content, not as decoration.
- News is presented in a clear hierarchy, with the most important and/or newest stories prominently displayed.
- Tabs clearly direct readers to different sections of the publication, such as news, sports, entertainment and opinion.
- Multiple elements of a story are packaged together into an integrated unit.
- Bullets, fonts, boxes and other design elements are used to facilitate reading and navigation.
- Links provide access to related content on the site.

Strengths:

Provide strengths, supported with specific references. (Minimum 350 characters)

This site is so well organized and attractive. There's nothing unappealing visually. Navigation is easy if a bit too categorized (see below). Links at bottom of home page take readers to areas of engagement (submit a story, viewpoint, social media outlets, advertising) as well as to Jesuit Dallas sites for easy reference. Hierarchy is orderly and clean, and all posts are dated. Visuals include photos, art and graphics/infographics that are always helpful and enhance stories rather than decorate. Infogs that are smaller can be enlarged by clicking on image (Health Care and the Job of the State). Stories are often chunked with subheadlines or interspersed media elements (e.g. photos) for easier reading.

Recommendations:

Provide recommendations, supported with specific references. (Minimum 350 characters)

Remove links to sites you no longer really use -- in your case, Google+, SoundCloud, YouTube. Keep things relevant so visitors to the site see you update regularly. While site is very well organized, tabs and drop-downs are a bit overwhelming. There are too many. Try to condense, combine and make things simpler on your reader. In sports and Viewpoints, it makes sense and isn't so cumbersome (the reviews are good to break into sub-categories). However, in the news tab, you've got 44 sub-tabs going on, and that's really not necessary when you have a search option at the top of the page.

Total points:

95

/ 100

Mark of Distinction:

Mark of Distinction for Design & Navigation for exemplary work

Please give your reason for awarding a mark of distinction here.

Site is professional, organized and easy to navigate. It puts the reader first.

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## Critiques - Review and Scoring



### Interactive Media & Frequency

Multimedia offers a rich experience for readers that taps multiple senses. New media is constantly changing, and innovation should be a vital element of any Web site. Student sites, in particular, which are less bound by convention and market pressures, should be creative and pioneering.

Students, advisers and judges should consider these criteria when judging quality of work:

- The site uses a variety of media, which may include audio, video, slide shows and/or audio slide shows, text and graphics.
- Media are used to enhance content and help tell stories rather than simply add flashy elements to the site.
- Each media element — slide show, video, podcast, etc. — tells a story.
- Photos and video are adequately lit and well composed.
- Photo illustrations are clearly labeled.
- In photos and video, a variety of shots — action, candid, long shots, close-ups and detail shots — are used.
- In audio and video reports, sound quality is clear; voices are easy to understand.
- Audio reports make use of ambient and natural sound as well as interviews.
- Graphics are clear and easy to understand.
- Special projects and packages are well organized and designed to help readers navigate through the content.
- Copyright laws are understood and respect; only original content or copyright-free material (music, photos, videos, etc.) is used.

Strengths:

Provide strengths, supported with specific references. (Minimum 350 characters)

Staff has really ventured into audio this year. Well done. The podcasts are well produced and interesting. Keep this up. Staff's video coverage is very good as well. There is a wide variety of coverage included, from sports to food to "Ranger of the Week" (a cool feature). The experimentation in terms of coverage and concept is good, too, with items like "Food Adventures" (which I hope readers can see more of). Keep pushing the envelope with unexpected elements. You have a handle on the continued series pieces.

Recommendations:

Provide recommendations, supported with specific references. (Minimum 350 characters)

Be careful to balance audio in podcasts. In "Did Somebody Say Football?" the music overwhelmed the narration through much of it. Ep. 6 and 7 were so much clearer. Shoot for that in terms of balance. Photo galleries are pretty sparse and outdated. Work on getting these updated as frequently as possible -- weekly or monthly? Consider eliminating "Social Media" tab to move that content to a sidebar on the home page. Where it is, it's buried and not doing much in terms of interactivity. It could really shine on the home page.

Total points:

90

/ 100

Mark of Distinction:

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## Critiques - Review and Scoring

- 1 Coverage & Content
- 2 Interactivity & Community
- 3 Breaking News
- 4 Design & Navigation
- 5 Interactive Media & Frequency
- 6 Site Design
- 7 **Summary**

### Summary

Judge's Summary Comments:

(Minimum 350 characters)

**Kudos, Roundup staff, on your news site! You've put together an outstanding publication. Note the comments throughout this critique and also consider making these top priorities for this school year: 1. Include more photos in your gallery. You've got some talent on your staff, so make use of it. Photos bring in readership. 2. Work to improve writing style and format. You have amazing reporting but need to tweak your style to be more straightforward and journalistic. It will make your stories more approachable and reader friendly. 3. Publish editorials more frequently. You are doing such outstanding work reaching out to your readership and including them. You are an advocate for your school community and really serve as a leader. Advocate change where you see it needs to happen and commend others in your school and community for the good they do. Good luck in 2018!**

Score:

Coverage & Content: 75

Interactivity & Community: 85

Breaking News: 70

Design & Navigation: 95

Interactive Media & Frequency: 90

Site Design: 7

Total Score: 422

Marks of Distinction:

- Design & Navigation

Honor Rating:

**First Class**

Judge:

**Shari Adwers**

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