



2019-2020

# YEARBOOK EVALUATION

May 2018 update  
By the NHSPA Board of Directors



Judges,

We hope our NHSPA yearbook judges find this digital evaluation guide user friendly. We want our guides to be easily used as learning tools. Although awards are nice, helping our advisers and students gain knowledge in scholastic journalism is the primary goal of our evaluation service.

By using this digital format, judges will be able to communicate with yearbook advisers and their students both strengths and weaknesses to make their future yearbooks better in a format that advisers can readily share with their staffs. They can simply project the evaluations from a computer in their classroom and teach from them.

So that our awards ceremony will still have an element of surprise, the actual ratings will be removed before forwarding evaluations to advisers. The full evaluation – comments and ratings – will be distributed at the NHSPA Fall Conference at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

Please send evaluations back by the deadline or sooner.

**Please save your file using the name of the book and school name: (Ex: Rambler – Lancaster)**

Thank you for sharing your time and expertise with the students of Nebraska.

Begin your evaluation below:

Yearbook/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Adviser: \_\_\_\_\_

# Explanation of Evaluation System

- This evaluation is divided into five parts:
  1. **Concept:** How well the yearbook utilizes the theme
  2. **Coverage:** How well the yearbook covers all areas of school and student life whether it be traditional or chronological
  3. **Writing:** How well students use journalistic style as it applies to yearbook copy and captions
  4. **Design:** How well students follow design guidelines and utilize design to communicate theme and coverage
  5. **Photography:** How well students produce photos of technical quality and dynamic content
- Each of the above sections is rated as Superior (Always), Excellent (Frequently), Good (Usually), Average (Sometimes), or Needs Improvement (Never).
- Judges will disregard divisions which relate to advertising or endsheets if the publication does not include ads or print on endsheets, and will not reduce a publication's score.
- Judges will annotate both positive and negative elements of the publication in red so that the staff can easily recognize the remarks. Therefore, judges will write in the publications.
- Judges may note that some schools have a traditional or chronological book. Scores should not be affected by their choice of book format.
- Judges will include comments relevant to each division and therefore each section in the space on the page provided. In addition, they will include supplementary comments explaining their overall impressions.
- Judges will award one or two Golden Kernel Awards to a staff for any special strength they see in any one or two bulleted items of the evaluation.
- Publications will be awarded one of the following class ratings:
  - Cornhusker
  - Superior
  - Distinction
  - Merit
- If a publication receives no official rating, the judge will provide specific recommendations along with a detailed evaluation.

# PART I: CONCEPT

## THEME/CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

- The theme/unifying concept is appropriately introduced on the cover.
- The theme/concept works as a unifying concept and appears appropriately – usually on the cover, endsheets, title page, opening/closing sections and divider pages.
- The theme/concept is clear, well-conceived, easily identifiable and relative to the student readers.
- The theme/concept is original and applicable to the school year.
- The book's overall presentation is appropriately influenced by the staff's selected theme/concept.

## COVER NECESSITIES

- The book's theme, title and year appear on the cover.
- The name of the school, city and state, book title, volume number and year appear on the spine.
- The cover enhances the theme/concept with color, design and type.
- When photographs are used on the cover, they have captions on the endsheets or early in the book to properly identify them.

## TITLE PAGE

- The title page includes the name of the book, year, school name and mailing address, telephone number, school enrollment, website address and volume number.
- The theme/concept statement or graphics is repeated on the title page.
- An action photograph(s), with appropriate caption, is used instead of a static photograph of the front of the school.

## FRONT/BACK ENDSHEETS

- Front and back endsheets are coordinated.
- Graphics are used from the cover
- If photographs are used, they have captions to properly identify them.
- Endsheets coordinate nicely with the cover and theme/concept of the book (If plain, judges will NOT deduct).

## CONTENTS LISTING

- Mini-theme/concept/phrases may be used along with listing the section names in the contents listing.
- Page numbers correspond with the actual pages.
- The contents listing is easy to find.
- The contents listing is physically placed on the endsheets or soon after, but not the title page.

## DIVISION PAGES

- The design is distinct.
- Copy, design and photography relate to the theme/concept as well as to the section.
- Headlines are featurized, not merely labels and creatively entice the reader into the copy.

