



ALL-COLORADO YEARBOOK CRITIQUE

2010-11

Colorado High School Press Association

Offices

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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.
- All five sections will conclude with a holistic narrative critique, an opportunity for judges to specifically note positives and suggestions for improvement.

Yearbook: _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

City & Zip Code: _____

Adviser: _____

School Classification: _____

Publication's URL (if applicable): _____

Judge _____

theme development/structure

Is the theme 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 help to set an overall tone (impression) of the book, the school, and the year?

Does the theme create unique personality that helps set it apart from other publications?

Is the theme design distinctive, appealing, and unique?

Does the reporting found on theme pages help to carry the theme forward in the book?

Do photographs enhance the book's theme?

Book Structure

Does the title page have a distinct and thematic design that includes name and year of book, school name, school address, enrollment, and other pertinent data?

Is there a table of contents or some other tool early in the book for the reader to navigate through the book?

If thematic names are used in the table of contents, is the common name for each section included (On Top of the Heap - Sports)?

Are effective folios included that give the reader the page number as well as the page content?

Does the book include a complete index of people, organizations, and activities with accurate page numbers?

theme development/structure

All-Colorado:

Staff has created an exemplary publication in the areas of Theme and Book Structure. Staff has developed a theme in such a way to guide readers through the content and effectively structure the reporting of the year.

Award of Commendation:

Staff has created a publication that uses many aspects of the areas of Theme and Book Structure. Staff has developed a theme that somewhat guides the readers through the content and effectively structure the reporting of the year despite some obvious inconsistencies.

Award of Merit:

Staff has created a publication that uses few aspects of the areas of Theme and Book Structure. Staff has developed a theme that only occasionally guides the readers through the content and effectively structure the reporting of the year, and there are some obvious inconsistencies.

Judge's narrative comments on theme and book structure:

coverage

Student Life

Does the yearbook provide full-year coverage of the school?

Does coverage indicate the unique elements of this school in this school year?

Is student life covered topically by spread?

Does coverage avoid stale and over-used coverage ideas?

Is the coverage selected in such a way as to provide something for everyone in this situation?

Has alternative coverage 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? (If not covered in this section, are these covered in an appropriate section?)

Does the coverage include complete scoreboards with overall win/loss records?

Is sports coverage set up in such a manner as to report a feature story of the season and leave the win/loss record to scoreboards and other statistics boxes?

Does sports coverage include photography that reflects the stories of the season?

Does the sports photography cover more than two events in a season?

coverage

Academics

Does this section feature unique and lively aspects of the academic side of coverage, avoiding the typical “sitting in a desk” type photo and coverage?

Do topics in this section have meaning for a majority of the readership?

Does coverage focus on student perspectives, but also include faculty perspectives?

Does academic coverage go beyond the four walls of the building to feature learning in other arenas such as workshops, conventions and field trips?

Does the coverage give a complete view of the school year by covering electives, required courses and vocational offerings?

People

Does this section include portraits of faculty, support staff, and administration as well as of students?

If included, is faculty information complete, including subjects taught and activities coached/sponsored?

Are portrait head sizes consistent and appropriate to the size of the book as well as to the size of the school, unless senior portraits are taken by multiple photographers and student submitted portraits are included?

Does each portrait spread include a copy feature and/or secondary coverage?

Does the section include coverage of the faculty, support staff, and administration without allowing it to dominate the section?

Does feature coverage emphasize unique talents, personalities and individuals?

If blended with another section, (such as Academics) does the people section provide proper coverage?

coverage

Organizations

Keeping in mind that some schools have a limited number of clubs, does organizations coverage seem appropriate to the size of the school?

Does the coverage emphasize the unique and lively aspects of the organization, focusing on events and activities versus meetings?

Does the reader obtain an overview of the organization offerings at the school?

Has staff selected coverage that includes reactions to events, activities, competitions, and does the coverage span more than one meeting or event.?

Ads/Community/Special Sections

Note to Judge: 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.

Is the ad section as a whole (business and senior ads) consistent and professional in appearance?

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, ads, or community blend into overall flow of the book and reflect the design and theme 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

All-Colorado:

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 is not complete and only occasionally serves the readership. Staff usually does not explore new/unique coverage concepts and does not appear to regularly cover events and activities throughout the year.

Judge's narrative comments on coverage:

reporting

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, including one quote from either the subject of the photo or someone qualified to comment on the action of the photo?
- 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 including opposing team members when readily recognizable through number or face?
- In large crowd shots, are at least some faces identified?

Headlines

- Do headlines draw the reader to the primary copy?
- Do headlines generally include a verb unless a specialty headline is used?
- Are headlines written in present tense?
- Are headlines and subheadlines placed next to the primary copy to complete the copy package?
- Are label headlines such as “boys basketball” or “student government” avoided?
- Do headlines follow AP style rules?
- Do headline accurately reflect the content of the copy?
- Does the subhheadline expand on the topic/angle to inform the readership?

reporting

Writing

Does staff incorporate sources and avoid first person journalism (unless part of the theme of the book)?

Do leads draw the reader into the copy?

Has staff demonstrated use of AP Style and school specific stylebook for greater consistency?

Is copy written in past tense, except when a lead in present tense is more effective?

Is copy detailed and descriptive, without being editorialized?

Does each copy block rely on source quotes?

