

# YEARBOOK EVALUATION GUIDEBOOK

## Georgia Scholastic Press Association

This evaluation guidebook is a learning tool for GSPA's members. It provides guidance and constructive criticism to help staffs improve the overall quality of their yearbooks.

The items listed in this evaluation guidebook are some of the basic journalistic guidelines used today in publishing a quality yearbook. Each yearbook is critiqued in four areas: Concept and Organization, Coverage, Copy and Photography and Design. Judges rate each section as superior, excellent, good, merit or needs work. Each section has been assigned a value of 25 points. Once the judge completes a review of the entire publication, they rate the publication overall. Yearbooks are evaluated against established standards of excellence and then rated relative to that group of entries (entries are grouped by school size).

GSPA judges are qualified journalism instructors, professional journalists, graduate students and collegiate yearbook editors. GSPA instructs its judges to critique and make comments about a yearbook in a way that encourages staffs to improve their books. Judges are asked to evaluate the finished product, which is all the reader sees. In addition, judges are asked to consider the special publishing situations or problems, when possible, as indicated by the yearbook adviser on the media information form. In the process of evaluating a book, judges often erase scores and comments. This is common and does not indicate any judging problems.

Awards will be given in each class according to the total number of points attained:

### Overall Scoring:

Superior/First Place (81-100 total points)

- The staff clearly demonstrated excellence in all areas of scholastic journalism in this yearbook.

Excellent/Second Place (61-80 total points)

- The staff demonstrated excellence in most areas of scholastic journalism in this yearbook but are lacking in at least one area of execution of the book.

Good/Achievement (41-60 total points)

- The staff demonstrated a basic understanding of general journalistic standards but additional details would enhance the book.

Merit (1-40 total points)

- The staff met some general journalistic standards but lack additional details in many areas.

### Section Scoring:

21-25-superior

16-20-excellent

11-15-good

6-10-merit

1-5-needs work

One general excellence winner will be chosen from the Superior/First-place recipients in each division. The General Excellence plaques are awarded at the annual GSPA Convention each spring, along with plaques awarded to newspapers, magazines and broadcast programs.

# CONCEPT AND ORGANIZATION

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

This section covers the interrelatedness and appropriateness of the purpose, theme, design and audience of the book. It includes recognizing the evidence of careful planning details that provide vital services to the reader.

### Theme

- Does the theme unify the entire book?
- Is the theme easily identifiable throughout the book?
- Is the theme imaginative and original?
- Is the theme relevant to the students, the year and the school?
- Is the theme properly carried out throughout the book through use in the following areas?
  - A. Cover design
  - B. Title page
  - C. Opening section
  - D. Divider pages
  - E. Closing section
  - F. Reader services pages (table of contents, index, folio, colophon)

### Cover

- Is the theme displayed on the cover?
- Does the cover design enhance the theme?
- Is the cover visually appealing?
- Does the name of the book and year appear on the cover?
- Are the school name, volume number and year displayed on the spine?

### Table of Contents

- Does the table of contents listing appear early in the book?
- Is the table of contents easy to find?
- Is each section of the book listed and the corresponding page number provided?
- Does it reflect the theme (through graphics or use of theme-related phrases instead of section names)?

### Title page

- Does the title page effectively introduce the book?
- Does the page include (at a minimum) the name of the book, year, school name and volume number? (The title page may also include telephone number, school mailing address and school enrollment.)
- Does the title page design continue the theme of the book?

### Folios

- Do folios include page number and section title or relevant page content?
- Are folios consistently placed throughout the book on at least one page per spread?
- Are page numbers present and accurate?
- Is the folio designed appropriately for the theme of the book?

### Comments

# CONCEPT AND ORGANIZATION

## Comments

### Divider Pages and Endsheets

- Does each section of the book have divider pages to introduce it?
- Does the design of the divider pages differ from the rest of the book?
- Does the design relate to and reflect the theme?
- Does the copy on divider pages relate to the respective sections of the book?
- Do the headlines draw the reader into the copy?
- If not blank, are the front and back endsheets coordinated?

