

2023 IJEa Newspaper & Digital New Media Contest

Individual Winners | Division 2 | Enrollment 1,000 to 1,979

BEST ADVERTISEMENT

First Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: Global Connections Ad: Boricua
- Entry Credit: Julianna Mokaya
- Judge Comment: Good for you all - going with video. Compelling and engaging.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: Annual Blood Drive March 10
- Entry Credit: Ava Bulfer
- Judge Comment: Luv the instructions. Clear and compelling

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: NHS Blood Drive
- Entry Credit: Ava Bulfer
- Judge Comment: Strong use of type to engage the reader

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Bob Jass Chevrolet
- Entry Credit: Anna Olp
- Judge Comment: Very clean layout.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Salon 440 (Advertisement)
- Entry Credit: Kevin Sigris
- Judge Comment: Unique type execution

Competition Comment

Have a hard time judging this competition year in and year out. Most of the entries are really just logos, address and phone numbers

BEST ALTERNATIVE STORYTELLING

First Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: #meettheteachers
- Entry Credit: Isabelle Ravanias, Bridget Galibois, Megha Khemka, Anna Calkins, Nabiha Charolia, Madeline Spanbauer, Olivia Sampson , Sanaa Taqvi, Daniel Garin-Vila, Kieran Blake, Annya Kong, Ayan Saynai, Campbell Meszaros, Janiya Williams, Julia Kozlowski
- Judge Comment: Excellent work to all! You can tell how much effort this took. I would personally like to see the author tag next to the date removed in favor of hyperlinking the author to the byline. Descending chronologically makes sense for now, but perhaps you'll get so many of these that you may want to organize them with a bubble map web-app atop the chronological feed, with a distinct button for each field of professional, for example, "counselors, science and math," etc.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: The death of a genre
- Entry Credit: Dhanveer Gill
- Judge Comment: It's great research and information, but you missed a few things in editing, like on 5, "was" shouldn't be there. There was passive voice on 2, 6 and 7. Passive voice can be okay in headlines for brevity's sake, but in body text, you need to avoid it.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: Q and A
- Entry Credit: Mya Biagini
- Judge Comment: This is a well done QA with a sharp design and smart sampling. But you should list the song ahead of the quote on its own line and remove that part of the quote altogether. This ensures consistency and removes the temptation to alter quotes so that they "fit the format"

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
- Entry Title: Winter Sports Preview
- Entry Credit: Asa Bassett, Chris Filas
- Judge Comment: Does cheer not have a captain? The formatting for upcoming matches, games or competitions is inconsistent when it comes to noting home games. Editor's name is on the page twice. Headline can be aligned center, but I would have liked to see subheads aligned left. Dance quote is missing quote marks, and says "from" instead of "said." If Cassie said this over email, just say "said in an email," instead of using "from."

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: We ask, you answer: Do school threats worry you?

- Entry Credit: Arianna Failor, Kevin Sigrist, Ashley Vanderhoff, Paige Whiteside, Zoey Pozen
- Judge Comment: The headline for a story should always be on top, or the top left. No exceptions. Still, the reporting for this looks like it took a lot of work and the design is otherwise good!

Competition Comment

These were great submissions and show a lot of promise. The deciding factor usually resolved with the degree to which a given submission stood on its own while also putting a premium on journalistic effort. This isn't the infographic category, Alternative Story Formats stand apart with greater emphasis on text and engagement. Magazines use ASFs religiously, especially in the front of the book section. Which in the older style magazines, can run really heavy on text, but still run the reader around a gambit of stories and make them feel wordly -- like they read 2x more than they actually did. The style has crept into newsletter and digital-first formats like Axios, and also defunct formats like Quartz' chatbot stories and Vox card stacks. These didn't fail because ASF is dying, rather ASF is becoming ubiquitous with the wider newsroom. Hone this craft and you'll go far.

BEST AUDIO JOURNALISM

First Place

- Contestant Name: Elk Grove High School
- Entry Title: Grenadier Sidelines, Episode 17: Basketball Updates and Boys Wrestling
- Entry Credit: Gabriel Newman
- Judge Comment: None

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: The Kaneland Krier Music-Cast: The February Episode
- Entry Credit: Paige Whiteside, Kevin Sigrist
- Judge Comment: None

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
- Entry Title: Dani Ebbole with Guest Brooke Dumalski
- Entry Credit: Dani Ebbole
- Judge Comment: None

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
- Entry Title: Siena Pietraszak With Guest Catie Beachum
- Entry Credit: Siena Pietraszak
- Judge Comment: None

Competition Comment

Audio journalism—in this contest and in the world in general—should aspire to deliver a strong focus and not just a rambling conversation. When a podcast has multiple segments and foci, those secondary and tertiary subjects just get lost. Students should ask themselves before beginning—and before publishing and promoting—what’s the point of this piece? And what’s in it for the listener? The podcast’s title and its opening seconds should make those things clear. And if there’s no one answer for those questions, consider editing it down or splitting the production into separate shows.

