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Newspaper Evaluation Guide

We hope our SIPA newspaper judges find this digital evaluation guide user friendly. We want our guides to be easily used as learning tools. Although awards are nice, helping our advisers and students gain knowledge in scholastic journalism is the primary goal of our evaluation service.

The first section of this guide, scholastic guidelines, gives new and experienced staffs basic guidelines for producing outstanding scholastic newspapers. Judges will use these guidelines to evaluate the verbal and visual sections of this guide.

Upon reviewing each section judges will rate different areas of each section. After completing these sub-evaluations, the judge will rate the overall quality of the section. Once the judge has completed a review of the entire publication, he/she will award the publication an overall rating of All-Southern, Superior, Excellent or Merit.

Judges can also send evaluations back as they finish them rather than waiting until all are complete.

Please save your file using the name of the paper and school name. (Ex: Prowler-Carolina ForestHS)

Begin your evaluation below:

NEWSPAPER/YEAR: _____

SCHOOL NAME: _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS: _____

ADVISER: _____

SCHOLASTIC GUIDELINES

Verbal Communication Guidelines

NEWS WRITING

- News stories should report recent events and issues. Because many papers publish monthly, it is difficult to write true news stories for scholastic newspapers. News stories with feature angles work better.
- Keep the following news elements in mind when writing: proximity, consequence, names, conflict, emotions, unusualness and human interest. While one of the most important aspects of writing a news story is finding interesting information and angles that will appeal to as many readers as possible, THE most important aspect of writing a news story is ACCURACY.
- Write short sentences and short paragraphs. The general guideline is no more than 20 - 60 words per paragraph. Most paragraphs should be three sentences or fewer.
- Alternate short and long paragraphs throughout the article.
- Be specific in the information you give the reader. Avoid vague words like "many," "several," "various," "some," "nice," "very."
- Do NOT editorialize. No opinion, including the writer's, should be in a story except in attributed quotes.
- Attribute all quotes to the person who made the comments.
- Be sure to balance your coverage on all stories. When writing about controversial issues, cover both sides.
- For consistency, a stylebook should be followed. The most common stylebook used by scholastic journalism staffs is the Associated Press (AP) Stylebook.

FEATURE WRITING

- A wide variety of features should be used in scholastic newspapers: human interest features, personality profiles, historical features, informative features and others.
- Research is important in feature writing. In order to write a complete and ACCURATE article, the writer must be knowledgeable. Read newspapers, books, magazines and credible online sites for background information. Use personal interviews with as many people as possible for each article.
- Feature stories should elicit emotions from the reader. Write about topics of interest to readers.
- Good feature stories are written as if the writer were telling a friend a good story full of quotes and anecdotes.
- Vivid, showing (not telling) details are essential to good feature writing. Use concrete nouns and active verbs to describe what the writer hears, sees, touches, smells and tastes. Avoid adjectives and adverbs as often as possible. The reader should feel he/she is actually witnessing the events that are taking place.
- Vary leads. Include narrative, suspended interest, shocking, historical, descriptive, anecdotal, direct quote, comparison or contrast, or one-word leads.
- Focus on the topic. For example, violence is a broad topic to cover, while guns in school is more specific.
- Before beginning research, determine the article's focus/purpose.
- Vary direct and indirect quotes. The best features are those that let the person tell his/her own story without much interference from the writer.
- Avoid editorializing. The only opinions that appear in feature stories should be in direct quotes.