### Opening and Closing Sections

- Is the design distinctly different on opening and closing sections from the design in the rest of the book?
- Does the copy in the opening section introduce the theme and inform the reader of the significance of the theme for this school for this year?
- Are photographs used to support the theme? Are students the focus of the photos?
- Do the headlines draw the reader into the copy of the opening and closing sections?
- Do the photographs and copy in the closing sections effectively give the reader a sense that the year is completed and the book is finished?

### Acknowledgements and Staff Listing

- Are acknowledgements tastefully presented?
- Is there a complete staff listing in the book?
- Does the listing include the adviser and is it tastefully presented?

### Index

- Does the index include a complete alphabetical listing of people, organizations, advertisers and events?
- Are the entries accurate and is the type easy to read?
- Is the design enhanced by including copy, graphic elements or photos for reader interest?

### Colophon

- Does the colophon include publishing specifics of the book: place of publication, paper, colors, type styles, yearbook representative, scholastic press memberships and previous awards?
- Is the colophon placed appropriately at the end of the book?

## Concept and Organization Section Evaluation

Total points for section: \_\_\_\_\_ (out of 25)

\_\_\_\_\_ Superior

\_\_\_\_\_ Excellent

\_\_\_\_\_ Good

\_\_\_\_\_ Merit

\_\_\_\_\_ Needs work

Examples of good execution of concept and organization: page(s)

Examples of weak execution of concept and organization: page(s)

# COVERAGE

## GENERAL GUIDELINES:

This section focuses on adequate and appropriately balanced coverage of all aspects of school life including academic, athletic, student life, faculty, staff and students. Coverage should reflect the diversity of the school population and provide emphasis on what makes this year different from others.

### Academics

- Does the reader get an overall sense of what took place, academically, at the school including core courses, electives and vocational classes?
- Was an effort made to include special class activities as well as daily events?
- Was an effort made to include out-of-class activities such as homework, special projects for school, special speakers and field trips?
- Was a “behind the scenes” area of academics covered thoroughly?
- Does the reader have a sense of the direct involvement of students in the learning process?
- Are faculty shown as being involved in the learning process?
- Was there an attempt to cover many course and department areas?
- Is the section well organized and easy to read?

### Sports

- Was an effort made to provide equal and balanced coverage for all sports including female, male, JV, freshman, individual and others?
- Was there an obvious effort by the staff to cover as many different people in this section as possible?
- Are complete scoreboards included for each sport, including overall record?
- Does coverage include strong action photographs that cover practice, pre-game, post-game and the season?
- Does coverage include the spectators and coaches?
- Was an effort made to include group photos (including the coach) for each sport?
- Is the copy written to cover the season and include quotes from a variety of sources including players, coaches and spectators?
- Does the copy reflect the team’s season, avoid restating the scoreboard and capture highlights of important games and struggles throughout the year?
- Does coverage include intramural, off-campus and informal, non-organized sports team and individual sports?

### People

- Was there an obvious effort to include all grade levels of students, faculty, administration and support staff of the school in this section?
- Does the faculty section include individual portraits, full names, a list of subjects taught and extracurricular and club assignments of each faculty member?
- Are individual portraits of administration and support staff included in this section?
- Does coverage include the work of faculty, staff and administration?
- Are action photographs included to enhance feature coverage?
- Are individual portraits displayed in rectangular, modular grids?
- Does coverage include feature stories highlighting the concerns, activities, individual achievements and class activities of students, faculty and staff on page spreads in addition to individual portraits, to increase reader interest?

### Clubs/Organizations

- Was emphasis placed on the activities and events, rather than goal

## Comments

# COVERAGE

# Comments

statements of organizations or clubs?

