

2025 IJEА NEWSPAPER & DIGITAL NEWS MEDIA CONTEST

DIVISION 1 INDIVIDUAL WINNERS — Enrollment up to 599

BEST ADVERTISEMENT

Place Name: First Place
Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School
Entry Title: Bill Ghent Insurance
Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley
Judge Comment: Love the Harrisburg High School connection! That was the deciding factor in giving this first place. The old photos add a really nice touch. Great job!

Place Name: Second Place
Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School
Entry Title: The Medicine Shoppe
Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley
Judge Comment: Very impressive design! All of the essential information is here. Excellent!

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST ALTERNATIVE STORYTELLING

Place Name: First Place
Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School
Entry Title: Homecoming from years past
Entry Credit: Abi Wilson
Judge Comment: Fantastic use of archival imagery.

Place Name: Second Place
Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School
Entry Title: What part of prom are you looking forward to the most?
Entry Credit: Maddie Feazel, Kinzleigh Stewart
Judge Comment: Wonderful, maybe less all caps?

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST AUDIO JOURNALISM**Place Name:** First Place**Contestant Name:** Harrisburg High School**Entry Title:** The Dawg Pound Report**Entry Credit:** Braxton Murphy, Rylan Palmer, Nash Vallette, Xander Robinson**Judge Comment:** None

Competition Comment: Audio not up to professional standards. Volume all over the place—especially at the open, the most important part of the show. Not great at bringing listeners into the story. This is more of a talk show than audio journalism.

BEST CENTERSPREAD STORY PACKAGE**Place Name:** First Place**Contestant Name:** Harrisburg High School**Entry Title:** In the spotlight: Harrisburg High School has a rich Homecoming History**Entry Credit:** Isabella Dooley, Abi Wilson

Judge Comment: The spread provides readers with a sense of who they are -- based on who they were. Let headlines have white space to breathe. Beware of colons in headlines.

Place Name: Second Place**Contestant Name:** Harrisburg High School**Entry Title:** To use AI or not to use AI**Entry Credit:** Isabella Dooley

Judge Comment: The AI debate makes a good spread on a continuing issue. The allusion to Hamlet should work with your audience.

Place Name: Third Place**Contestant Name:** Herscher High School**Entry Title:** September**Entry Credit:** Ally Doyle, Brittany Wietting, Gianna Giacometti

Judge Comment: The focus on advice should help grab the readers. Try to get verbs in headlines.

Place Name: Honorable Mention**Contestant Name:** Herscher High School**Entry Title:** December**Entry Credit:** Ally Doyle, Brittany Wietting, Gianna Giacometti

Judge Comment: Seasonal stories can make a good feature spread. Beware of gutters and make sure readers can spot photo captions.

Competition Comment: Local coverage makes a good spread, and local reporting shows hard work to provide good journalism to readers. Remember the basics . . . white space helps headlines . . . avoid colons in headlines . . . give headlines action verbs . . . avoid sizing photos alike . . .

BEST EDITORIAL CARTOON

Place Name: First Place
Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School
Entry Title: A Call to Change: Enough with the Restroom Vandalism
Entry Credit: Rachel Smock
Judge Comment: Point of view is shown and supports the opinion piece.

Competition Comment: Aside from the winning entry, all others did not meet the criteria for an editorial cartoon, that being, as stated, "A cartoon that expresses an opinion about a subject of relevance to the publication's audience" and that an editorial cartoon "should not simply be an illustration that goes along with a news or feature article."

BEST FEATURE STORY

Place Name: First Place
Contestant Name: Herscher High School
Entry Title: Back at it again
Entry Credit: Elsie Hoffman
Judge Comment: Nice job. Good research and story-telling of your own. What an interesting history! Maybe a comment from the principal or someone like a senior class or Student council president to talk on its significance today? But really nice job!

Place Name: Second Place
Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School
Entry Title: A whole new world: Opportunity to enjoy unique hobby exists in southern Illinois
Entry Credit: Tanner Shelton
Judge Comment: Perfect topic for this category. Unique and interesting and unknown to most people. You offered good background and explanation. Your source was good but it would have been helpful to hear from an instructor or maybe someone at Mermet Springs. Overall, very good piece.