## INDEX

- Is accurate and includes a complete listing of all people, organizations and events covered in the book.
- It may include copy and photographs for reader interest.
- The type is easy to read.
- Design coordinates with the rest of the book.

## COLPHON/STAFF LISTING/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- The colophon may include the publishing specifics of the book (place of publication, paper, colors, type styles, yearbook representative, plant representative, scholastic press memberships and previous awards).

- Is placed appropriately in the index, at the end of ads, or on the back endsheet but is not the final page of the book.
- Acknowledgements are factual and written in good taste.
- A staff listing, including the adviser (at the bottom of the list), is included.

**FOLIOS**

- Every spread has complete folios.
- Visual/graphic elements of the folios coordinate with the rest of the book's design.
- The folio includes page numbers and appropriate page/spread name.
- Folio graphics do not dominate the spread.

**OVERALL SCORE FOR CONCEPT**

0-100	150	175	200	<input type="text"/>
Needs Improvement	Average/Good	Very Good	Excellent	

*\*Judges: the numbers above are just for markers. You may give any number of points up to 200.*

**GENERAL COMMENTS FOR CONCEPT**

## **PART II: COVERAGE**

### **ACADEMICS:**

#### **IN THE CLASSROOM**

- This includes all academic areas (core classes, electives, AP, vocational, etc.)
- The staff has tried to cover as many courses/departmental areas of the school as possible.
- Coverage is enlivened with the use of strong action photographs and creative graphics.
- An attempt is made to include as many different people as possible within this section and within the book
- The reader gets an overall feel for what took place academically at the school for both students and faculty.
- The direct involvement of students in the learning process is shown through special classroom events and routine classroom happenings.
- Interesting candid photographs dominate each spread with limited photographs of students sitting in desks.

#### **OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

- Behind-the-scenes areas of academics are included through photographs and stories.
- Reader can see interaction between students and the community throughout.

#### **FACULTY**

- Faculty members are included; however, faculty coverage does not overshadow student coverage.
- The reader sees the interaction between students and faculty.
- The staff has avoided using the academic section for faculty portraits.
- Faculty are title appropriately.

#### **GENERAL DESIGN**

- Each spread has a dominant element that serves as a focal point.
- Facing pages are designed as spreads with consistent inner and outer margins.
- The section's design is distinctive from other sections of the book.
- Design elements within the section assist in visually combining the design of the entire book.
- A variety of photographic shapes and sizes have been used effectively on all spreads throughout the section.

### **SPORTS:**

#### **COVERAGE**

- Coverage is enlivened with strong copy, action photographs and creative graphics.
- An attempt is made to include as many people as possible.
- Coverage includes regular practices as well as special events, such as summer camps, out-of-season and preseason conditioning.
- All sports levels and genders are effectively covered.
- Editorializing and predictions about future seasons eliminated.
- The staff has shown an element of fan support and coaches and/or sponsors are included.

#### **SEASON DOCUMENTATION**

- Identified team photos are accurate, scoreboards are included and complement the book.
- Scoreboards are readable and records are included in every scoreboard.

## **PEOPLE:**

### **COVERAGE**

- Coverage of all students and staff is enlivened with strong copy, action photographs and creative graphics.
- An attempt is made to include as many different people as possible

### **PORTRAITS**

- The people section is accurate and may list students or staff members who are not pictured.
- Individual portraits are appropriately sized and designed in rectangular modular grids.
- Faculty are identified by full name and position.
- Elements of secondary coverage (feature stories, infographics, etc.) are integrated with the portrait panels to give readers variety.

## **CLUBS:**

### **COVERAGE**

- Coverage is enlivened with strong copy, action photographs and creative graphics. An attempt is made to include as many different people as possible.
- Club events that take place within school as well as outside of school are covered.
- Coverage shows the relationship of the club to student interests and activities.
- Club coverage goes beyond the obvious to show community/school contributions including fundraising and service opportunities.
- Pertinent quotes from club members are used effectively, so readers understand the intent and purpose of an activity the club sponsors.
- Copy avoids simply listing the purpose or goals of the organization.
- Organization awards, honors or accomplishments are highlighted, but the staff has avoided making them the entire focus.
- The organization's sponsor or adviser is included in the coverage.
- An accurate record of club members and sponsors are included in the book.