- Does club coverage include routine events as well as events unique to this school year?
- Were in-school and out-of-school club activities covered effectively?
- Does coverage include strong action photos and appropriate graphics?
- Are quotes from club/organization members used in the text?
- Are club sponsors/advisers included in club coverage and in photographs?

## Student Life

- Does coverage include both in-school and out-of-school activities?
- Does coverage include daily routines as well as major events?
- Are interesting angles used to cover annual topics such as prom, etc.?
- Was the social life of students at the school covered in a unique way?
- Does coverage include strong action photographs?
- Was there an obvious effort by the staff to cover as many different people as possible in this section?
- Was there an obvious effort to cover aspects of student life from as many different perspectives as possible?
- Does coverage include controversial subjects handled in good taste?

## Community

- Does coverage indicate an awareness of community, national and international events and their influence on students in this school?
- Does the section give a sense of student involvement within the community by showing relationships between students, school and community?
- Do photos show students involved in off-campus activities and events?

## Advertising

- Do the advertisements emphasize services and products of interest to students, when possible?
- Did the section include appropriate community features, photographs, copy and/or graphics?
- Are the ads professionally designed? Was there minimal use of business card ads?
- Are personal ads placed together with business ads throughout the section?
- Were personal ads designed in a tasteful way? Did personal ads follow a consistent journalistic standard?
- Was the section clearly identified as advertisement? Was it an appropriate size for both the size of the book and the size of the school?

## Coverage Section Evaluation

Total points for section: \_\_\_\_\_ (out of 25)

\_\_\_\_\_ Superior

\_\_\_\_\_ Excellent

\_\_\_\_\_ Good

\_\_\_\_\_ Merit

\_\_\_\_\_ Needs work

Examples of good coverage:

\_\_\_\_\_ page(s)

Examples of weak coverage:

\_\_\_\_\_ page(s)

# PHOTOGRAPHY AND DESIGN

## GENERAL GUIDELINES:

This section focuses on the appropriateness and attractiveness of the total book in terms of photography, layout, typography and graphics.

### Photographs

- Is there an effective mix of action photos and posed photos?
- Do the photos illustrate the true nature of a particular event or learning experience?
- Do photographs show what the students are accomplishing in the classroom?
- Are a variety of action shots used? (i.e., academic photos show more than students bending over a book, sports photos show more than just the touchdown, the homecoming photos are more than just posed shots of couples, etc.)
- Are a variety of people used in photos throughout the book?
- Are a variety of compositions used for photos including close-up, mid-range and wide-angle shots?
- Do photographs vary in size and content?
- Do the photos exhibit a dynamic sense of composition? (Has the rule of thirds been used?)
- Are photos in sharp focus (no blurred or fuzzy photos)?
- Are photos clear of technical flaws such as dust, scratches, fingerprints or poor contrast (not too light; not too gray or flat; not too dark) or other technical flaws?
- Have photos been cropped to eliminate wasted or busy backgrounds to focus attention on the intended subject?
- Are subjects in group photos arranged in easily identifiable rows with all faces recognizable?
- Are subjects in group photos cropped in an attractive fashion?
- Are portrait head sizes reasonably the same within classes?
- Are portraits properly lighted and consistent in background and tone quality?

### Layout Design

- Is the design consistent throughout each section of the book? (Spread designs should vary between sections but remain consistent within sections.)
- Are facing pages designed as page spreads instead of single pages?
- Is a distinctively dominant element, usually a photo, the focal point on page spreads? (Recommendation: Dominant photo should be approximately two and a half times larger than other photos on the spread.)
- Do the elements work together to provide an uncluttered, unified look that reinforces the message of the spread?
- Are all the necessary elements on each spread? (may include copy, headlines, captions, photos, folios)
- Is type style of copy, headlines and captions consistent in design and easy to read in each section? (Type style can vary between sections of the book but should remain consistent within sections.)
- Are the photos an integral part of the overall design of the page?
- Does the action in photographs flow into the gutter and not off the page?
- Are bleeds across gutters planned so the gutter does not run