EDITORIAL/OPINION WRITING

- Research is important to good editorial and opinion writing. All opinions should be based on facts. Editorial types should vary. Use editorials of praise, as well as editorials that commemorate, criticize, argue a point or satirize.
- Staff editorials are unbylined and express the views of a majority of the staff or editorial board. Staffs often find it helpful to use editorial boards to help decide the topics and position of editorials they will print).
- Editorial columns are bylined and express the view of the writer.
- An editorial has three main parts: lead, body and conclusion. The lead introduce the topic, issue or problem. The body gives supporting facts. The conclusion proposes a solution to the problem, calls for action or urges the reader to think.
- Good editorials should be both lively and concise. Good editorials are seldom more than 300 words.
- Write editorials in the third person. Using the "editorial we" is permissible when it refers to the staff.
- Cite sources of facts used in the editorial.
- Direct quotes are not usually used unless the editorial is based on something someone said.
- Be objective and fair. Address all sides of an issue.
- Criticize policies and not the individuals who made the policies.
- Use editorial cartoons to add visual support to an editorial or to present another idea not covered in the copy.
- Vary reviews. Cover music, art, food, movies, etc. Cover a variety of types within each genre.

SCHOLASTIC GUIDELINES

COLUMN WRITING

- Column writing is similar to editorial writing but varies in purpose and type. Columnists can choose to write news, feature, editorial or sports columns. Other types include: humor and review columns.
- The writer can use the first person.
- Humor columns should avoid sarcasm or ridicule.
- Columns, while based on facts, research or personal experience, bring an individual writer's voice into the paper.
- The best columns are based on the writer's personal experience. A good column writer is able to see ordinary events from unusual perspectives.
- Good columns are well edited. Through appropriate word choice, they create details that show the reader what the writer has experienced, in reality or vicariously. They have a universal idea, make a point and make the reader think.
- Good column writers frequently read the writing of other successful scholastic and professional columnists.

SPORTS WRITING

- The lead should always feature the most exciting part of the sporting event being covered. How was this game different from other games?
- The reporter should understand the game he/she is covering. It is easier to write about something one understands.
- A good sports reporter is aware of the surroundings, as well as the events on the field/court. Include coaches, trainers and fans in coverage. Good sports stories make the reader feel as if he/she is actually at the event.

- Include statistics as infographics or box-score information.
- Use action verbs and be specific. Johnny didn't make a "long" run. He gained 30 yards after breaking through the left side of the line behind the blocking of senior Mark Smith.
- Do not editorialize. Even if the opposing team is the arch rival, report the actual events without any personal opinions.
- Cover all sports, male/female and varsity/junior varsity, equally.
- Cover non-school, individual and group sports – hunting, fishing, skiing, etc. as well as church leagues and community sports – thus giving balanced coverage of your student body's sports habits.

HEADLINES

- Headlines need a subject and an action verb (avoid passive forms).
- Punctuate headlines correctly: omit periods; commas may replace "and"; all other comma uses in standard English apply; use the semi-colon to attach two related thoughts; use single quotations instead of double.
- Use attention getting, reader-pleasing headlines and vary headline style. Use wickets, tripods, kickers and hammers.
- Downstyle (capitalizing only the first word of a headline and all proper nouns) is the preferred style in today's newspapers.
- Use information from the lead of the article in the headline.
- Avoid using "to be" verbs. Also avoid using the words "a," "an" and "the."
- Avoid separating the following from one line to the next: preposition and its object, parts of the same verb, parts of names that belong together,

abbreviations, noun and its adjacent adjective, compound words.

- Avoid word repetition in headlines and from headline to headline in the paper, especially on same or facing pages.
- Avoid the name of school, mascot and team in a headline.
- If abbreviations must appear in headlines, make sure they are well known abbreviations.
- Use the present tense to describe past events (unless past is needed for clarity); use the infinitive form for future events.
- Do not editorialize.
- The headline should fill the space allocated for it. The general rule is that there should be no more than two picas of white space at the end of a headline.

CUTLINE GUIDELINES

- Give every photograph a cutline.
- Cutlines should generally be at least two sentences. The first sentence is written in present tense and the subsequent sentences are written in past tense. The first sentence tells the reader what's happening in the photo (the who, what, when, where) without giving the obvious. The subsequent sentences give the reader some information he wouldn't get from looking at the photo.
- Each person in the photo should be identified in full – first name, last name and an identification. People are named from left to right, but the words "left to right" aren't necessary. Avoid large group photos. A large group usually constitutes more than five people.
- Avoid editorializing and gag cutlines.