Place Name: Third Place
Contestant Name: Galena High School

Entry Title: The Curtain Closes One Last Time

Entry Credit: Lily Kern

Judge Comment: Personal account of final performance. Wish a few things had been explained more, such as what is Mandatory Class and a bit about the actual end of the performance, many of your impressions from the stage, etc. But nice work, and a good topic overall.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST FRONT-PAGE DESIGN

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Purple Clarion Volume 98, Issue 1

Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley

Judge Comment: Wow! Excellent lead photo. No doubt about the dominant visual element here! I love it when designs go big with a good photo. Great work! Everything else is strong. Love the reader-friendly teasers and QR code.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Purple Clarion Volume 98, Issue 3

Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley

Judge Comment: Great use of special effects (the film edges) to create a single dominant image out of three smaller photos. Good thinking! The rest of the page is solid. Nice work!

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: November

Entry Credit: Brittany Wietting, Gianna Giacometti

Judge Comment: Very good traditional front-page design! Excellent dominant image! Three things would improve the design: (1) Put the teasers inside a vertical box, preferably the same color as the box containing "Tiger News Today." (2) Break up the story text by using subheads and/or a pullout quote. (3) Use a more traditional font for the main headline. Overall, good work here!

Place Name: Honorable Mention

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: October

Entry Credit: Gianna Giacometti, Brittany Wietting

Judge Comment: The same advice given for the third-place entry applies here. Do you change the color of the "Tiger News Today" box with each issue? If so, why? Just curious. I

definitely recommend using a more traditional font for your main headline. The stencil font doesn't really seem suitable for a front page, too gimmicky.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST HEADLINE

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: The veins of Valentines Day

Entry Credit: Elsie Hoffman

Judge Comment: As a crucial physical component of the makeup and function of the heart, "veins" is a great word choice to reflect a historical piece about the essential elements of the holiday. The subhead would be better if it contained a verb that indicated more about the story.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Poised in Prose: Teston takes first place finish

Entry Credit: Gabby Dooley

Judge Comment: Nice use of alliteration in the first part of the headline to gain attention to the topic. The second half of the headline needs clarity: "takes first place finish" is not as clear as "takes first at State."

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: A parade of memories to honor Vinyard

Entry Credit: Abi Wilson

Judge Comment: "Parade of memories" is a nice turn-of-phrase that ties in nicely to the heart of the story. Using the honoree's name in both the headline and the subhead is redundant. You could incorporate the quote from the story: "Grand Marshal Choice Honors 'Everyone's Biggest Fan'"

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST HUMOROUS COMMENTARY

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Galena High School

Entry Title: Girl Math 101

Entry Credit: Cameron Einsweiler, Ell Law

Judge Comment: Great use of humor and sarcasm. The examples were very funny. Well written, this piece had me laughing out loud. Keep writing!

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Brandi's Banger Reviews October

Entry Credit: Brandi Palmateer

Judge Comment: Nice to see some humor used in a movie review. The writing style is conversational and approachable. Keep on writing!

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Brandi's Banger Reviews November

Entry Credit: Brandi Palmateer

Judge Comment: Humorous and light film review. Well researched and presented.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST ILLUSTRATION

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: December center spread

Entry Credit: Ally Doyle

Judge Comment: Playful art welcomes in readers; the snowman's head adds to the interest.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: October center spread

Entry Credit: Ally Doyle

Judge Comment: Art shows off nice fall experiences.

Competition Comment: Illustrations do their job by drawing the reader's attention to the topic. Nice clear art is inviting to the readers. Art should relay a message. Words can be used to aid in making the message clear.

BEST IN-DEPTH NEWS STORY

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Brain Power in Action

Entry Credit: Ava Taylor, Laney Mohler

Judge Comment: I liked this news feature. The commentary was thoughtful, and while it was on the shorter side I felt like I had a grasp on the group and what students enjoy about it.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Galena High School

Entry Title: Snowed In: Galena School District Cancels School Due to Extreme Weather

Entry Credit: Vanesa Vazquez

Judge Comment: This was a nice news feature-y write up on a hard news story. It gives students a little behind the scenes view into how and why these decisions are made.

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Best Buddies Forever

Entry Credit: Alex Graefnitz

Judge Comment: This was a nice package as a whole, with the photos and scene setting helping to tell the story. In the future I would try to ask more probing questions to students with simple responses. Like: What do you like about that activity? Is it something you've always enjoyed or is it something the club helped you realize? What was the most challenging activity, and how did you overcome it? Overall it was a good read.

Competition Comment: All entries took very interesting angles to what could be otherwise average hard news stories.

BEST INFOGRAPHIC

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Using AI in the Classroom - Checklist

Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley

Judge Comment: Nice job! I like how the design coordinates with the illustration that contains the headline, but the robot is a bit different, but well done. The text in the boxes looks a bit cramped. And the bullets are unnecessary. The page as a whole looks really good.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Prop Prep Checklist

Entry Credit: Bella Dooley

Judge Comment: Nice job! I like the consistency of the design and the nod to the

Post-Modern design aesthetic. The headings could be better centered vertically inside the orange bars. Coordinates well with the student survey on the right side of the page.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST MULTIMEDIA STORY PACKAGE

No entries.