## **STUDENT LIFE:**

### **SCHOOL AND OUTSIDE SCHOOL**

- Coverage is student-centered and enlivened with strong copy, action photographs and creative graphics.
- An attempt is made to include as many different people as possible.
- Activities are written about using a feature angle.
- While some topics have to be included year after year, such as homecoming, prom and graduation, an attempt has been made to include topics that haven't been covered before.
- The reader sees the activities students participate in outside of school, such as shopping, sports or work.
- The staff attempts to cover yearly topics from a unique angle and avoids clichés.
- The coverage of student life spans a full year, not just the academic year.
- The staff uses student surveys to give quantified statistics about topics/events.

### **SOCIAL LIFE**

- The student life section includes a perspective on the social life of students at the school
- The staff has attempted to cover social life of students in an interesting way.
- The section also includes a perspective of students' home lives.

- An entertainment perspective is included to help date the year.
- If included, fads and fashions are covered in an interesting way.

**ADVERTISING:**

**COVERAGE**

- The section has been utilized for maximum student appeal
- The ads emphasize services and products of interest to students.
- All photographs have complete captions, so students know who their peers are in the photographs.

**PERSONAL ADS**

- Personal ads are tasteful and appropriate.
- Personal ads fit well with the other ads in the section.
- Personal ads are appropriately designed.

**PROFESSIONALISM**

- Ads are displayed in a professional manner.
- Staff has avoided too many “business card” ads.
- Ads are appropriately designed.

**OVERALL SCORE FOR COVERAGE**

0-100	150	175	200	
Needs Improvement	Average/Good	Very Good	Excellent	

*\*Judges: the numbers above are just for markers. You may give any number of points up to 200.*

**GENERAL COMMENTS FOR COVERAGE**



# PART III: WRITING

## HEADLINES

- Headlines are clear summaries of the content and angle of the stories to which they refer.
- Language is dynamic so that headlines grab reader attention.
- All headlines have a subject and a verb, whether by themselves or in conjunction with a secondary head and are active rather than passive.
- Headline style is consistent regarding which words are capitalized.
- Headlines are written in present tense.
- Label headlines are avoided.
- Headlines are clever, appropriate, interesting and accurate.
- Primary and secondary headline work together effectively.
- The headline style is consistent throughout the section.
- Headlines are feature-oriented instead of being news-oriented.
- Headlines are carefully proofread to avoid unclear language, misspellings and grammatical errors.

## COPY

- Leads are dynamic and concise, grabbing readers' attention and pulling them into the story.
- Quotes are anecdotal; they're "feeling" rather than "fact" quotes.
- Source names are carefully proofread to avoid spelling errors.
- Consistent feature style is followed, and stories are carefully edited for spelling and grammatical mistakes.
- Paragraphs are short to enhance readability.
- Topics are not mundane and overused, and coverage shows, and doesn't merely tell.
- Stories include answers to all key questions (who, where, why, what, when, and how), but even more importantly answer, "So what?"
- Stories feature quote from all different kinds of students.
- Copy is written in past tense.
- Stories feature unique angles to necessary topics such as homecoming, dramatic productions, and team and club coverage.
- Students are identified by first and last name, and grade, and faculty and administrators are identified by first and last name, and subject taught (English teacher Tom Jones); sources are identified by last name only in the second reference.

## CAPTIONS

- Each photo should have a caption that includes a headline that serves as an entry point for the reader.
- Captions are usually more than one sentence, and should be written in present tense when describing the photo specifically, and in past tense in subsequent sentences providing valuable supplementary or background information for the photo.
- Captions do not merely state the obvious (John Smith catches the football), but instead tell what isn't in the photo, such as details about the environment in which the photo was shot, the outcome of the event in the photo, background information leading up to the picture, or anything else that adds to the story of the photo without editorializing.
- Captions identify every recognizable person in the photo from left to right except when impractical; usually six or fewer.
- People in a photo need to all be identified by first and last names, and by grade.
- Group captions are consistent in their designation of the location of students (front row, back row, etc.)

