



ALL-
KANSAS
YEARBOOK
CRITIQUE
2009-2010

KANSAS SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION

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YEARBOOK

Evaluation Guide

- This guide is designed to be an educational device to improve the quality of your yearbook.
- This guide is intended to point out positive aspects of your publication as well as to point out possible deficiencies.
- Judging comments are designed as suggestions for improvement. Keep in mind that these comments represent just one individual's opinion.
- Comments should represent current trends in yearbook production.
- Judge's comments may not apply to all school situations. Please understand that it would be impossible for your judge to be aware of the specifics of each school.
- Each of the five sections contained in this guide book has an overall evaluation where the judge must rate the section according to an overall set of criteria. The final evaluation is based on an average of the five section evaluations.
- Each section calls for a specific ranking with a (3) for strong work in the area; a (2) for being adequate, a (1) for needing improvement and an (NA) for not applicable.
- A two-page critique should accompany this booklet.

Yearbook: _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

City & Zip Code: _____

Adviser: _____

School Classification: _____

Judge: _____

C CONCEPTS

Theme - Services

Theme

- ___ Is there an obvious theme concept utilized to create unity throughout the publications?
- ___ Is this theme concept introduced on the front cover of the book and carried throughout the book via an opening section, dividers and a closing section?
- ___ Does the theme concept help to set an overall tone (impression) of the book and the school?
- ___ Does the theme concept employ a unique flavor that helps set it apart from other publications?
- ___ Is the design of the theme concept section distinctive, appealing and unique?
- ___ Does the reporting found on theme concept pages help to carry theme forward in the book?
- ___ Is the reporting specific to this school, to this theme, and to this year?
- ___ Do photographs show the relationship of the theme to the book?
- ___ Do captions supplement the action of the photos and help to carry the theme forward through the book?

Services

- ___ Does the book indicate staff awareness of a definite concern for readability?
 - ___ Does the title page have a distinctive and dramatic design that includes name and year of book, school name, school address, enrollment, and other pertinent data?
 - ___ Is the table of contents located on the end or the first spread of the book?
 - ___ Does the table of contents give the common name for each section (On Top of the Heap-Sports)?
 - ___ Are folios included that give the reader the page number as well as the page content?
 - ___ Are folios designed to be informative without being effusive?
 - ___ Does the book include a complete index of people, organizations, activities, and advertising with appropriate page numbers?
-

C CONCEPTS

Final Evaluation

All-Kansas:

Staff has created an exemplary publication in the areas of Theme and Services. Staff obviously understands the need to provide readers with elements that enhance readability of the publication.

Award of Commendation:

Staff has done an adequate job in the areas of Theme and Services. Staff demonstrates an awareness of these elements and utilizes most all essentials for enhancing readability of the yearbook despite some obvious inconsistencies.

Award of Merit:

Staff needs to work on providing greater reader services. Improvement is necessary in this area and staff would do well to incorporate a plan for future years.

Comments:

C OVERAGE

Student Life - Sports

Student Life

- ___ Does the yearbook provide full-year coverage of the school year including summer activities?
- ___ Does coverage indicate the unique elements of this school in this school year?
- ___ Is the student life section created topically?
- ___ Do feature ideas help to show the reader the uniqueness of this school?
- ___ Do feature ideas avoid stale and over-used coverage ideas?
- ___ Is the coverage selected in such a way as to provide something for everyone in this situation?
- ___ Is coverage of standard school events such as homecoming, school musical and graduation covered chronologically with accent features utilized to supplement the coverage?
- ___ Is the coverage presented in such a manner as to entice students to the section?
- ___ Have sidebar stories been included to enhance the overall coverage concept?

Sports

- ___ Is the sports coverage appropriate for the size of the book and the size of the school?
 - ___ Does the staff attempt to provide equal and adequate coverage for both boys and girls athletics?
 - ___ Does the staff supplement the athletic coverage with coverage of intramurals (if offered) and non-organized athletic involvement?
 - ___ Does the coverage include complete scoreboards with overall win/loss records?
 - ___ Is sports coverage set up in such a manner as to cover the highlights of each athletic season?
 - ___ Are sports features incorporated into the coverage?
 - ___ Does sports coverage emphasize in reporting and in photography the unique aspects of the season?
 - ___ Are all sports adequately covered?
-

C COVERAGE

Academics - People

Academics

- Does this section feature unique aspects of the academic side of coverage?
- Have student-selected topics for this section of the book that have meaning for a majority of the readership been included?
- Does this section avoid the typical academic coverage of frog dissection and home economics chocolate chip cookies?
- Has staff avoided using this section to feature the faculty rather than placing them in the people section?
- Is the section lively and illustrative of the “fun of learning” found in schools today?
- Has the staff placed an emphasis on topical coverage in this section that highlights the academic year?
- Does academic coverage go beyond the four walls of the building to feature learning in other arenas such as workshops, conventions and seminars?
- Does the coverage give a complete view of the school year by covering electives, required courses and vocational offerings?