BEST CENTERSPREAD STORY PACKAGE

First Place

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
- Entry Title: Food Fanfare Foodie Facts
- Entry Credit: Avery Close, Taylor Lawson, Caleigh Plough
- Judge Comment: None

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
- Entry Title: Holidays are being commercialized
- Entry Credit: Carolina Lozano
- Judge Comment: None

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
- Entry Title: The history of Valentine's Day
- Entry Credit: Carolina Lozano
- Judge Comment: None

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
 - Entry Title: Students Turn Passions Into Profit
 - Entry Credit: Teriyana Green, Tayen Orr, Taylor Lawson, Braden Little
 - Judge Comment: None
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BEST EDITORIAL CARTOON

First Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: The Reality of High School (Cartoon)
- Entry Credit: Lilliana Bobé

- Judge Comment: The profound pessimism of the image makes an uncompromising point about high school and the human condition. The grim face of the protagonist shows the joylessness in choosing either the phone or the books.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: Finals Freakout
- Entry Credit: Kenzie Menken
- Judge Comment: Readers should identify with the hyperbolic notion that their head explodes at the end of every semester. The cartoon also asks a serious question about whether freaking teens out is a productive way to educate them.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: First Week of Spring
- Entry Credit: AJ Westley
- Judge Comment: Weather has impact, which is a major determinant of news. The light tone suits the subject, and the opening and closing panels carry a message with the protagonist's same attire. Stoicism is required to cope with nature's whimsy.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Reality of Student Drama (Cartoon)
- Entry Credit: Lilliana Bobé
- Judge Comment: Readers should agree with the notion that -- like all the world -- high school is a stage and they are but performers in the drama. They might have enjoyed reading dialogue in the caption bubbles. Why not go for it -- and then give the lone character a thought bubble?

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: Your Back Wants A Break!
- Entry Credit: Ahana Gholkar
- Judge Comment: The clear images remind readers to consider what to include and what to leave out of a backpack.

Competition Comment

Editorial cartoons at their best should challenge authority and address issues that relate to the school. Think of them as combining critical thinking with artistic talent. Making a strong point in the public interest is a good use of artistic talent. The tenets of the Hutchins Commission should guide the cartoonist in the same way they should guide editorial writers.

BEST FEATURE STORY

First Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: Students find 'safe places' at school
- Entry Credit: Adrien Reetz
- Judge Comment: Good quotes and details.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: Three years of the COVID-19 pandemic: How the world has changed for high schoolers
- Entry Credit: Olivia Sampson
- Judge Comment: Good quotes. Told a complete story.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
 - Entry Title: Teens question if there is more to life than "The Grind"
 - Entry Credit: Effie Giannoudakos
 - Judge Comment: Some spelling issues. Also, why was a former student interviewed? There was no further explanation and that lowered this story's rating.
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BEST FRONT-PAGE DESIGN**First Place**

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: First Day Supplement Cover
- Entry Credit: Samantha Dunne
- Judge Comment: Minimalist design can be kind of difficult to pull off, but this hits all the points. All elements, including necessary elements like the info at the bottom, work well together - especially with the photo subject reinforcing the point of the lead article. Good use of space and design overall.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: Oct. 31 Page 1
- Entry Credit: Lauren Ammerman, Asher Hausam
- Judge Comment: None

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: March 10, 2023
- Entry Credit: Lauren Ammerman, Asher Hausam
- Judge Comment: None

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
- Entry Title: October Page 1
- Entry Credit: Natalie Smith
- Judge Comment: None

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
 - Entry Title: December Page 1
 - Entry Credit: Natalie Smith
 - Judge Comment: None
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BEST HEADLINE**First Place**