SCHOLASTIC GUIDELINES

Visual Communication Guidelines

GENERAL DESIGN

- The general design of the newspaper should create a personality for the publication. The personality should reflect the staff and the school in a particular year. Although it is not necessary to completely redesign each year, some change each year should reflect the current staff and school.
- Once the design of the paper has been established, it should be maintained from issue to issue. Elements/Features that appear in every issue should be in the same location with the same design and typefaces. This practice will help give the reader a sense of familiarity and comfort with the paper.
- Give every page a folio line, which identifies page number, issue date and paper name. Page headings to aid the reader may also be used.
- Pages should be designed with consistent internal and external margins.
- Vary column widths on pages to help increase reader interest.
- Avoid having a vertical column of more than six inches without going to a second column. Also avoid having a column shorter than two inches.
- Set headlines flush left in most situations. Do not center headlines except in modules.
- Use downstyle headlines only (capitalize first word and proper nouns except feature modules.)
- Vary headline types to attract readers. Use hammers, wickets, tripods, slammers, raw wraps, kickers and sidesaddle heads.

- Display (non-standard) headlines may be used to enhance the design of a feature story, photo spread or news package.
- Place at least one dominant photo or other graphic on every page. This center of visual interest (CVI) is usually at least twice the size of any other graphic element on the page. If centerspreads are used, they should be designed with the center of visual interest in the middle.

GRAPHICS

- Graphics should be used throughout the paper to help break up the gray. However, be sure graphics don't make it hard to read the information they highlight.
- Use rules to package or separate elements and to show relationships between elements. Rules can be used to create logos, bylines and other standing elements, to build charts and graphs, to enhance display headlines and designs and to border photos.
- Use only one or two sizes - a thick and a thin.
- Use screens and reverses only for special effects to highlight an item that is different or special. If you screen text be sure the font is big and bold.
- Avoid print type against distracting backgrounds, and avoid screened art over type.
- Both spot color and process (full) color can be used to enhance design, but it is better used on display type and art than text.
- Infographics help enhance the visual aspect of the page. They provide readers with information in an easy to read manner by conveying data pictorially. They can be used to analyze an event, object or place.
- Dingbats like bullets, squares and diamonds can be used to help alleviate gray areas by breaking up long legs of texts, itemizing lists in a story and highlighting important points within stories.

- Initial caps, refers and logos can also be designed as graphics to help break up gray.
- White space can be used to provide visual relief for the reader. In addition to white space around the outside of pages, additional white space can be achieved by increasing the leading between the lines in the copy of special articles.

TYPOGRAPHY

- Type should be easy to read. Serif type is better for body copy.
- Type should be used to help establish the personality of your paper. Modern typefaces should be used throughout the paper.
- Use a consistent font and style from issue to issue. The staff should consider selecting different fonts for headlines and body copy to provide contrast. Special elements, such as the nameplate and masthead, might also have their own special fonts. Make sure selected fonts, although different, still work together.
- Restrict the number of fonts. Provide variety by using the different weights and styles (italics, boldface, condensed, etc.)
- The same font should be used for the nameplate and the masthead. It is also a good idea to use it for the folios to help establish the paper's personality.
- Headline type sizes should vary from article to article. The most important articles should be identified by larger headline sizes. Secondary articles should have smaller headline sizes.
- Generally body copy type is set between 9 and 12-point type, depending on the font. The staff might consider making the body copy slightly larger for editorials to help set them apart from other articles.
- Staffs should consider using ragged right (unjustified) copy to highlight a special story, column or centerspread.