BEST NEWS OR FEATURE PHOTO

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: From rituals to roses: The fascinating history behind Valentine's Day (Maddie Feazel and Braxton Murphy)

Entry Credit: Kinzley Stewart

Judge Comment: Nice working capturing a spontaneous moment. Unposed and natural.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Okawville Jr/Sr High School

Entry Title: Going Once...Going Twice...Sold!

Entry Credit: Madison Gogolek

Judge Comment: Good composition making a mundane moment visually interesting.

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Okawville Jr/Sr High School

Entry Title: Homecoming Court Results

Entry Credit: Madisyn Rennegarbe

Judge Comment: Not your average homecoming shot! It's an "in between" moment.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST NEWS STORY

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Poised in Prose: Teston takes first place finish

Entry Credit: Gabby Dooley

Judge Comment: Well written and organized. Great quotes from the winner. Where was

the tournament held, and when? Would also have liked to see more details about the rest of the speech team. Watch your style, e.g. numerals for numbers 10 and higher.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Little Women display big dreams and aspirations

Entry Credit: Kailyn Carlton

Judge Comment: Decently written story. Would have liked to see more from the students higher up in the story. Be mindful of grammar and style. Tends to stray from straight news ("many might think").

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Winter driving

Entry Credit: Gracie Stevens, Brenna Williamson

Judge Comment: Shorter paragraphs would make this easier to read. A nice variety of quotes from different sources, but they're very long and tend to run right into each other, so be mindful of where you place the attribution. I'd advise being more selective about what you directly quote and paraphrasing other material to craft a better flowing narrative. The phrase "cold season" typically refers to sickness vs. when it's cold outside.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST OVERALL DESIGN

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Purple Clarion Volume 98, Issue 1

Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley

Judge Comment: Color palette and font choice help establish a distinct look and feel. Modular design achieved. Copy is generally clean and easy to read. Consider slightly wider margins and looking for more ways to find white space.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: December

Entry Credit: Gianna Giacometti, Brittany Wietting

Judge Comment: Text is generally clean and easy to read. Dominant images appear on most pages. Consider other graphics (callouts, charts, drop caps) to boost reader interest.

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Purple Clarion Volume 98, Issue 2

Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley

Judge Comment: Another well-done issue. Graphic elements and colored screens help boost reader interest.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST PERSONALITY PROFILE

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Galena High School

Entry Title: A Brave Path: Marisol Trujillo's Commitment to the National Guard

Entry Credit: Vanesa Vazquez

Judge Comment: This is an inspiring piece. It could use more storytelling. Often, interviewees will respond well to direct requests for stories about their own lives.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Where are they now series: A legacy of coaching and impact

Entry Credit: Braxton Murphy

Judge Comment: This is a newsworthy and interesting article that is low on storytelling. Often, interviewees will respond well to direct requests for stories about their own lives.

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Foreign exchange students

Entry Credit: Elaina Flores

Judge Comment: The comparisons between different education systems is interesting. The newspaper readers would likely love this story.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST PHOTO GALLERY OR PHOTO SLIDESHOW

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Beloved Mascot Has Interesting Beginnings

Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley

Judge Comment: The photos are well composed, but by themselves they don't tell much of a story. As a gallery or slideshow, the photos should be strong enough to tell a story without the help of an accompanying article. Here, we really needed to see the bulldog more than just at the end. The closeups were good, but we needed a variety of shots

(mid-range, wide angle) that included larger views of the students working on the statue, etc.

Competition Comment: See judge comment.

BEST PHOTO STORY

No entries.

BEST REVIEW

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Billie Eilish connects with fans at Bridgestone Arena

Entry Credit: Gabby Dooley

Judge Comment: A richly detailed concert review that makes the reader feel like they are there experiencing it along with the writer.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Long awaited Wicked arrives

Entry Credit: Rylan Palmer

Judge Comment: A well-written analysis of what the writer felt did and did not work in the screen adaptation of "Wicked."

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Brandi's Banger Reviews Jan/Feb

Entry Credit: Brandi Palmateer

Judge Comment: The engaging personality of Brandi, the writer, is what resonates beyond any critique.

Place Name: Honorable Mention

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Brandi's Banger Reviews September

Entry Credit: Brandi Palmateer

Judge Comment: Another solid entry in the Brandi's Banger column.