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
- Entry Title: Students Turn Passion Into Profit
- Entry Credit: Braden Little
- Judge Comment: A nice, tight headline that captivated my interest. I like the alliteration. I wanted to check out the story to see what it was about after reading the headline.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Navigating our changing world: How school shootings shape our lives as high school students in an uncertain America
- Entry Credit: Lizzy Sidman
- Judge Comment: A very professional headline to address a very sensitive topic. I like that the headline got right to the point and didn't try to be clever on a very difficult topic.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: 'Egg-cellent' devices for AP Physics
- Entry Credit: Izzy Crane
- Judge Comment: Good pun using 'egg' - it leads readers right into the story.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: Going to Sushi + is like finding a "soymate"
- Entry Credit: Tania Cristobal
- Judge Comment: Good pun - it captivates readers' interest.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: 'Boo'eautiful Marching Band kudos for Panthers WCHS wins Governor's Trophy, named Grand Champs
- Entry Credit: Karigen Watson
- Judge Comment: Creative headline - would have ranked higher if the competition was directly related to Halloween instead of the issue coming out on Halloween.

Competition Comment

A nice mix of creative headlines and to-the-point headlines.

BEST HUMOROUS COMMENTARY

First Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: Maskless students strut fearlessly through halls
- Entry Credit: Madelyn Robbins
- Judge Comment: This is a well-written, satiric look at high school life after the COVID masks come off. A fun read.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: New 20-minute homerooms allow time to 'dance' or 'study'
- Entry Credit: Payton Smith
- Judge Comment: If you enjoy high school homeroom jokes, this entry is for you. Very "Onion-esque."

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
 - Entry Title: February-Notable Natalie
 - Entry Credit: Natalie Smith
 - Judge Comment: This is a bittersweet reflection of a childhood spent in a local movie theater about to close. Humorous anecdotes brighten the narrative.
-

BEST ILLUSTRATION

First Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: What climate change looks like in the midwest region (Cartoon)
- Entry Credit: Ashley Vanderhoff
- Judge Comment: Lovely, delicate depiction of mother earth suffering under climate change. Nice lines, great use of muted color. Subtle but effective.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: RETURNING TO NORMAL
- Entry Credit: Maggie Grugan
- Judge Comment: Drawing effectively depicts the "celebratory" nature of students' no-mask euphoria. Nice lines; including the onlookers was a good decision.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: Crumbl
- Entry Credit: Kenzie Menken
- Judge Comment: A fiendish-looking cookie, grasping a bag of money in one hand and a fistful in the other, aligns with student views on Crumbl cookies. Although less "professional" in look than some other entries, this one has a message and quirky sense of fun. Good work.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: The impactful influence of music (cartoon)
- Entry Credit: Lizzy Sidman
- Judge Comment: Attractive depiction of guitar (and accompanying notes). Nice colors.

Competition Comment

It's useful for judges to be able to see the drawing in its environment (especially since the guidelines DO say that the drawing should be the dominant art element). It's best to either submit a PDF of the story with its art or full the page OR a link to the story and art, if it's online only.

BEST IN-DEPTH NEW STORY

First Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: New learning academy opens next fall
- Entry Credit: Rafika Khan
- Judge Comment: 1. A solid, detailed piece that moves what may seem like a "routine" news story into an in-depth. Nice all-around coverage that offers sources and explanations.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: WCCHS works to create a safe learning environment for students, staff
- Entry Credit: Akciri Ortiz, Sasha Baumgartner, Karidja Monjolo

- Judge Comment: Generally well written. Most glaring problem is the use of a source who is identified by last name only -- it turns out it was the principal. Attention to detail is essential. Inclusion of the School Board president, police liaison and dean of students helps explain things

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: It's a numbers game: Political engagement during the 2023 Chicago mayoral election
- Entry Credit: Bridget Galibois
- Judge Comment: Timely story that is of interest to the community. A tighter written story would help as a lot of quotes seem to say the same thing. Greater focus on why voting is important would enhance the story.

Competition Comment

An in-depth news story is more than just a long news story. A variety of sources, attribution and relevancy are essential. Inclusion of expert sources is a huge help in in-depth stories to help the reader understand why the story is important.

BEST INFOGRAPHIC

First Place

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
- Entry Title: The Hauntings of Alton
- Entry Credit: Avery Close, Taylor Lawson, Miles Wrischnik
- Judge Comment: Nice concept and well executed. Love the cat peeking from behind the call-out text box (which needs a little more room below the last line of text). Not sure what the significance of the colored-in areas are. Accompanies a story that is not shown - I would like to see the other pages that are referred to in the text