SCHOLASTIC GUIDELINES

READER SERVICE GUIDELINES

- The nameplate should be in the top third of the front page and should be clean and sophisticated and emphasize the publication's name. It should include the name of the paper and school, school address, the specific publication date (not just month), and volume and issue number.
- Specialized type should be used in the nameplate to assist in establishing a personality for the paper.
- The design of the masthead should be similar to that of the nameplate. The masthead may be located at the bottom of the editorial page or run vertically, but the smaller, the better. Location and look should be consistent from issue to issue.
- The masthead should have the same information as the nameplate (see above) as well as the phone number and a list all staff members and their positions. The adviser's name should be included at the bottom of the list. The masthead should include an abbreviated editorial policy: who is responsible for the paper, how many times a year it is published, what its purpose is and who is responsible for the opinion. Also include how letters to the editor can be submitted and what restrictions the staff will put on them (length, editing for libel, spelling, AP style, etc.). Include ad information such as how a potential advertiser can contact the staff. There may also be a listing of scholastic press association memberships.
- Teasers on the front page should guide readers to articles inside. If a contents listing is used, it should be consistent in design with the rest of the front page. In general avoid a contents listing (index) if the paper is eight pages or fewer.
- Each page should have a folio containing the page number, issue date and paper's name. Page content may also appear.

PHOTOGRAPHY

- All photographs should be technically perfect. They should be in focus and free of scratches and dust.
- Photographs should not show excessive grain. Staffs should realize the more they enlarge a photo, the more prominent grain appears.
- Photographs should display strong composition. The photographer should always keep in mind the following elements of photographic composition: dominance, subordination, rule of thirds, eye flow, contrast, mood, leading lines, framing, angle of view, texture, backgrounds and repeated pattern.
- Select photographs for maximum reader interest and reproduction quality.
- Avoid posed photographs. Candid photographs should dominate pages.
- When mug shots are used they should be closely cropped. When a series of mug shots are used, the photo and face size should be consistent from photo to photo.
- Use eye flow in photographs to lead the reader into the page or, more importantly, back into a related story.
- When possible, write headlines to relate articles to supporting photographs.
- Use rectangular photographs. Avoid odd-shaped photos.
- Let the reproduction size of photographs in the paper reflect the photo's overall news value, as well as the quality.
- All photos should have cutlines and photo credits. Photo credits should be near the photograph or at the end of the cutline.
- Good photos should be used as CVIs.

Part I: Reader Services

SECTION A: Reader Assistance

NAMEPLATE

- The nameplate includes paper's name, name of school, complete school address, complete city and state listing, issue and volume numbers and date of publication.
- The paper's name is designed in a specialized type that adds uniqueness to the design of the nameplate.
- The nameplate establishes a personality for the paper.
- Appropriate type sizes are used so nameplate information is easy to read, as well as functional for the overall design of the nameplate area.

MASTHEAD

- The name of the paper is used as the heading of the masthead.
- The same or similar design is used as the nameplate, so the nameplate and masthead are visually tied together.
- All necessary contact information – school address, phone, e-mail, Web site – is listed.
- There is information about how to submit letters to the editor.
- Advertising information is given.
- Staff position titles are noted clearly.
- Adviser's name is also noted in the masthead, preferably at the bottom of the list.
- An abbreviated staff policy is included in the masthead.
- The placement of the masthead is appropriate based on the overall format of the newspaper.
- If names and titles are done in relatively small type (9 pt. or less), boldface type is used to make them easy to read.

FOLIOS

- All pages, with the exception of the front page, has a complete folio.
- The folio visually ties back into the design of the nameplate.
- Staff has titled pages appropriately, so reader quickly knows what general content will be covered on the page.
- Folios do not over-dominate the overall design of a page.

CONTENT LISTING and/or TEASERS

- If staff has decided to do a listing of what's on inside pages, it is placed effectively on the front page.
- If teasers are used, they help to entice the reader into the upcoming stories/pages.
- Design of the listing is tied in to the design of the rest of the front page.

Section A rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Section A Commendations and Recommendations:

SECTION B: Overall Coverage

GENERAL COVERAGE

- Staff has covered as many areas of school/student/community life as deemed appropriate for the size and frequency of the newspaper.
- The coverage seems well-rounded, with appropriate space given to news, opinion, features, reviews and sports.
- Coverage reflects the school's diversity and multi-culturalism.
- Staff emphasizes coverage of students over faculty, administrators and staff.
- There is a text/visual balance to all coverage areas, so reader can understand stories through both visual and verbal means.