- Captions attempt to answer who, what, where, when, why, how and so what.
- Joke/gag captions should be avoided.
- Photos include a complete caption with rare exceptions.
- Name are very carefully checked for proper spelling and accuracy.
- Captions should be in a readable font and size
- Sports captions tell the outcome of the event pictured, but do not repeat the scoreboard.

## OVERALL SCORE FOR WRITING

0-100

Needs Improvement

150

Average/Good

175

Very Good

200

Excellent

***\*Judges: the numbers above are just for markers. You may give any number of points up to 200.***

## GENERAL COMMENTS FOR WRITING

# PART IV: DESIGN

## GENERAL DESIGN

- Each spread has a dominant element that serves as a focal point.
- Facing pages are designed as spreads with consistent inner and outer margins.
- An individual section's design can be distinctive from other sections of the book.
- Design elements within the section assist in visually combining the design of the entire book.
- A variety of photographic shapes and sizes have been used effectively on all spreads throughout the section.
- Layouts have been designed using a column or grid structure.
- Subjects and action in photos face onto the spread.
- Use of white or negative space is used effectively.
- A horizontal eyeline carries the reader from one side of the spread to the other.
- Color is used to highlight the content of the spread and is not so overpowering that it draws attention to itself.

## TYPOGRAPHY

- The typography is effective for the overall design of the book.
- The typography used enhances the look of the spread.
- Distracting typography is avoided.
- The staff has selected readable typefaces and is limited in the number of font families.
- Type choices are appropriate and work well together on each spread.

## GRAPHICS

- Graphics are used effectively.
- Graphics do not take away from the readability of a spread.
- Theme/concept-related graphic elements are used.
- Graphics are used to supplement the words and photographs.
- Graphic elements are repeated within a section or throughout the book to achieve unity rather than to decorate and fill the space.