Second Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: Subscription overload: what a changing economy means for the consumer
- Entry Credit: Dhanveer Gill
- Judge Comment: Nicely designed and organized layout! Good use of hierarchy and rules to separate the information.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Dealing with holiday financial stress (infographic)
- Entry Credit: Ashley Vanderhoff
- Judge Comment: Relates nicely to the article. Great idea to use the gift tag motif. Easy to read and friendly appearance.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: Halloween Zodiac
- Entry Credit: Anna Calkins
- Judge Comment: Fun and interesting infographic that is very inviting to read and explore! However, the category notes say that the infographic should accompany an article and I don't see the article.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
 - Entry Title: Date Ideas
 - Entry Credit: Carolina Lozano
 - Judge Comment: Visually very interesting, but perhaps a bit too busy. Color choices are more sophisticated than simple reds that are often seen with Valentine's Day illustrations. Nice use of clipart-style illustrations to break up the text and make it more inviting. Almost impossible to read the text in the far-right box labeled "Valentine's Single"
-

BEST MULTIMEDIA STORY PACKAGE

First Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: The Kaneland Krier Music-Cast: The January Episode & Song breakdowns
- Entry Credit: Kevin Sigrist, Paige Whiteside
- Judge Comment: Fantastic use of a podcast, mixed in with easy to read material.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
- Entry Title: Redbirds Start the Year Strong with Fox News Pep Rally
- Entry Credit: Grace Gibbons
- Judge Comment: Great photos and visuals.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: The adverse effects of European beauty standards
- Entry Credit: Dane Coyne
- Judge Comment: Great job on using creative visuals to help tell the story. Really added to a lot to the whole presentation of the story, very eye catching.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: War and profiteroles: La Fête de Français 2023

- Entry Credit: Megha Khemka
 - Judge Comment: Fun use of video and photos.
-

BEST NEWS OR FEATURE PHOTO

First Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: Few masks but far from forgotten: Marking three years since Chicago's Covid-19 lockdown
- Entry Credit: Bridget Galibois
- Judge Comment: Photo does a great job of illustrating the story.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: "This is me resisting": Moments from Black History Month Compass
- Entry Credit: Sophia Borgula
- Judge Comment: Excellent composition. Really like how the subjects are framed in the middle of the circle.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Ways to live an eco-friendly lifestyle
- Entry Credit: Anna Olp
- Judge Comment: Nice, tight close up.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: Photo Essay: Scenes of dissection at WEGO
- Entry Credit: Sasha Baumgartner
- Judge Comment: Bold shot!

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
 - Entry Title: Winter percussion returns after hiatus (photo)
 - Entry Credit: Kevin Sigrist
 - Judge Comment: Good composition and exposure. I like how there's a slight blur describing motion.
-

BEST NEWS STORY

First Place

- Contestant Name: Elk Grove High School

- Entry Title: Tardy sweeps keep students on their toes
- Entry Credit: Stella Alexandropoulos
- Judge Comment: Great anecdotal lead illustrates the news excellently for the reader.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
- Entry Title: News Unsubstantiated Threat Impacts Students and Staff
- Entry Credit: Ty Sullivan
- Judge Comment: Solid reporting here! Would have loved to heard from a student who stayed home. Why? And did staying home impact the students in any way?

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: Where are we really safe? How violence in the community impacts students' lives
- Entry Credit: Madeleine Spanbauer
- Judge Comment: This is a strong piece on an important issue. Next time, write a headline that matches the tone of this piece. The hed here would be better with an opinion piece.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
 - Entry Title: Students, staff react to changes in lunch prices
 - Entry Credit: Karidja Monjolo
 - Judge Comment: This is an important story but your editorializing got in the way of your news reporting. Next time, make sure to use neutral words. The reader shouldn't know how you feel about the topic you are writing about.
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BEST OVERALL DESIGN

First Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: May 11, 2022
- Entry Credit: The Advocate Staff
- Judge Comment: Modular design and visual hierarchy achieved on all pages. Body copy is generally clean, with few widows, orphans or bad text breaks. Liberal use of hairlines. Plenty of photos on each page create visual interest and move reader's eye across pages.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Kaneland Krier - Volume 49 - Issue 4

