

# HOOSIER STAR EVALUATION SERVICE



## WEBSITE GUIDEBOOK

# IHSPA

INDIANA HIGH SCHOOL PRESS ASSOCIATION

SCHOOL NAME

WEBSITE NAME & URL

SCHOOL YEAR & STAFF SIZE

EDITOR(S) IN CHIEF

FACULTY ADVISER(S)

EVALUATION CATEGORY

**DIVISION I:**  
*Under 1,000 enrollment*

**DIVISION II:**  
*1,000-2,000 enrollment*

**DIVISION III:**  
*2,000+ enrollment*

## BACKGROUND & INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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

1. *Combine a variety of storytelling formats to give the audience a well-rounded insight into the school and community;*
2. *Enhance the appearance with visuals appropriate for the format, incorporating current design trends;*
3. *Coordinate the overall coverage and content so a consistent, attractive and reader-friendly appearance is established and maintained throughout the school year;*
4. *Follow the highest standards of legal and ethical behavior such as those set forth by the Society of Professional Journalists, First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Indiana academic standards for the Journalism and Student Media courses (<http://bit.ly/IndJourStandards>);*
5. *Adhere to the Indiana High School Press Association's core values of truth, courage, integrity and freedom.*

## HOOSIER STAR & DISTINCTIONS

*All "superior" and "excellent" ranked submissions are exceptionally well done. These student media outlets are entered into the Hoosier Star competition, the IHSPA's annual program that awards Indiana's very best in scholastic journalism. Judges other than those who conduct the initial evaluation determine Hoosier Star winners for each of the three divisions. Judges may also award "Special Distinction" status to any section deemed to be innovative.*

## SPECIAL THANKS

*This guidebook is modeled after the All-Kansas Video News Critique Booklet created by the Kansas Scholastic Press Association, and is being used for the IHSPA Broadcast Hoosier Star Evaluation with the permission of the KSPA and its executive director, Eric Thomas. The original document may be viewed at <http://bit.ly/KSPAweb> on the KSPA website.*

## COVERAGE & CONTENT

Does the site include web-exclusive content, including blogs, interactive elements, video, audio and breaking news coverage?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does the staff use blogs to update breaking news, provide coverage of often-overlooked stories and add perspective to news and feature stories?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

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

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Do stand-alone video and audio pieces reflect the value of the medium or do they just look like warmed-over TV and radio packages?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Do complementary video and audio add value to the coverage they accompany?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Do interactive elements add value to and complement the coverage they accompany?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does the staff use the site for special reports and in-depth coverage?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Do students use multimedia components to add breadth, depth to those special reports?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does the staff understand that its website has a readership beyond the school and its students and staff?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Is this a site that will keep “accidental” readers attention by offering stories that have a universal appeal?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

## CONTENT & COVERAGE

### RATING

- Superior*
- Excellent*
- Good*
- Average*
- In need of  
improvement*
  
- Special  
distinction  
earned*

### JUDGE'S COMMENTS

## WRITING & EDITING

Does the staff understand how readers gather information online: by scanning the page for relevant words and other information?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Do writers and editors avoid simply “shoveling” the content from their print product onto the website?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Are stories easily readable because they are divided into chunks or sections?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Are paragraphs kept short and relevant?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Do sentences begin with keywords?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Are headlines written using specific words so that search engines easily find and recognize keywords?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

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

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Do writers provide valuable hyperlinks (either embedded into stories or listed elsewhere) to stories that provide the reader with immediate depth?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Do scripts for multimedia elements (audio and video) follow the basic guidelines of “writing for the ear” that broadcast media follow?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Are multimedia elements accompanied by at least some text that allows readers to gain some context before listening to or viewing the multimedia?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