Place Name: Honorable Mention

Contestant Name: Galena High School

Entry Title: Magically Wicked

Entry Credit: Grace McIntyre

Judge Comment: The writer's enthusiasm leaps off the page here and has us wanting more.

Competition Comment: What the majority of these submissions lack in substance, they make up for in the charisma and enthusiasm of the writers themselves.

BEST SERIOUS COMMENTARY

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Frustrated Students Sometimes ask: Maybe we should just bring back paper?

Entry Credit: Kinzley Stewart

Judge Comment: Well-presented argument presenting problems and potential solutions; writing style is solid and conversational. Organizing into shorter paragraphs would help, at least to create more opportunities for transitions to drive the piece forward.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Superintendant or Superwoman? Unit #3 administrator sets the bar for leadership

Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley

Judge Comment: Very engaging and well-written, short and sweet. Lets the superintendent's actions speak for themselves without the writer getting in the way.

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Senior Riley Webber Presents...

Entry Credit: Riley Webber

Judge Comment: This column appears to be part of a continuing conversation with readers, which can work, but each piece should really be able to stand on its own. Needs help with organization and focus; this reads like the transcript of a YouTube influencer's video. Also, this may be evident in other parts of the series, but these examples show little relevance to the student community.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST SINGLE-PAGE STORY PACKAGE

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: School scaries

Entry Credit: Ayla Summers

Judge Comment: A nice look at the application process - good information from the faculty member.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Back to school

Entry Credit: Elsie Hoffman

Judge Comment: Nice photo of pottery students at work - and nice quote in the caption.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST SPORTS COMMENTARY

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Cross country often overlooked in the sports world.

Entry Credit: Maddie Feazel

Judge Comment: A nice, quick, opinion piece extolling cross country participation and fan enjoyment.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: First ever 3-peat

Entry Credit: Alec Nicholos

Judge Comment: A good story with nice quotes. I'd like to see more opinion from the author.

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Brayden's bizarre sports

Entry Credit: Brayden Joyce

Judge Comment: A nice story on a quirky sport, but more opinion is needed for an opinion piece.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST SPORTS FEATURE STORY

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Getting the Gold
Entry Credit: Reed Laird, RyLyn Adams
Judge Comment: Well written early season scene-setter. Good quotes from cheerleaders and coach.

Place Name: Second Place
Contestant Name: Galena High School
Entry Title: Big Ambitions: How I decided to join football, and what I did to get there
Entry Credit: Cael Ozee
Judge Comment: Ambitious first-person account of the rigors of training for football season. Revealing personal insights and self-observations.

Place Name: Third Place
Contestant Name: Galena High School
Entry Title: Graduate to Cheer Coach
Entry Credit: Caitlin Kennedy
Judge Comment: Nice profile of a recent grad dedicated to her school. Made me want to know more about her.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST SPORTS NEWS STORY

Place Name: First Place
Contestant Name: Herscher High School
Entry Title: Livin' on the mats
Entry Credit: Gavin Hull, Payten Young
Judge Comment: A nice preview of what the wrestling team is feeling about the upcoming season. It's evident that there's a lot of excitement and expectation for success. Because there are so many quotes highlighting that excitement and want for success, some of the transitional sentences can be taken out to tighten the story up and show the team's emotions through the students' quotes.

Place Name: Second Place
Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School
Entry Title: Bowling over the competition: Dogs ranked #1 in the state
Entry Credit: Nash Vallette
Judge Comment: Nice job incorporating stats to show why the Bulldogs became ranked number one in the state. I think a quote from maybe one more player would definitely help capture a better sense of the team's mentality being ranked 1st in the state.

Place Name: Third Place
Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: Clawing into state

Entry Credit: Brenna Williamson, Keira Ahramovich

Judge Comment: Very informative with good quotes from members of the team highlighting not only the success of this season but the hope for next season too. The lede could be reworked to be a little stronger, maybe something about how the team bonding helps them with their success. Nice job overall!

Competition Comment: Several stories made good use of context and analysis to help show why the story they were covering was significant. Also a great use of imagery and player/coach quotes to help really tie everything together.

BEST SPORTS PHOTO

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Okawville Jr/Sr High School

Entry Title: Bump Set Spike!

Entry Credit: Paige Kolweier

Judge Comment: Great shot. Love the low angle and frozen moment.

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Galena High School

Entry Title: Galena High School beats River Ridge Wildcats in a close intense game

Entry Credit: McKaylah Sites, Cael Ozee

Judge Comment: Good work capturing the concentration of the shot.

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Galena High School

Entry Title: Galena Breaks Playoff Drought

Entry Credit: Lily Kern, Mason Smith

Judge Comment: Great image depicting the intensity of the pursuit!