- Entry Credit: Kevin Sigrist, Paige Whiteside, Ashley Vanderhoff, Samantha Dunne, Sela Valignota, Abbey Mondt, Katie Pfotenhauer, Audrey Walker, Andrew Valentini, Sofia Williams, Elliot Krippelz, Lizzy Sidman, Rafika Khan, Jackson Kottmeyer, Dane Coyne, Lillian Bobé, Delaney Calabrese
- Judge Comment: Eye-catching cover photo. Body copy is neat and tidy, with few widows, orphans or bad text breaks. Use of screens and student artwork create visual interest. Nice use of text wraps on pp. 3, 6, 11-13 and 17.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: The Paw Print
- Entry Credit: Chloe Olaizola, Vivian Kaleta, Annya Kong, Sanaa Taqvi, Bridget Galibois, Daniel Garin-Vila, Ahana Gholkar, Campbell Meszaros, Anna Yang, Isabelle Ravanans, Anna Calkins, Madeline Spanbauer, Cameron Smith, Megha Khemka, Olivia Sampson
- Judge Comment: Distinct folios and section heads. Body copy is neat and tidy, with few widows, orphans or bad text breaks.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
 - Entry Title: The Redbird Word September Issue
 - Entry Credit: Avery Close, Eden Finger, Taylor Lawson
 - Judge Comment: Bright colors and fun frames make for an engaging visual experience.
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BEST PERSONALITY PROFILE

First Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: Tatted Up Teachers
- Entry Credit: Olivia Sampson
- Judge Comment: This is absolutely wonderful! What a terrific, fun, and intriguing way to get to know teachers. The opening works just because of the surprise of it. The images are powerful. And the stories linked to the tattoos take readers into teachers' lives in ways students usually can't achieve. Beautiful work!!

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Kaneland welcomes back new principal
- Entry Credit: Ashley Vanderhoff
- Judge Comment: This is an excellent profile. It contains terrific stories and quotes that convey the subject's humor and love of teaching. I would suggest what is currently the first paragraph down to below the anecdote about the roof blowing off. Doing so will create an anecdotal lead that will make readers want to continue through the more general and informative material in the current first paragraph.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: Behind every student at WEGO, there is a story: here is Lucia's
- Entry Credit: Sasha Baumgartner, Amanda Perez
- Judge Comment: Strong piece! I would love more, actually, about what it has been like to adjust to US culture. It's summed up, but would be great with a scene or story. On the other hand, what is here is terrific.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Elk Grove High School
- Entry Title: Exchange student Lafon gets involved at EG
- Entry Credit: Alexa Di Novo
- Judge Comment: This is very strong. Wonderful opening. The quotes capture verbal energy and vocal styles that convey personality. Nice ability to convey Birch's personality, values, and struggle in a short space. As the story goes on, it trends towards some generalities. In this portion, the piece could use more specific details and anecdotes or scenes throughout to give substance to her loneliness, for instance. But super work overall.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
- Entry Title: Zion Hodges takes the lead with his own t-shirt business
- Entry Credit: Christian Taylor
- Judge Comment: This is a very strong entry, with great quotations and anecdotes. A few scenes of Neely working might add substance. And the opening could better draw in readers. A powerful or entertaining anecdote is often a good way in. But what is here is already very strong.

Competition Comment

I was impressed with the high qualities of the entries overall.

BEST PHOTO GALLERY/SLIDESHOW

First Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: Photo Essay: Parade of Champions celebrates state competitors
- Entry Credit: Emily Ziajor, Carlos Allen
- Judge Comment: Terrific storytelling combining text and photos. Emily and Carlos did a great job improvising and thinking on their feet when the alarm went off. Really impressive stuff!

Second Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: Beyond the green light: backstage at WEGO's The Great Gatsby
- Entry Credit: Sofia Tamayo
- Judge Comment: Love the composition and variety of shots! The photos and accompanying text really make us feel that we're backstage with the cast. Bravo!

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: Seniors, spirit, and celebration: The 2022 fall sports pep rally
- Entry Credit: Peter Albu, Megha Khemka
- Judge Comment: Amazing photos! Really solid work. Love the low angles. Excellent job of combining images and text to tell the story. The competition was very strong, and it's no knock that this received third place.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Knights host Spartans on Military Appreciation Night
- Entry Credit: Abbey Mondt
- Judge Comment: This is extremely solid visual storytelling. The competition was very tough, and it's no knock on this entry that it received honorable mention. A few more action shots probably would have bumped this up a place or two. But again, excellent work!

Competition Comment

All of the competitors in Division 2 understood how to do visual storytelling. It was a delight to judge this division!