### Comments

<b>DESIGN</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<p>through faces or other key areas of the photo?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are inner and outer margins consistent throughout?</li> <li>• Is white space used effectively?</li> <li>• Are photo panels in the people sections organized in rectangular shapes?</li> <li>• Does the type style enhance the look of the page spreads?</li> <li>• Is there consistent and/or attractive spacing between elements such as copy, graphics and photos?</li> </ul> <p><b>Graphics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do graphics seem well-planned? Do they reinforce or accent the content of the page spreads rather than detracting from the readability of the spread?</li> <li>• Have graphics been used to enhance captions?</li> <li>• Are graphics consistent within book sections?</li> <li>• Are theme-related graphic elements used?</li> <li>• Does the use of rules, screens and large type have a function in the design? Is the text in screens and large type easy to read?</li> <li>• Does the use of color and special effects enhance the book as a whole?</li> <li>• Are special effects (cutouts, non-rectangular shapes, etc.) used sparingly and for a clear purpose?</li> <li>• If used, is reverse type easily readable?</li> </ul>	

**Photography and Design Section Evaluation**

Total points for section: \_\_\_\_\_ (out of 25)

\_\_\_\_\_ Superior

\_\_\_\_\_ Excellent

\_\_\_\_\_ Good

\_\_\_\_\_ Merit

\_\_\_\_\_ Needs work

Examples of good photography and design:  
page(s)

Examples of weak photography and design:  
page(s)

# COPY

## GENERAL GUIDELINES:

This section focuses on journalistic style copy which includes headlines, text copy and captions. Copy should be included on every page spread and include direct quotes, where appropriate.

### Headlines

- Do headlines accurately reflect the content of the page spread?
- Do headlines use present tense with active verbs?
- Do headlines grab reader's attention?
- Are headlines used on every spread?
- Do headlines show consistency in style?
- Are headlines written for the specific year?
- Do the headlines reflect the tone or content of the copy?
- Is editorializing avoided in headlines?

### Body/Text Copy

- Do stories focus on an original and specific angle, reflecting research and reporting and avoiding generalities, and answer the who, what, when, where, why and how?
- Does copy include proper attribution of quotes, use of active verbs and correct journalistic style?
- Are meaningful student quotes included in copy?
- Is editorializing avoided in copy?
- Is the copy written in feature style?
- Is the copy specific enough to provide readers with the information needed to remember the importance of an event?
- Does the copy follow a consistent style throughout each book section?
- Is the copy grammatically correct and without spelling errors and typos?
- Are leads varied throughout the book and do they provide a unique angle to encourage readers to continue the story?

### Captions

- Does every photograph have a caption?
- Do captions identify all persons with first and last names and describe the action?
- Do captions give the story behind the photograph providing the who, what, when, where, why and how, if possible?
- Do captions include strong visual nouns and action verbs?
- Do group captions identify members in a logical way? Example: Name of group. Front: with full names, Back: with full names. (insert row 2, row 3, etc. when needed)
- Are photo credits used consistently throughout the book?
- Are gag captions and editorializing avoided in captions?
- Is every photograph consistently placed?

### Comments

## Copy Section Evaluation

Total points for section: \_\_\_\_\_ (out of 25)

Examples of good copy: page(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ Superior

\_\_\_\_\_ Excellent

\_\_\_\_\_ Good

\_\_\_\_\_ Merit

\_\_\_\_\_ Needs work

## OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

## YOUR PUBLICATION'S SCORE

<b>Categories</b>		<b>Score</b>
Concept and Organization	(25 possible points)	_____
Coverage	(25 possible points)	_____
Photography and Design	(25 possible points)	_____
Copy	(25 possible points)	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(100 possible points)</b>	_____

Superior/First Place	(81-100 total points)
Excellent/Second Place	(61-80 total points)
Good/Achievement	(41-60 total points)
Merit	(1-40 total points)