Place Name: Honorable Mention

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Dogs to face Breese Central in playoffs

Entry Credit: Gabby Dooley

Judge Comment: Good amusing shot!

Place Name: Honorable Mention

Contestant Name: Okawville Jr/Sr High School

Entry Title: Anderson Scores 1,000th Point

Entry Credit: Paige Kolweier

Judge Comment: Interesting image capturing the interplay of the players and action.

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST STAFF EDITORIAL

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Could absence incentive programs have unintended consequences?

Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley

Judge Comment: Amazing job here! Congratulations on a first-place finish. This is a very strong piece that speaks directly to something students care about at your school. Those are the best kinds of editorials. Kudos!

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: Can Harrisburg Students Compete in the Changing Climate of College Prep and Admissions

Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley

Judge Comment: Great job here as well! This is a very strong topic that faces plenty of schools across the country. I think you do a really strong job of making an effort to make it specific to your area.

Place Name: Third Place

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: January/February

Entry Credit: Brittany Wietting, Gianna Giacometti

Judge Comment: These are fun opinion pieces that I'm sure relate well to the student body! In the future, be sure to submit unsigned editorials for this category.

Place Name: Honorable Mention

Contestant Name: Herscher High School

Entry Title: December

Entry Credit: Brittany Wietting, Gianna Giacometti

Judge Comment: These are fun opinion pieces that I'm sure relate well to the student body! In the future, be sure to submit unsigned editorials for this category.

Competition Comment: Thank you for the opportunity to read these! These were great and thought-provoking.

BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Place Name: First Place Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School Entry Title: Purple Clarion - Instagram Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley, Abi Wilson Judge Comment: None
Place Name: Second Place Contestant Name: Galena High School Entry Title: @ghs.pubs Entry Credit: Avery Ziegler Judge Comment: None
Place Name: Third Place Contestant Name: Okawville Jr/Sr High School Entry Title: OJSHS Launch Pad - Facebook Entry Credit: Lillian Cragen, Lillian Helbig Judge Comment: None
Place Name: Honorable Mention Contestant Name: Herscher High School Entry Title: hhs.publications tiktok Entry Credit: Lillie Wepprecht Judge Comment: None
Competition Comment: Overall the groundwork is laid to have strong social media accounts. Make sure to be consistent in posting, consistent in branding and to use this to promote your publications - not just try out fun trends.

BEST VIDEO STORY

Place Name: First Place Contestant Name: LIFT Regional Area Career Center Entry Title: LIFT News Feature Story on 9/11 Stair Climb to Honor 1st Responders Entry Credit: Alexis Miller Judge Comment: Fascinating story! This video informed me in a thoughtful, visually compelling way of a type of 9/11 commemoration that I hadn't been familiar with. Excellent videography, smooth editing, respectful content. Great job!
Place Name: Second Place Contestant Name: LIFT Regional Area Career Center

Entry Title: Sending School Spotlight Featuring Damian from Arcola Schools

Entry Credit: Alexis Miller

Judge Comment: Damian seems like a fascinating student. This video was a good introduction to him, but it would have been stronger with the addition of a few more voices — perhaps one of his parents, an Arcola friend, a LIFT student not from Arcola, etc. B-roll footage of Damian interacting with people in Arcola would also have improved the video. Does Damian work part-time in his parents' bakery? If so, that would lend itself to some good b-roll as well. But overall, this is a solid portrait of an interesting student!

Competition Comment: See judge comments.

BEST WEBSITE

Place Name: First Place

Contestant Name: Harrisburg High School

Entry Title: The Purple Clarion

Entry Credit: Isabella Dooley

Judge Comment: Nice reverse header with social links, date, and search bar. Site has organized navigation with interactive drop down. Clean footer. Consider adding a contact us page. More updated content showcasing a recent podcast, spotlight photo or gallery would help refresh the site. Stories could use some internal/external links. Consider moving the flipbook print version off the homepage and highlight it in main menu instead. Mobile is responsive. Great job, Harrisburg!

Place Name: Second Place

Contestant Name: Okawville Jr/Sr High School

Entry Title: Launch Pad

Entry Credit: Laura Cook, KateLyn Borrenpohl, Brynn Rhodes

Judge Comment: Homepage is straightforward with concise headers. Consider narrowing the colors down to 1 main color and 1 accent color. Most articles are text heavy so possibly use a free stock photo site as images could help visitor engagement and create a more dynamic viewer experience. I like the sports score ticker element. Mobile is responsive. Countdown is a good feature and can be used to break up content. Good job, Okawville!

Competition Comment: See judge comments.