BEST PHOTO STORY

First Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: The importance of agriculture
- Entry Credit: Lilliana Bobé
- Judge Comment: Excellent group of images! Well-done.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Fulfilling activities for Kaneland students
- Entry Credit: Lilliana Bobé
- Judge Comment: Also an excellent group of images! Good combination of group shots and details.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: WCHS students earn recognition for exemplary work
- Entry Credit: Lauren Ammerman
- Judge Comment: A nice mix of pictures that do a good job of telling the story.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
- Entry Title: Fall Sports Wrap-Up
- Entry Credit: Chloe Plough
- Judge Comment: Really great sports photos in the mix.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
 - Entry Title: Homecoming 2022
 - Entry Credit: Carolina Lozano
 - Judge Comment: Photos do a good job of capturing the spirit of the event.
-

BEST REVIEW

First Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Andor: a fresh take on Star Wars
- Entry Credit: Kevin Sigrist
- Judge Comment: This review is so excellent and persuasive that it has finally made me want to check out the series itself, which is the ultimate compliment.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: Listening to “Her Loss” was really our loss
- Entry Credit: Dhanveer Gill
- Judge Comment: A superb analysis of this album's specific shortcomings.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: “hypochondriac” by brakence: a three-year journey
- Entry Credit: Michael Birdsell
- Judge Comment: A wonderful breakdown of what makes this music so distinctive and impactful.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: The nightmare before christmas | Review
- Entry Credit: Ashley Vanderhoff

- Judge Comment: A terrific article illuminating why "The Nightmare Before Christmas" remains a holiday perennial.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: Taylor Swift's latest album, Midnights
- Entry Credit: Madeleine Spanbauer
- Judge Comment: The emotional impact of Taylor Swift's artistry is beautifully expressed here.

Competition Comment

Though some of the submissions were reports on the views of others rather than reviews themselves, each was very well-written.

BEST SERIOUS COMMENTARY

First Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: On youth and politics
- Entry Credit: Annya Kong
- Judge Comment: well written, well researched. informative quotes, global yet local

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: ChatGPT: what it means to teach in the age of artificial intelligence
- Entry Credit: Annya Kong
- Judge Comment: well researched, informative, pertinent examples. a bit wordy.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: The death of a genre
- Entry Credit: Dhanveer Gill
- Judge Comment: interesting topic and thesis. well researched and well organized

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: The reasons for self-defense classes
- Entry Credit: Lizzy Sidman
- Judge Comment: well organized with logical progression valid arguments

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: The inconsistencies in women's sizing

- Entry Credit: Lizzy Sidman
 - Judge Comment: relevant topic for online shoppers using pertinent examples
-

BEST SINGLE-PAGE STORY PACKAGE

First Place

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
- Entry Title: How to stay motivated
- Entry Credit: Emma Silk, Renee Morris
- Judge Comment: Nice use of white space helps readers comprehend unusual head layout. Great and informative dominant visual.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: Prom goers have 'roaring' good time
- Entry Credit: Johanna Miller
- Judge Comment: Great photos, but too many for a single page. Better editing needed.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
 - Entry Title: Stay Positive
 - Entry Credit: Grace Phelps
 - Judge Comment: Nicely concise story gives topic neither more nor less space than needed. Colorful, which may help engage readers but doesn't have much thematically to do with story. PLEASE copy-edit; typos in bylines and in infographics are just embarrassing — and easily caught.
-

BEST SPORTS COMMENTARY

First Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Time for the College Football Playoff to expand
- Entry Credit: Ben Warford
- Judge Comment: A nice opinion piece with solid arguments.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
- Entry Title: Tom Brady Demolishes NFL Competition
- Entry Credit: Chase Chilton
- Judge Comment: I liked the use of facts to bolster the opinion.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Benefits of a fieldhouse at Kaneland
- Entry Credit: Nicholas Mitchinson
- Judge Comment: Using quotes to bolster your position made the piece better.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
- Entry Title: Cards Positioned to Give Cards a Tough Time
- Entry Credit: Ben Mitchell
- Judge Comment: A good opinion piece with solid arguments defending your take.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
 - Entry Title: Who's Using the Field?
 - Entry Credit: Hadli Joyce
 - Judge Comment: A nice piece that bordered on being a news story.
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BEST SPORTS FEATURE STORY

First Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Trainers: The backbone of athletics
- Entry Credit: Audrey Walker
- Judge Comment: Well constructed. Good topic. Good interviews and use of quotes. Nice job!

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: Tourney features star players
- Entry Credit: Zach Anderson
- Judge Comment: Great topic for a sports feature. Good background and overview. Good use of quotes and perspective. Nice job.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
- Entry Title: Superfans
- Entry Credit: Samantha Johnson
- Judge Comment: Overall a complete piece with details and personal reaction. Nice job.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: West Chicago's Nolan Allen wins 3A 152lb state title in wrestling
- Entry Credit: Carlos Allen

- Judge Comment: Good job of taking a sports news story and providing background and depth to the subject. Good to talk to the dad ... it provides a nice insight.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Elk Grove High School
- Entry Title: Why do high school sports still cut athletes?
- Entry Credit: Alexa Di Novo
- Judge Comment: Great topic. I wish this had been more than a one-source story, though. Does the IHSA have team limits? Maybe talk about the cut process? Maybe talk to someone who was cut one year and made the team the next year?