Are paragraphs kept short (30 to 35 words) for greater readability?

Has copy been written in such a way as to incorporate specifics, include narratives when appropriate, and generally show, not tell?

Does copy give evidence of concise 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 copy reflect a unique angle or focus in the story?

Does each spread of the book feature a distinct primary copy block in addition to expanded coverage packages?

Do writers attribute information obtained from sources correctly?

reporting

All-Colorado:

All copy supplements the photographic action in the book. Each spread includes specific and complete copy. All copy demonstrates quality writing skills by student staff members. Copy is free of typos, spelling errors and grammatical mistakes.

Award of Commendation:

All copy is adequate, but could use more detail or description that will capture the reader's interest. Each spread may include complete copy, and the quality is inconsistent, and needs more work. Copy may have a few typos, spelling errors, and grammatical mistakes.

Award of Merit:

Copy is occasionally adequate, or even non-existent. The writing often could use more detail or description that will capture the reader's interest. Many spreads need more attention given to the writing, whether in the form of headlines, captions or stories. Copy may have a few typos, spelling errors, and grammatical mistakes.

Judge's narrative comments on coverage:

photography

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?

Does photography on theme pages reflect the theme as well as good photography?

Do photos reveal a variety of camera angles?

Does photos reflect action and interaction instead of “mugging for the camera” or posed photos?

Does each spread contain an obvious dominant photo?

Do the photos capture a broad range of emotions?

Do all photos include members of the school community?

Have photos been cropped to the center of interest?

Has an attempt been made to keep head sizes consistent in portrait panels, unless senior portraits are taken by multiple photographers and student submitted portraits are included?

Do the photos in the book represent the diversity of the student population while telling the story of the year.

In instances of sports shots, is the ball or opposing team interaction included to enhance the content?

Technical Qualities

Are all pictures in proper focus?

Is consistent contrast apparent in photos?

Have depth of field and center of visual impact been considered?

Have group photos been cropped just above the tops of heads in the back row and at the waist in the front row?

Has white balance been adjusted, particularly in poor gym lighting?

Have photos been cropped so that the subject fills the frame?

Were the settings adjusted to capture the action without blur?

photography

All-Colorado:

Photography throughout the yearbook indicates staff has an awareness of the critical role quality photography plays in telling the complete story of the school year. Sound composition and strong technical quality are apparent throughout the book with few lapses.

Award of Commendation:

Photography is generally strong throughout the yearbook. There are some technical problems but these are kept to a minimum. Staff shows evidence of appropriate photo selection.

Award of Merit:

Photography is inconsistent throughout the yearbook. There are many technical problems that more photographic training might avoid. Staff photo selection is inconsistent in terms of storytelling.

Judge's narrative comments on coverage:

design

Typography

Has the staff selected no more than three type families that complement each other throughout the book?

Do type treatments direct reader through the book?

Has staff layered type (bold/light, large/small contrast) effectively within each sections?

Have staff designers included a caption starter that is both functional and eye appealing?

Did staff avoid the use of overly decorative typefaces or specialty typefaces that draw attention to themselves?

Has staff utilized a consistent style for headlines?

Layout

Do included graphics complement the overall design concept rather than simply decorate the page?

Has staff utilized a consistent and complimentary grid pattern for design throughout the book?

Are pages designed as spreads as opposed to single pages?

Does a dominant photo cross the gutter to join opposing sides of the spread?

Have designers avoided “lost faces” in the book binding by effectively cropping photos that cross the gutter?

Has the staff utilized consistent and effective internal and external margins?

Has color been used effectively outside of photographs?

Has each spread been designed to include photos, copy package, captions, white space, and graphic elements?

Is white space used effectively in the design?

Are all captions and copy packages set in one consistent width on a spread?

Does the folio reflect the theme design and properly communicate page content?

Do theme development spreads have a distinctive style to them that helps separate them from the design in the rest of the book?

Have typographical points of entrance such as large initial letters, pulled quotes and fact boxes been incorporated into the overall design concept?

design

All-Colorado:

Yearbook shows staff understanding of basic design concepts with graphic accent. Spreads reveal a unity of purpose with balance, dominance and perspective. Design helps communicate the message of the spreads without dominating that message. Design is clean, clear and appealing.

Award of Commendation:

Design is clean and appropriate to the message the book is attempting to deliver. There are occasional problems with design elements but generally the design is simple, creative and effective for reader appreciation.

Award of Merit:

Design sometimes does not seem to connect to the message the book is attempting to deliver. There are numerous problems with design elements and the staff needs to work on simple, creative and effective design strategies, with readers in mind.

Judge's narrative comments on coverage:

overall final evaluation

All-Colorado:

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 that is very close to becoming All-Colorado. 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 really 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:

This yearbook attempts to cover a unique year, but is plagued by inconsistency. There may be occasional strong elements (in coverage, photography, etc.) but they don't occur regularly. Yearbook journalism is hard work, and there is evidence of dedication here, but most of the skills needed to produce a top book need to be improved.

Judge's Evaluation Summary

Theme/Structure

All-Colorado
Award of Commendation
Award of Merit

Reporting

All-Colorado
Award of Commendation
Award of Merit

Design

All-Colorado
Award of Commendation
Award of Merit

Coverage

All-Colorado
Award of Commendation
Award of Merit

Photography

All-Colorado
Award of Commendation
Award of Merit