## OVERALL SCORE FOR DESIGN

0-100

Needs Improvement

150

Average/Good

175

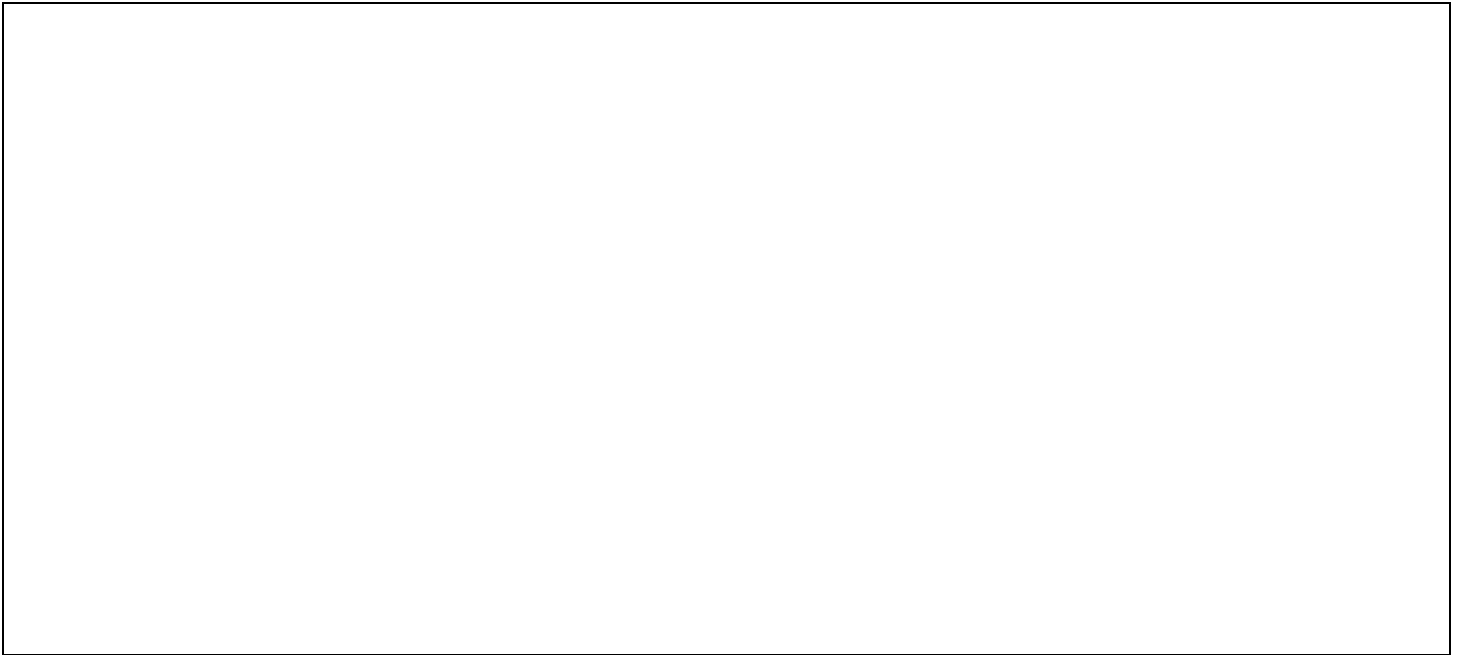
Very Good

200

Excellent

*\*Judges: the numbers above are just for markers. You may give any number of points up to 200.*

## GENERAL COMMENTS FOR DESIGN



## PART V: PHOTOGRAPHY

### PHOTOGRAPHY

- Photographs with strong composition are used as dominant elements on a spread.
- Photographs are cropped to show the most important elements.
- The number of posed photographs is limited.
- Photographs are in sharp focus, not pixelated and are free from distortion, being stretched, or other imperfections.
- No photos are unethically manipulated (ex. Photoshop treatment that changes content of photo).
- Group photos generally are cropped at the waist of the front row.
- Photo content emphasizes faces, action, emotion and a strong center of interest.
- No copyright images used without written permissions.
- Photos should not be flipped.

### CAPTIONS

- Every photograph has an in-depth caption that fully identifies each person (first and last name)
- Captions go beyond telling the reader what the eye can see.
- In sports section, captions tell the outcome of the event pictured, but do not repeat the scoreboard.
- Creative lead-ins draw the reader into captions.
- The captions styles is consistent throughout the section.
- Storytelling captions capture before, during and after moments to tell the full story.
- Individual photo credits recognize student photographers for their work.

# OVERALL SCORE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

0-100

Needs Improvement

150

Average/Good

175

Very Good

200

Excellent

*\*Judges: the numbers above are just for markers. You may give any number of points up to 200.*

## GENERAL COMMENTS FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

# FINAL RATINGS

PARTS	RATING
CONCEPT	_____/200
COVERAGE*	_____/200
WRITING	_____/200
DESIGN	_____/200
PHOTOGRAPHY	_____/200
TOTAL	_____/1000

**\*JUDGES WILL NOT SCORE SECTION FOR ADVERTISING/COMMUNITY AS NOT ALL PUBLICATIONS WILL INCLUDE THIS SECTION. PLEASE GIVE GENERAL COMMENTS FOR THIS SECTION IF INCLUDED.**

CORNHUSKER (850 – 1000)  
 SUPERIOR (700 – 849)  
 DISTINCTION (550 – 699)  
 MERIT (300 – 549)

## OVERALL RATING

- Cornhusker:** This is the NHSPA’s highest evaluation rating. Yearbooks receiving this rating demonstrate excellence in all areas of scholastic journalism production. These yearbooks effectively integrate all five areas of emphasis to give readers an excellent record of the year.
- Superior:** Yearbooks receiving this rating demonstrate excellence in most areas of scholastic journalism production. While they consistently integrate all five areas of emphasis into the publication, they are lacking in at least one area of overall execution.
- Distinction:** Yearbooks receiving this rating demonstrate a basic understanding of general scholastic journalism standards. These yearbooks consistently integrate all five areas of emphasis into their publication, but they are lacking in at least two areas of overall execution that make for a superior publication.
- Merit:** Yearbooks receiving this rating demonstrate some general journalistic standards but lack necessary depth in the five areas of emphasis.

\*If a publication receives no official rating, the judge will provide specific recommendations along with a detailed evaluation.

**Golden Kernel Award**

Judges will award one or two Golden Kernel Awards to a staff for any special strength they see in any one or two areas of emphasis.

**Golden Kernel #1**

**Golden Kernel #2**

**ADDITIONAL EVALUATION COMMENTS:**

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Classification: \_\_\_\_\_