Competition Comment

Some good stories in this division that take us either to behind-the-scenes or to insights we would not have known without the reporter asking. The best stories provided description to bring us right into the situation as well as thorough background and detail.

BEST SPORTS NEWS STORY

First Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Girls wrestling continues to develop
- Entry Credit: Lyla Christakes
- Judge Comment: Rearranging the section about women facing adversity in wrestling so that it follows Boose's quote about women empowerment would help it flow smoother, but well-reported piece that looks at the growth, hopes and obstacles with women's wrestling as it continues to grow nationwide. Nice use of statistics, variety of sources and thorough quotes.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
- Entry Title: Boys basketball rallies together for postseason
- Entry Credit: Chris Filas
- Judge Comment: Well-paced piece that offers interesting insight from coach and players. Great description of players singing on the bus to show the strength of their team chemistry. A brief mention of their most notable win or loss this season would've been beneficial but still a good story overall.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: Seniors come up clutch in annual Powderpuff game
- Entry Credit: Adrian Munoz

- Judge Comment: Intro could've been more engaging with a scene from the game to begin with, but the imagery and player quotes made for a compelling piece that captured the intensity of the game.

Competition Comment

Many of the stories used vivid imagery and player quotes to provide interesting snapshots of where their teams were at during the season or what was going through their heads during a key moment.

BEST SPORTS PHOTO

First Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: Spirit for Seniors
- Entry Credit: Peter Albu
- Judge Comment: Really great shot with excellent framing, focus, and timing.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
- Entry Title: Senior Simon McClaine strikes the ball during warm up before an intense Regional game against Edwardsville High School.
- Entry Credit: Caleigh Plough
- Judge Comment: Love the quality of light, and the captured movement.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: LOOKING TO KILL
- Entry Credit: Ava Bulfer
- Judge Comment: Good work capturing the action and setup.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
- Entry Title: Sophomore Kiyoko Proctor scores an outstanding basket for the team against Collinsville High School.
- Entry Credit: Caleigh Plough
- Judge Comment: Nice shot freezing the motion of the drive. Good point of view and framing.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Washington Community High School
- Entry Title: FOCUSED
- Entry Credit: Myles Gilliam

- Judge Comment: Good timing and a nice tight composition. (Water is overexposed, but that might have been difficult to avoid given the circumstances.)
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BEST STAFF EDITORIAL

First Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: Recycling necessary at WCCHS, even if costly
- Entry Credit: Sasha Baumgartner, Adan Villa, Charlie Baumgartner, Asa Kuharich, Ida Bertram, Zach Smith, Alyssa Amabile
- Judge Comment: This is an excellent editorial! The level of detail and research here is impressive. The staff clearly worked hard on this making it well-worthy of a first-place finish. Great job!

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: In defense of the humanities at Payton
- Entry Credit: Megha Khemka
- Judge Comment: This is a strong editorial that touches on a topic students on campus clearly care about. It is well-written and researched. Good job!

Third Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: Excessive social media use: dangerous for teenagers
- Entry Credit: Dhanveer Gill, Savannah Epperson, Charlotte Boorsma, Michael Birdsell
- Judge Comment: The seriousness with which this editorial approaches a topic that can sometimes be dismissed is much appreciated. Well done!

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Participating in politics
- Entry Credit: Kevin Sigrist, Paige Whiteside, Ashley Vanderhoff, Zoey Pozen, Samantha Dunne, Ben Warford
- Judge Comment: This is an important topic and well-written. In the future, adding a bit more detail or research can help take this to the next level.

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Reality of student drama
- Entry Credit: Kevin Sigrist, Ashley Vanderhoff, Paige Whiteside, Samantha Dunne, Zoey Pozen, Ben Warford
- Judge Comment: Great topic! Be sure to add in more opinion throughout in the future to read more like an editorial than a feature.