SCHOOL COVERAGE

- Staff covers a variety of segments of the school's student body.
- Coverage adequately represents organizations, activities and ethnic groups at the school.
- The staff avoids overuse of articles on any one individual or group.

COMMUNITY COVERAGE

- Coverage focuses on events and issues outside the school walls but with a student angle.
- Local, regional and nation events are covered in a different way from the professional media.
- Coverage of events and issues outside school include the student angle.
- Coverage includes classroom and academic activities of interest to the student and community readers.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

- Photos in quote boxes and man-on-the-street surveys reflect the diversity of the student body.
- Photos in quote boxes and man-on-the-street surveys reflect a balance between males and females as well as upperclass and underclass students.
- Front page dominant photographs generally reflect students, not adults, buildings or objects.

Section B rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Section B Commendations and Recommendations:

Overall **READER SERVICES** rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Reader Services General Comments:

Part II: Overall Visuals

SECTION A: General Design

DESIGN CONCEPTS

- Individual pages use column designs effectively: column widths are varied throughout the paper and on individual pages and vertical columns of more than six inches and shorter than two inches are avoided.
- The staff uses photographs of varying shapes and sizes.
- Odd-shaped photos have been avoided.
- The paper shows an awareness of design trends.

CONSISTENCY

- Consistent internal and external margin spacing is used throughout the paper.
- The staff maintains consistent type sizes and spacing for verbal elements.
- Design techniques are consistent throughout the paper.
- The staff shows consistency in design from issue to issue. Elements that appear in all issues (bylines, pulled quotes, columns, logos, rule lines, etc.) are designed the same, and they appear in the same locations.

PERSONALITY

- The overall design establishes a unique personality for the paper.
- The writing style and topic coverage throughout the paper helps support the personality of the paper.

Section A rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Section A Commendations and Recommendations:

SECTION B: Graphics

RULE LINES

- Rules lines are used effectively to increase readability of pages.
- The staff uses rule lines to help package similar elements.
- A pica of space is left between rule lines and type.

SCREENS

- The staff uses screens to draw the readers' attention to important elements.
- Screens avoid distracting from the readability of the page.
- If color is used, the staff has been cost effective in using it appropriately on natural spreads or printer pages.

INFOGRAPHICS

- Infographics are used to draw the reader's attention to articles.
- Infographics are appropriately designed. They are based on solid, documented research.
- Computer graphic designers are given credit and sources of information cited.

Section B rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Section B Commendations and Recommendations:

SECTION C: Typography

VISUAL APPEAL

- Overall type selections enhance the visual appeal of the paper.
- Modern typefaces are used throughout the publication.
- The staff selects typefaces that work together.
- A variety of type sizes are used for headlines.

READABILITY

- Overall type selections enhance the readability of the paper.
- All typefaces are easy to read.
- The staff avoids italic type for small type sizes (8 pt. or smaller).

Section C rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Section C Commendations and Recommendations:

SECTION D: Photography

COMPOSITION

- All photographs show strong compositional quality.
- Posed photographs are avoided. Strong action shots are used.
- Photographs show different students participating in a variety of activities.
- Facial features and emotions are clear and emphasized.

TECHNICAL QUALITY

- All photographs are in focus.
- Scanned, enlarged or reduced photos are kept in proportion.
- The staff avoids using photos with dust or scratches.
- Photographs are free of excess grain.