## WRITING & EDITING

### RATING

- Superior*
- Excellent*
- Good*
- Average*
- In need of  
improvement*
  
- Special  
distinction  
earned*

### JUDGE'S COMMENTS

## BREAKING NEWS

Does the staff report on important news, sports and features in a timely manner?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does the staff include new content as often as it can, possibly daily or even more often?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Is breaking news verified and updated as new information is learned?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does the staff follow breaking news for as long as the news changes and is relevant?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does the site cover sports as it happens or shortly thereafter?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does live sports coverage remain objective and accurate?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does the staff use multiple media to report breaking news?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does coverage include useful information readers, such as notification of school closings for inclement weather or other emergencies?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does breaking news coverage also include news from other sources that may have an impact on the students, staff and community?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

### RATING

- Superior*
- Excellent*
- Good*
- Average*
- In need of improvement*
  
- Special distinction earned*

### JUDGE'S COMMENTS

## INTERACTIVITY & MULTIMEDIA

Are readers able to interact with the publication in a number of ways, including comments, discussion boards and polls/surveys?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does the staff use social media tools to market its own work, but also to provide readers with valuable information?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Has the staff created online directories and reader services so that the website becomes a one-stop-shop for the community's information needs?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Do games, polls, quizzes, interactive maps and other interactive tools engage readers with the news?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does the staff embrace "Citizen Journalism?" Are readers invited to submit photos, stories, blogs and other content that can be used for a stand-alone page or as complementary material to go with the staff's work? Does the staff use that material?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Do reporters and editors use "crowd-sourcing" to not only develop story ideas, but to enhance and enrich stories that have already been published?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Do useful hyperlinks add value to a story by directing readers to other stories or sites with vital information?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

For photo and video stories, does the staff use a variety of shots and adequate graphics or captions to tell a coherent story?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

For audio reports, does the staff record clean sound and use VOs, natural sound and sound bites to tell a coherent story?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Does the staff not only understand but follow copyright laws, using only original content or copyright-free material and material in the public domain?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS



## INTERACTIVITY & MULTIMEDIA

### RATING

- Superior*
- Excellent*
- Good*
- Average*
- In need of  
improvement*
  
- Special  
distinction  
earned*

### JUDGE'S COMMENTS

## DESIGN & NAVIGATION

Does the site balance text and graphics so that both are visible “above the fold” on a computer screen?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Has the staff made effective use of text on the page to attract readers?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Is the home page simple and uncluttered?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Is navigation easy, presenting readers with only enough options on a single page that they won't easily become confused or overwhelmed?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Are navigation bars and other content presented in an F-shaped pattern that mimics how online readers peruse a page?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Are multimedia viewing panes large enough so that readers can enjoy the multimedia feature, but small enough to not obscure key written elements of the story?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Do visual elements enhance but not dominate a page?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Is there a clear hierarchy of news stories on a page?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Are stories divided into clear categories and sections, and has the staff created tabs that direct readers to those sections?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

Are multiple elements in any story placed together in a cohesive package?

NEVER     SOMETIMES     USUALLY     FREQUENTLY     ALWAYS

## DESIGN & NAVIGATION

### RATING

- Superior*
- Excellent*
- Good*
- Average*
- In need of  
improvement*
  
- Special  
distinction  
earned*

### JUDGE'S COMMENTS

## SECTION RATINGS

### COVERAGE & CONTENT

- Superior*
- Excellent*
- Good*
- Average*
- In need of improvement*

### WRITING & EDITING

- Superior*
- Excellent*
- Good*
- Average*
- In need of improvement*

### BREAKING NEWS

- Superior*
- Excellent*
- Good*
- Average*
- In need of improvement*

### INTERACTIVITY & MULTIMEDIA

- Superior*
- Excellent*
- Good*
- Average*
- In need of improvement*

### DESIGN & NAVIGATION

- Superior*
- Excellent*
- Good*
- Average*
- In need of improvement*

### AREAS OF DISTINCTION

- Coverage & Content*
- Writing & Editing*
- Breaking News*
- Interactivity & Multimedia*
- Design & Navigation*

## OVERALL RATING

- Superior*
- Excellent*
- Good*
- Average*
- In need of improvement*

## JUDGE NAME

### PREFERRED MAILING ADDRESS

### PREFERRED EMAIL

### JUDGE'S FIVE (OR MORE) WAYS TO IMPROVE

### JUDGE'S FINAL COMMENTS



# IHSPA

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