Competition Comment

Very strong entries with important topics from across their campuses

BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**First Place**

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
- Entry Title: GN Knights Media Instagram
- Entry Credit: Staff of Knights Media
- Judge Comment: None

Second Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: Wildcat Chronicle Instagram
- Entry Credit: Miley Pegg, Emily Armenta, Savannah Epperson, Jonathan Saucedo, Jetzelli Hernandez, Karidja Monjolo
- Judge Comment: None

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Kaneland Instagram
- Entry Credit: Sammy Dunne, Zoey Pozen
- Judge Comment: None

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Alton High School
- Entry Title: The Daily Bird Tik Tok
- Entry Credit: Adrianna Paynic
- Judge Comment: None

Honorable Mention

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Kaneland Twitter
- Entry Credit: Zoey Pozen, Sammy Dunne
- Judge Comment: None

Competition Comment

Overall, consistently posting a variety of posts is what the winners did well.

BEST VIDEO STORY

First Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Kaneland Krier News Broadcast (03/13) – Kaneland High School Referendum
- Entry Credit: Taylor Anello, Andrew Valentini, Delaney Calabrese, Ashley Vanderhoff
- Judge Comment: good story, good to interview the principals of the story--Superintendent, AD Camera movements--too much movement--very dizzying. Shots should have had students in the classrooms to make the report come alive. Who cares about empty classrooms--people care about people. avoid vocalized encouragers when interviewing--look at AD interview. Cutaways would have helped break up the report. When AD was talking about stadium, let's see it. Need to see person we are interviewing before hearing from them.

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Kaneland High School
- Entry Title: Kaneland vs. Elgin – Senior Night (01/20)
- Entry Credit: Taylor Anello, Delaney Calabrese, Andrew Valentini
- Judge Comment: good footage; good vo; needed to see person before we hear from them; watch cutting off heads in interviews; avoid jump cuts--use cutaway footage to cover need to use mic--hard to hear.

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
- Entry Title: Jazz Band Competition
- Entry Credit: Ailani Pedroza
- Judge Comment: Good topic for report. Don't open with a standup--that says you are the most compelling video of the story. Open up with performance from NIU, with nat sound, then pull down nat sound and do your intro under. No nat sound present when we saw performers in NIU theater until end. Needed nat sound under; should see before we hear interviewers--need to edit tighter--not all of drummer's comments added to the story; avoid jump cuts. You had good cutaway footage you could have used to avoid

Competition Comment

Good stories relevant to students. Needed to edit tighter. Some entries were too long. Need to be crisp in writing and let the video help tell the story. Never open with standup--that indicates you are the most compelling video of the story. Open with footage of the event and use a vo. Use cutaway footage to avoid jump cuts. Use mics. Use tripods. Avoid unnecessary camera movements. Camera movements should be motivated--there should be a need or reason. Entries were fun to view. Keep up the good work. Watch professionals and critique evening news to help hone your craft.

BEST WEBSITE

First Place

- Contestant Name: West Chicago High School
- Entry Title: Wildcat Chronicle
- Entry Credit: Sasha Baumgartner, Karidja Monjolo, Dhanveer Gill, Savannah Epperson, Carlos Allen, Jonathan Saucedo
- Judge Comment: Where to begin! I love the diversity of content available on the site (including the vlogs), all of the multimedia is very well produced and professional, very easy to use and navigate, and after watching some homecoming coverage and reading some articles, I felt like I had been to West Chicago Community HS, which is incredible! And that basketball scoreboard on the bottom of the home page is so cool! If I could offer one piece of advice, I would suggest decreasing the amount of stuff on the home page. Especially with how many elements move (like the sections popping up as you scroll or the latest stories scrolling by on the top), it can feel a bit overwhelming and hard to figure out where on the site to go. So I would suggest reducing the amount of content on the homepage and maybe adding more specific categories to the navigation rail at the top if you're worried about people knowing how much is available. Other than that, great work!!

Second Place

- Contestant Name: Walter Payton High School
- Entry Title: The Paw Print
- Entry Credit: Andrew Sassower
- Judge Comment: The design of the site feels very clean and crisp—I especially love that header image with your logo on the top! All of your multimedia content was very well produced and super interesting—even to someone who doesn't go to your school. I love the option in the sidebar to sign up for email updates, which is something many real-world online publications rely on too. The only thing I would suggest would be to add a bit of organization to the homepage. I like the content blocks, but since everything is just labeled "featured," I'm not entirely sure which content falls into which categories or what is the latest news. So switching out the "featured" articles now and then or labeling them as "news," "sports," etc., would go a long way. But other than that, great work!!!

Third Place

- Contestant Name: Grayslake North High School
 - Entry Title: Knights Media
 - Entry Credit: Staff
 - Judge Comment: I love the photo grid at the top of the homepage; it immediately drew my eye and made me curious! Your multimedia content was very well produced too, and I love how you have ads on the site for senior portraits. Great work!
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