Section D rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Section D Commendations and Recommendations:

Overall **OVERALL VISUALS** rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Overall Visuals General Comments:

Part III: Editing

SECTION A: Headlines/Cutlines

- Headlines have a subject and verb, avoid “to be” verbs and use the active voice instead of the passive voice (unless to do so would be awkward).
- Headlines are punctuated correctly.
- Headlines use downstyle and are set flush left (except display and special feature headlines).
- Headlines of appropriate width fill the allotted space.
- Headlines are written so that closely related words (subject/verb, preposition/object, adjective/noun, parts of same verb) are not separated from one line to another.
- A variety of headline styles are used (kicker, wicket, hammers, tripods, etc.).
- Repetitious wording avoided within a single headline and among the headlines on the same or facing pages.
- The present tense is used for past events and the infinitive form is used for the future.
- Every photo has a cutline.
- Most cutlines are two sentences. The first one (in present tense) tells the reader what is happening in the photo. The second sentence (in past tense) gives the reader information he/she won’t get from looking at the photo.
- Each person in the photo is named and identified.
- Editorializing is avoided in headlines and cutlines.

Section A rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

SECTION B: Overall Editing

GRAMMAR/PUNCTUATION

- All articles are properly edited and proofed to ensure readability. (Organization, unity and flow)
- All articles are free of spelling and grammatical errors.
- The copy is edited for sentence length, paragraph length, word choice, style rules, conciseness and awkward construction.

CONSISTENCY

- An acceptable stylebook, such as the AP stylebook, is consistently used.
- Cutlines and photography/art credit lines are written in the same form consistently throughout the paper.
- Sexist, racist and other stereotyping language is avoided.
- Consistency in design elements and page layout has been maintained throughout the paper and from issue to issue of the paper.
- Prejudice toward individuals, sports and teams is avoided.
- Stories reflect thorough reporting, a wide variety of sources and various viewpoints.

Section B rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Overall EDITING rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Editing General Comments:

Part IV: Advertising

**NOTE: If the newspaper does not include advertising or patron ads, the evaluator will only make suggestions that relate to the importance of integrating ads into the paper. The evaluator will not penalize staffs for not including ads.*

SECTION A: Design/Placement

- Ads are placed appropriately in a module at the bottom of the page or stacked to the side.
- The staff places larger ads toward the gutter.
- The staff avoids placing competing business ads on the same page.
- Accurate and appropriate headlines, photos and graphics (like company logo) are used in each ad.
- Ads are placed on news, feature, entertainment and sports pages.
- The staff avoids placing ads on the front page, editorial pages, centerspread and speciality feature pages.
- Most ads reflect the student audience.
- If coupons are used, they are relevant and timely and are used for products or services that students are interested in.

Section A rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

SECTION B: Professionalism

- The staff has a written policy on the acceptance of ads for the paper.
- Ads are tasteful.
- Design and reproduction size of ads are appropriate for maintaining a professional appearance.
- Business card and complimentary ads are used sparingly (when the client would not use another size or kind).
- High quality photographs and artwork are used to enhance the overall quality and appeal of ads.
- All ads contain the name of the business as well as the address and telephone number.
- If patron ads/lists are used, the design and placement are consistent with the rest of the advertising.

Section B rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Overall ADVERTISING rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Advertising General Comments:

Part V: News

SECTION A: General Writing

- General guidelines for newswriting are followed. (*see guidelines at front of booklet*)
- News angles on dated events are developed effectively.
- Stories focus on future rather than past events.
- In general, stories follow the inverted pyramid style of writing.
- Leads begin with the most important facts. They are varied in grammatical structure and avoid starting with articles, names or dates.
- In general, leads are limited to one sentence of approximately 25-30 words.
- Articles avoid vague words like “many,” “some,” “several,” “many,” “most,” etc.
- Indirect and direct quotes are used throughout the stories and are all quotes attributed to the person who made the comments.
- Both sides of controversial stories are shown.
- Editorializing is avoided.
- The writer alternates between short and long paragraphs.

Section A rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

SECTION B: Coverage

- Topics covered have an obvious impact on the student audience.
- The staff uses news briefs to report on relatively current information.
- If used, news briefs are designed as a unit that visually enhances its placement on a page.
- The staff covers state, regional and national events as well as events in their school. These events are covered from a student perspective.

