

Columbia Scholastic Press Association

Summer Journalism Workshop 2008

Newspaper Editors-in-Chief (section 3)

Serving as editor-in-chief of a student newspaper can be an empowering experience. Not only will you have the opportunity to exercise your many journalistic passions, but if you maximize your tenure as editor, you will find many ways in which you can challenge yourself as a leader and find ways to grow as a person, as well.

The purpose of the newspaper editor-in-chief sequence is to provide you with a dual experience: first and foremost, to give you tools that will help you carry out your duties as leader of the newspaper staff and, secondly, to help you help others to achieve their maximum potential. The ultimate goal of this sequence is to make your job more clearly defined, give you tools and confidences to carry out your duties efficiently and effectively, and, when school begins, enable you to “hit the ground running.”

During the week, we’ll use a variety of settings (individual, small group, large group) to share and exchange ideas, to problem solve, to draft and compose, all the while recognizing that oftentimes the best learning experiences are extemporaneous and spontaneous. Come prepared to talk, to contribute, and to exchange dialogue with your peers from around the country.

When we’re through with the week, you will have a much clearer perspective of:

- Your role as editor-in-chief: the many hats you’ll wear; leadership techniques; ways to ensure your success.
- A self-evaluation of your publication with specific steps for improvement.
- The importance of staff job descriptions; staff organization charts; ways to facilitate staff education and motivation; how to create and use a staff manual.
- Using issue-driven coverage for increased readership; how to implement an editorial campaign.
- Contemporary writing trends for today’s newspapers.
- How to expand your newspaper’s editorial leadership and commentary pages to improve reader dialogue and exchange of ideas.
- The importance of design as a tool that can improve both readership and receptivity of your newspaper.

Sequence activities:

- We’ll look at all phases an editor’s job entails, from working with the staff and adviser to administrator relations and “rally-er of the troops.” We’ll also develop a production schedule that works and maybe, just maybe, give you some tips on maintaining your sanity throughout the year.
- Students will view outstanding student newspapers from across the U.S. to use as a springboard for evaluating their own publications. Then, a specific plan of action will be drafted, with a detailed “to-do” list of things to work on to make your newspaper the best it can be.
- Students will review sample job descriptions and staff manuals. Then, students will begin the process of writing a staff manual for their newspaper. This is an on-going process and will not be completed during this week.

- We'll discuss how current events and social issues can be localized for coverage in your newspaper and we'll look at more engaging ways of covering routine campus activities. We'll also discuss the importance of a focused editorial campaign and zero in on topics for consideration in your own publication.
- Using power points, we'll learn concrete ways to tell stories better to fully captivate the reader.
- Students will write a story utilizing this personal style of writing.
- We'll look at editorial leadership opportunities and obligations and discuss legal and ethical issues. We'll also look at ways to expand the commentary and ed-op content to engage more of the school community.
- Through a power point presentation, we'll learn how to utilize a variety of visual techniques to improve your newspaper's appearance.

Bring newspapers from your school, your burning questions, your frustrating challenges—even your insecurities. We'll use the energy and synergy of the group to deal head-on with the myriad of responsibilities that school newspaper editors face. If it's important to you, we'll find time to discuss it. By investing a week with student journalists from across the U.S. you'll leave here fired up, confident, and fully prepared to lead your staff in the coming year.