People

- Does this section include mug shots of faculty as well as of students?
 - If included, are faculty statistics aligned adjacent to the photos?
 - Are portrait head sizes appropriate to the size of the book as well as to the size of the school?
 - Does each portrait spread include a copy feature or at least a sidebar?
 - Does the section include coverage of the support staff?
 - Does the section allow for coverage of the administration without allowing it to dominate the section?
 - Do copy reports emphasize unique talents, personalities and individuals?
 - If blended with another section, (such as Academics) does the people section provide proper coverage?
-

COVERAGES

Organizations - Ads/Community/Special Sections

Organizations

- Keeping in mind that some schools have a limited number of clubs, does organizations coverage seem appropriate to the size of the school?
- Are all school-sponsored clubs included in the coverage?
- Does the coverage emphasize the unique aspects of the school year?
- Does this section feature topics that are common to all school organizations (such as fund raising)?
- Does the reader obtain a complete overview of the organization offerings at the school?
- Is the coverage lively with emphasis on activities from this year?
- Has staff selected coverage that shows the diversity of the school clubs?

Ads/Community/Special Sections

Judge's Note: Not all schools will incorporate these three elements, but all schools should have at least one. Evaluate the book on the basis of what is there and do not penalize a school for that which is not included.

- Have ads been designed to sell a specific product?
 - Are ads created contemporary in their approach?
 - Are ads created in such a way as to appeal to a teenage audience?
 - Is community coverage complete enough to serve as a remainder to the reader 25 years from now?
 - Does community coverage emphasize the locale's uniqueness?
 - Does community coverage highlight community-sponsored activities for student readers?
 - Does special section blend into overall flow of the book?
 - Is the reason for the inclusion of the special section apparent?
 - Is the special section appropriate to the size of the school and to the book?
-

COVERAGE

Final Evaluation

All-Kansas:

Coverage is complete and thorough and helps to tell the story of the school year in both words and photos. Staff indicates an obvious awareness of coverage ideals. Staff approaches coverage with an emphasis on the unique and unusual.

Award of Commendation:

Coverage is generally complete and adequately serves the readership. Staff shows an awareness of unique coverage concepts and is generally able to incorporate them throughout the book.

Award of Merit:

Coverage tends to be a bit shallow and lacks a creative spark that will set this book off from other books. The contemporary book should emphasize the unique and unusual. Staff would do well to place greater emphasis on these elements of coverage.

Comments:

R E P O R T I N G

Captions - Headlines

Captions

- ___ Do captions supplement the action of the photos throughout the book?
- ___ Do captions answer reader questions of who, what, when, where, why and how?
- ___ Do captions avoid stating the obvious?
- ___ Are captions carefully edited?
- ___ Are captions generally two sentences in length?
- ___ Do captions identify all recognizable people photographed?
- ___ Has staff selected an attractive and effective style for their captions?
- ___ Is the ongoing action in the photo recorded in the caption in present tense with subsequent information in past tense?
- ___ Do captions avoid road sign directions such as “pictured above” and “left center?”
- ___ Do group photos follow a specific style for identification? Do they use “front row, row 2, back row” designation?
- ___ Are all subjects identified within the caption?

Headlines

- ___ Do headlines draw the reader to the copy report?
 - ___ Do heads generally follow an S-V-O format?
 - ___ Are headlines written in present tense?
 - ___ Are headlines placed in conjunction with the copy report for easy access by the reader to the copy?
 - ___ Are label headlines avoided?
 - ___ Do headlines have reader appeal?
 - ___ Do headlines follow proper grammar rules?
 - ___ Do headline writers place an emphasis on accuracy and on reader interest?
 - ___ Are headlines layered in such a manner as to best serve the readership?
 - ___ Do headlines inform without overwhelming the reader?
-

REPORTING

Writing

Writing

- ___ Does staff demonstrate an obvious awareness of the need for sources in copy?
 - ___ Do copy leads draw the reader into the report?
 - ___ Has staff demonstrated use of a recognized stylebook for greater consistency?
 - ___ Is copy written in past tense?
 - ___ Is copy colorful, without being effusive?
 - ___ Does each copy block rely on source quotes?
 - ___ Are paragraphs kept short (30 to 35 words) for greater readability?
 - ___ Have reporters allowed the reader to draw his/her own conclusion?
 - ___ Has copy been written in such a way as to incorporate specifics?
 - ___ Do copy reports give evidence of tight and carefully edited writing?
 - ___ Do writers rely on specific details to better tell the story of the school year?
 - ___ Have writers avoided allowing their own opinions to creep into their reporting?
 - ___ Has staff used subtle transitions to allow for a better flow?
 - ___ Does the writer show an awareness of the need for focus in the story?
 - ___ Have staff writers featured the unique and the unusual aspect in the reporting?
 - ___ Does each spread of the book feature a copy report or an alternative copy feature?
 - ___ Are specific details cited in each copy block to add greater reader interest?
 - ___ Do writers attribute information obtained from sources?
-