Section B rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Overall NEWS rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

News General Comments:

Part VI: Opinions

SECTION A: General Writing

- General guidelines for editorial/opinion writing are followed. *(see guidelines in booklet)*
- Editorials reflect careful research.
- Writing is clear, concise and based on sound reasoning.
- First-person pronouns are avoided in staff editorials.
- Review writers avoid first person.
- If the “editorial we” is used in a staff editorial, it refers to the newspaper staff (or editorial staff), not the student body.
- Staff editorials are unbylined.
- Surveys are used to obtain audience opinions on important topics. Survey results are used in the articles, and the article reports survey methodology.
- A variety of editorial approaches are used: criticism, praise, argumentative, commemoration, satire.
- The editorials and editorial columns make readers think.

Section A rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

SECTION B: Coverage

- Topics covered have an obvious impact on the student audience.
- Articles communicate a strong, responsible voice on subjects of readers’ interest.
- Coverage includes a full range of educational as well as social issues.
- The staff focuses on issues in and out of school that affect students.
- When issues of community, state, regional, national and international importance are covered, editorials address local reactions and implications.
- Students, faculty, administration and staff have access to the paper through a letters-to-the-editor section.
- Letters have been appropriately edited.
- Editorial cartoons are included in the paper.
- Reviews reflect a variety of genres and types within specific genres.

Section B rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Overall **OPINIONS** rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Opinions General Comments:

Part VII: Features

SECTION A: General Writing

- General guidelines for feature writing are followed. (*see guidelines in booklet*)
- Feature stories avoid the use of the standard inverted pyramid style of writing.
- Features contain a single dominant theme. It is apparent that the writer has selected a specific aspect of a topic to focus on.
- The feature has a local/student angle.
- The topic is approached in a fresh and creative way. The writer has avoided writing about the same topics addressed in the paper in previous years.
- Most articles reflect research.
- Features contain direct and indirect quotes from a variety of sources.
- The writing shows vivid details with concrete nouns and active verbs.
- Leads vary in style, grammatical structure and type.
- Editorializing is avoided.

Section A rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

SECTION B: Coverage

- Features are included in most sections, including news-features, human interest features, personality features, historical features, informative features and sports features.
- Topics covered have an impact on the student audience.
- Feature topics give insight into student interests and concerns.
- Feature stories are used as the focal point of coverage in most sections of the newspaper.
- If a centerspread is used, important issues of student relevance are covered.

Section B rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Overall FEATURES rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Features General Comments:

Part VIII: Sports

SECTION A: General Writing

- General guidelines for sports writing are followed. (*see guidelines in booklet*)
- Sports stories use accepted sports terms and avoid amateur and needless jargon.
- Play-by-play stories are avoided.
- Direct and indirect quotes are used to enliven coverage and to share team insights with the reader.
- Sports features go behind the scenes to give readers an insight into more than the obvious information obtained by watching the sporting event.

Section A rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

SECTION B: Coverage

- Topics covered have an obvious impact on the student audience.
- The staff effectively and equally cover men's and women's sports, as well as freshman, junior varsity and varsity sports.
- The staff makes an effort to cover all types of sports and sports activities – team and individual, in and out of school.

Section B rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Overall **SPORTS** rating:

All-Southern

Superior

Excellent

Merit

Sports General Comments:

SECTION

RATING

Reader Services

Overall Visuals

Editing

Advertising

News

Opinion

Features

Sports

OVERALL EVALUATION RATING:

All-Southern

This is SIPA's highest evaluation rating. These publications demonstrate excellence in all areas of scholastic journalism production. These publications effectively integrate writing, design and photography/art to give readers an excellent record of the school.

Superior

These publications demonstrate excellence in most areas of scholastic journalism production. While they consistently integrate writing, design and photography/art into the publications, they are lacking in at least one area of overall execution.

Excellent

These publications demonstrate a basic understanding of general scholastic journalism standards. These publications consistently integrate writing, design and photography/art into their publication, but they are lacking in at least two areas overall execution that makes for a Superior publication.

Merit

These publications demonstrate meet some general journalistic standards but lack necessary depth in writing, and excellence in design or photography/art.

ADDITIONAL EVALUATION COMMENTS: