

Columbia Scholastic Press Association

Summer Journalism Workshop 2008

Newspaper Editors in Chief (section 2)

Editors in chief enjoy their opportunities to learn to meet the challenges of running effective news publications. They are excited to find that they and their staffs are actually covering small worlds—their own schools. They are fascinated, too, with finding ways to lead their staffs in the coverage of events and issues outside their school communities that affect their readers' lives.

In this sequence, editors in chiefs will have opportunities to talk over experiences and insights with one another as they learn effective techniques of leading news publications. An emphasis in this sequence is that participants' school communities and circumstances differ, but the participants themselves share idealistic goals and can work together to devise realistic ways to meet challenges and solve problems.

Sometimes working in small groups and sometimes working on their own, participants will develop their awareness of their publications' missions. They will polish their own assigning, writing, editing and design skills. They will learn methods of teaching skills and of improving communication within their staffs. They will also learn techniques of staff motivation and of managing publications as a business ventures.

As editors and advisers establish policies and practices, examine existing ones and find ways to make improvements, they will develop resources for success in the year ahead.

Sequence of topics

1. **Finding and keeping a journalistic balance:** An introductory look at some ways to weigh facts and opinion, keep staff workloads realistic, consider legal matters and keep the business side thriving
2. **Basics of legal and ethical considerations:** An overview of terms, precedents and circumstances that affect the scholastic press in public and private schools
3. **Teaching your staff to find and cover the news:** Story ideas, beat systems, fundamentals of interviewing and other methods of journalistic research; ways to give clear, effective story assignments
4. **Teaching your staff to write and edit fact-based news, features and sports:** An overview of news style, copyediting and rewrite, headline writing; tips on proofreading
5. **Presenting a forum for opinions:** A focus on different types of opinion writing including editorials, columns, letters to the editor, surveys and cartoons as they relate to publications' editorial missions
6. **Staff motivation:** An opportunity to raise questions, share challenges and consider possibilities; an overview of effective techniques
7. **Teaching your staff to cover school arts and arts outside the school:** A follow-up to opinion with a special emphasis on review writing; preparation for our trip to meet Broadway show cast members and see them perform on stage

8. **Fundamentals of newspaper design:** How to apply key principles so as to enhance your publication's "personality" and attract readers, page by page
9. **Special pages, special sections and spreads:** Developing a list of possibilities and devising ways to carry them through to completion
10. **Managing the business side:** A look at ways to assess your publication's circumstances and possibilities with techniques of making a budget, developing a list of advertising leads and practicing methods of advertising sales
11. **Presentation of one another's newspapers:** Having interviewed a participant in this sequence and reviewed that participant's experiences and published results based on, editors will share suggestions based on *Newspaper Fundamentals* and the methods covered this week.

Assignments

Over the course of the week:

Read *Scholastic Newspaper Fundamentals*. Then exchange your publication with another participant's. Over the course of the week, interview one another to get a sense of your own journalistic context: school, community, local circumstances that affect the publication. Then prepare and share your views and suggestions with the whole group.

During and between sessions:

1. Develop interview questions and applications for your staff.
2. Write a response to an ethical problem.
3. Develop a list of news beats for your publication.
4. Describe the positions and experiences you have had so far on your publication. This written statement should allow you to reflect on what you have accomplished. It should also help someone else decide whether and why to apply for these positions.
5. Write a mission statement for your publication.
6. Write an editorial or a column to use in the coming year in your publication.
7. Design a page or two for your own publication.
8. Write a review of the Broadway show the group attends for your own publication or write a related feature that concerns the arts.
9. Make a list of advertising leads for your publication.
10. Develop and deliver a sales presentation.