P

HOTOGRAPHY

Composition - Technical Qualities

Composition

- Do photographs show advanced planning by the photographer?
- Do photos tell their own specific story?
- Does the photography selected in each section of the book help to enhance the coverage?
- Do photos reveal a variety of camera angles?
- Has staff made an obvious attempt to avoid posed photos?
- Has the staff generally made effective use of dominant photography?
- Do the photos provide for a broad range of emotions?
- Have the photos been planned to include people in them?
- Have photos been cropped to the center of interest?
- Has an attempt been made to keep head sizes consistent in portrait panels?
- Does it appear that a broad representation of students has been photographed to tell the story of the school year?

Technical Qualities

- Do pictures show a technical quality that allows the photo to stand on its content merit?
 - Are all pictures in proper focus?
 - Do photos have a natural blend of tonal qualities?
 - Have water spots and dust marks been avoided?
 - Does the yearbook staff show an obvious awareness of sound darkroom technique?
 - Is consistent contrast apparent in photos?
 - Have depth of field and center of visual impact been considered?
 - Have portrait panels been closely cropped?
 - Do photos show an awareness of the need for clean and crisp prints?
 - Does picture quality seem to suffer from technological advances?
 - Have group photos been cropped just above the tops of heads in the back row and at the waist in the front row?
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DESIGN

Typography - Graphics

Typography

- ___ Has staff selected typefaces that blend well throughout the book?
- ___ Has staff made effective use of type that helps to communicate to the reader?
- ___ Has staff layered type (bold/light, large/small contrast) effectively within each section?
- ___ Have staff designers included a caption lead-in technique that is both functional and eye appealing?
- ___ Does type add to the coverage by drawing the reader to the spreads?
- ___ Did staff avoid the use of overly decorative typefaces that draw attention to themselves?
- ___ Do theme development spreads have a distinctive style to them that helps separate them from the design in the rest of the book?
- ___ Has staff utilized a consistent style for headlines - either downstyle or upstyle?
- ___ Are headlines placed on the spread in a manner that will lead the reader to the report?
- ___ Have typographical points of entrance such as large initial letters, pulled quotes and fact boxes been incorporated into the overall design concept?

Graphics

- ___ Are graphics included to complement the overall design concept?
- ___ Has staff utilized a consistent design pattern (mosaic, grid, mondrian) at least throughout a section of the book?
- ___ Are pages designed as spreads as opposed to singular pages, unless consistent design dictates the use of single pages?
- ___ Has the staff utilized consistent internal and external margins?
- ___ Are graphic devices incorporated for accent without being overly effusive?
- ___ Have color and gray tones been utilized effectively?
- ___ Has each spread of the book been designed using all design elements of photos, copy, captions, a headline and white space?
- ___ Does each spread feature a center of visual interest?
- ___ Have staff designers made effective use of white space in the design?
- ___ Are all captions and reporting blocks set in one consistent width on a spread?
- ___ Has staff made effective use of logos to identify page information?

FINAL EVALUATION

Yearbook Evaluation

All-Kansas:

This is a quality yearbook that would compete well at any level. Staff demonstrates a solid understanding of the yearbook and its purpose. Book features well-written copy, attractive design and story-telling photography. This book obviously was produced to serve a readership. Staff and adviser should be most proud of their efforts. Staff goes above and beyond the typical to produce a book that sets the tone of the school year for the readers and does so with a unique and appealing approach.

Award of Commendation:

This yearbook represents a work in progress. Staff members indicate an awareness of what a quality yearbook should include but fail to consistently carry out that mission. There are flashes of brilliance in all areas of yearbook production but this book lacks a necessary consistency to be readily effective. This book is about to break out and make its mark on the scholastic journalism scene once the staff can garner a greater consistency in quality and that extra spark that top yearbooks exhibit.

Award of Merit:

Too many flaws keep this publication from higher recognition. Staff and adviser should concentrate their efforts on basic yearbook production concepts. This book has obviously been produced as a labor of love but lacks the essential ingredients for a quality publication. Start with the basic considerations, and then once those have been mastered, the staff will be ready to ascend to the next rung. Strive to tell more of a complete story of your school year in both words and photos.

Concepts

- All-Kansas
- Award of Commendation
- Award of Merit

Coverage

- All-Kansas
- Award of Commendation
- Award of Merit

Reporting

- All-Kansas
- Award of Commendation
- Award of Merit

Photography

- All-Kansas
- Award of Commendation
- Award of Merit

Design

- All-Kansas
- Award of Commendation
- Award of Merit