**News**

**Nurse, principal note Covid challenges, successes**

_Ainsley Danilson_, Reporter • May 27, 2021

Due to coronavirus, this school year presented difficulties to overcome for both students and staff. "It's been challenging, but the school has done great," said School Nurse Mrs. Marianne Vogt ’86. Adjustments...

**State press association honors Megaphone**

_Megaphone Staff_ • May 24, 2021

For the sixth time in the last seven years, the Indiana High School Press Association has named the Cathedral High School student newspaper, the Megaphone, a Hoosier Star finalist. Out-of-state judges evaluate high school...

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**Sports**

**Shortage of umpires affects baseball season**

_Luke Spencer_, Sports Editor • May 27, 2021

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BACKGROUND & INFORMATION

NOTE: STAFFS SHOULD COMPLETE THE HOOSIER STAR APPLICATION (IHSPA.NET/FORMS-CENTRAL) TO SUPPLY BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR JUDGE.

The Indiana High School Press Association hopes this guidebook, and resulting judge’s critique, will enhance the overall quality of Hoosier student media outlets. Students and their advisers are encouraged to utilize the feedback during planning sessions and workshops to set high standards for their journalism program and better serve their audience.

The Hoosier Star rating is established by an evaluation of superior, excellent, good, average, or in need of improvement. Journalistic works are judged against established standards of excellence and criteria that are included in this guidebook and then compared to other student media in respective enrollment divisions for IHSPA awards and honors. Judges may also recognize specific content and/or ideas as “special distinction” and identify the student-produced material that earned this honor.

Judges are asked to review this entire guidebook before beginning their evaluation and rate each of the criteria accordingly. Additionally, they are instructed to provide written feedback in a manner that encourages staffs to improve by using these guidelines. The IHSPA requires that comments be written in a constructive manner and not in a way that is deemed overly critical or unrealistic. However, anyone who believes their evaluation and/or rating to be unfair may request a second critique at no cost.

Overall, judges will be looking for student media outlets that:

1. Combine a variety of storytelling formats to give the audience a well-rounded insight into the school and community;

2. Enhance the appearance with visuals appropriate for the format, incorporating current design trends;

3. Coordinate the overall coverage and content so a consistent, attractive and reader-friendly appearance is established and maintained throughout the school year;

4. Follow the highest standards of legal and ethical behavior such as those set forth by the Society of Professional Journalists, First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Indiana academic standards for the Journalism and Student Media courses (ihspa.net/indianajournalismstandards);

5. Adhere to the Indiana High School Press Association’s core values of truth, courage, integrity and freedom.

HOOSIER STAR & DISTINCTIONS

All submissions ranked “superior” or “excellent” are exceptionally well done and are finalists for the Hoosier Star, Indiana’s top distinction for scholastic journalism. Judges other than those who conduct the initial evaluation determine Hoosier Star winners for each of the three divisions.
COVERAGE & CONTENT

- The site includes web-exclusive content, including blogs, interactive elements, video, audio and breaking news coverage.

- Staff uses blogs to update breaking news, provide coverage of often-overlooked stories and add perspective to news and feature stories.

- When used, video and audio are the best method for telling those stories.

- Stand-alone video and audio pieces reflect the value of the medium and do not just look like warmed-over TV and radio packages.

- Complementary video and audio add value to the coverage they accompany.

- Interactive elements add value to and complement the coverage they accompany.

- The staff uses the site for special reports and in-depth coverage.

- Students use multimedia components to add breadth, depth to those special reports.

- The staff understands that its website has a readership beyond the school and its students and staff.

- This is a site that will keep “accidental” readers attention by offering stories that have a universal appeal.
WRITING & EDITING

• The staff understands how readers gather information online: by scanning the page for relevant words and other information.

• Writers and editors avoid simply “shoveling” content from print product onto site.

• Stories are easily readable because they are divided into chunks or sections.

• Paragraphs are kept short and relevant.

• Sentences begin with keywords.

• Headlines are written using specific words so that search engines easily find and recognize keywords.

• For longer stories, writers and editors make use of other key visual elements in the stories, such as bullet points, sub-headlines and highlighted keywords.

• Writers provide valuable hyperlinks (either embedded into stories or listed elsewhere) to stories that provide the reader with immediate depth.

• Scripts for multimedia elements (audio and video) follow the basic guidelines of “writing for the ear” that broadcast media follow.

• Multimedia elements are accompanied by at least some text that allows readers to gain some context before listening to or viewing the multimedia.
INTERACTIVITY & MULTIMEDIA

- Readers are able to interact with the publication in a number of ways, including comments, discussion boards and polls/surveys.

- The staff uses social media tools to market its own work, but also to provide readers with valuable information.

- The staff created online directories and reader services so that the website becomes a one-stop-shop for the community’s information needs.

- Games, polls, quizzes, interactive maps and other interactive tools engage readers with the news.

- The staff embraces “Citizen Journalism,” and readers are invited to submit photos, stories, blogs and other content that can be used for a stand-alone page or as complementary material to go with the staff’s work.

- Reporters and editors use “crowd-sourcing” to not only develop story ideas, but to enhance and enrich stories that have already been published.

- Useful hyperlinks add value to a story by directing readers to other stories or sites with vital information.

- For photo and video stories, the staff uses a variety of shots and adequate graphics or captions to tell a coherent story.

- For audio reports, the staff records clean sound and uses VOs, natural sound and sound bites to tell a coherent story.

- The staff not only understands but follows copyright laws, using only original content or copyright-free material and material in the public domain.
**BREAKING NEWS**

- The staff reports on important news, sports and features in a timely manner.
- The staff includes new content as often as it can, possibly daily or even more often.
- Breaking news is verified and updated as new information is learned.
- The staff follows breaking news for as long as the news changes and is relevant.
- Altered photos (beyond COB’s and cut-outs) carry a note of explanation in caption.
- The site covers sports as it happens or shortly thereafter.
- Live sports coverage remains objective and accurate.
- The staff uses multiple media to report breaking news.
- Coverage includes useful information for readers, such as notification of school closings for inclement weather or other emergencies.
- Breaking news coverage also includes news from other sources that may have an impact on the students, staff and community.
DESIGN & NAVIGATION

• The site balances text and graphics so that both are visible “above the fold” on a computer screen.

• The staff makes effective use of text on the page to attract readers.

• The home page is simple and uncluttered.

• Navigation is easy, presenting readers with only enough options on a single page that they won’t easily become confused or overwhelmed.

• Navigation bars and other content are presented in an F-shaped pattern that mimics how online readers peruse a page.

• Multimedia viewing panes are large enough so that readers can enjoy the multimedia feature, but small enough to not obscure key written elements of the story.

• Visual elements enhance, but do not dominate, a page.

• There is a clear hierarchy of news stories on a page.

• Stories are divided into clear categories and sections, and the staff has created tabs that direct readers to those sections.

• Multiple elements in any story are placed together in a cohesive package.