

**Minutes of the 2008-09 Journalism Advisory Committee**  
**Thursday May 14, 2009**

The IHSA Journalism Advisory Committee was held at the IHSA Office in Bloomington on Thursday, May 14, 2009 beginning at 10:00 a.m. Committee members present were: State final managers- Sally Turner and James Tidwell - EIU; Advisory committee members: Division 3 - Linda Kane, Naperville (Central); Division 5 - David Porecca, Urbana (University); Division 6 Steve Steele, Taylorville and Division 7 - Herman Albers, Coulterville. Division 1 – Sylvia Nelson Jordan Chicago Public Schools; Division 4 - Dr. Kenneth Jackson and Division 2 - Amanda Urban, Franklin Park-Northlake (Leyden), were unable to attend. IHSA Asst. Executive Director Susan Knoblauch conducted the meeting.

**Terms and Conditions Recommendations**

**1. Item VI D 3 Time Schedule**

**Recommendation:** To implement the following block schedule change:

Block A

- \*Feature Photography
- News Writing
- Review Writing
- Advertising
- Yearbook Theme Development (single - duo)
- \*Newspaper Design
- Sports Writing
- \*Info Graphics
- Broadcasting

Block B

- \*Feature Photography
- Feature Writing
- \*Headline Writing
- Yearbook Copy Writing
- \*Yearbook Layout: Double Page Spread
- Editorial Cartooning
- Editorial Writing
- Copy Editing

**Rationale:** These changes will better accommodate the judges' needs for more time to rank some of the writing categories. The schedule will also reflect the addition, if approved, of the new broadcasting category.

**No action taken**

2. **Item VIII A Headline Writing**

**Recommendation:** Students will be provided with news and feature stories in which to write **six (6) headlines**. Dummy sheets will be provided. Students will determine the font size and number of lines. Students shall be judged on headline rules, creativity and accuracy.

**Rationale:** Currently students write three (3) headlines. The committee felt that adding three more headlines could challenge the students creatively and still be attainable within the time parameters of the 90 minute competition block. With the additional requirement and format, students can challenge their creativity by determining how to best incorporate the headlines for a total of six (6) stories.

**approved**

3. **Item VIII A 9 Categories Broadcasting**

**Recommendation:** Students will provide their own equipment to create an audio MP3 clip of a two (2) minute news broadcast using live and written information received at a mock press conference. Students shall be judged on news value, news judgment, and convergence.

**Rationale:** The committee discussed piloting a broadcasting category last year. There is interest from competing schools. The committee reviewed the format again this year and recommended a competition plan that would not require the sectional site to provide more technology.

**No action taken**

4. **Item VIII A Categories News Writing, Feature Writing, Sports Writing, Review Writing, Editorial Writing and Yearbook Copy Writing**

**Recommendation:** The word limits will be: 500 word count for news, feature and sports writing; 350 word count for review writing, editorial writing and yearbook copy writing.

**Rationale:** Contestants will need to adhere to word limits. This will assist the judges in having appropriate time to read and rank all of the required material. Word limits shall be listed in the terms and conditions, sample prompts, and reflect in the ranking sheets (*Does the writer adhere to word count?*). Word processing can check for word count (2 type written pages approximately 500 words). Students can place the word count on their submitted work.

**approved**

5. **Item VIII A Categories News Writing, Feature Writing, Sports Writing, Review Writing, Editorial Writing and Yearbook Copy Writing**

**Recommendation:** Students are permitted to use AP style books and dictionaries.

**Rationale:** Efforts to clarify what students should bring to contest sites are addressed in the recommendation. This information will also be included in the managers' manual, sample prompts, and web link.

**approved**

6. **Item VI D Time Schedule**

**Recommendation:** Team awards will be held at *approximately* 3pm

**Rationale:** Running two blocks of awards was not conducive to the tournament flow. The time from the conclusion of students competing in Block B till the judges are finished ranking the last block of categories can be used for students to eat or tour the campus or departments. The recommended awards time is an approximate time and is pending how quickly the judges conclude their rankings. Tournament management focuses on keeping the tournament on time, however the consensus was not to rush the ranking process but encourage judges to select their top six choices in a timely manner so scoring can begin. Judges can continue writing comments for packet pick up at the conclusion of the tournament.

**approved**

## 7. **Item VII Advancement of Winners**

**Recommendation:** Alternate Qualifiers Advancement...the next advancing student from the sectional shall be notified...

**Rationale:** The original language stated that the fourth place student would advance. This wording would allow the next advancing student to be allowed to compete if the fourth or fifth places were unable to compete. Since ranking is only to sixth place and all three advancing students decline then no student will move up to advance in that respective category.

**approved**

### **Items of Discussion:**

1. The committee reviewed the **site and dates** of the journalism state series. They supported to continue with the state final on Friday. There are a few conflicts with Friday proms; however more school were affected with Saturday proms and Saturday sporting events. Some student left after they competed on Friday /Saturday which allowed them time to attend other school events. This is always a difficult challenge with any spring sport/activity.
2. The journalism **competition format and structure** was reviewed. The committee likes the scope of the contest and feels that momentum is growing regarding the interest and excitement about the Journalism state final. The committee recommended efforts to improve communication regarding the contest.
3. The committee **reviewed the sectional host sites**. Two high school venues were used and they were great hosts. However, the committee felt that a college campus for sectionals creates a neutral site and allows students to compete in a venue that features post secondary journalism programs. In addition to the five (5) campus sites that currently host and do a fine job, the IHSA will work early to secure two more campus competition sites. Harper College, College of Dupage, Illinois Valley Community College, Illinois Central College, Illinois State University, Bradley University, Moraine Valley, Roosevelt downtown and Columbia were all suggested as potential host sites that could possibly accommodate the contest and best serve the travel needs of competition schools. The host campus can provide admissions information and incorporate promotional tours during the time between the conclusion of Block B categories and awards.
4. Sally Turner recommended having a **sectional/state final managers meeting**. This will assist the host sites in finalizing details for the sectional competition and help trouble

shoot some of the inconsistencies of the sectional contests. A tentative sectional/state final managers meeting is set for Wednesday December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009. A manual for managers with a checklist will also be created to assist the hosts in the implementation of the contest. At this meeting and in the manual, managers will be reminded of items such as communicating technology issues and what platforms will be available. Managers will also review a back up plan regarding any technology failures.

**5. All writing events can be done in a computer lab** if availability allows at competition sites. Students can use computer labs to word process their stories if sites can accommodate the needs for extra computers. This will also assist the judges in ranking contestants.

**6. Printing concerns** were discussed. At some sectionals printing is problematic and work is ranked on the computer screen. Attempts will be made to assist the sectionals in their printing needs.

7. Sectionals will also be reminded to use the given **contestant student numbers** so all work is anonymous. This is outlined in the terms and conditions and can not be altered. Advisers are also reminded to continue to emphasize with their students that contest numbers must be displayed on all submitted work. Student numbers are provided to the sectional manager from the IHSA in the scheduling/scoring program.

**8.** Efforts will be made to **clarify with sectional hosts what students should bring to contest** sites. Paper should be provided, however students/advisers may want some back up supplies. Students should always bring their own writing instruments. Students competing in yearbook theme development can use colored pencils, magazines, scissors and glue sticks. This information will also be included in the managers manual, terms and conditions, sample prompts, and web link.

**9.** No prompts should be returned at sectionals because some formats will be recycled in years to come. All student's work and ranking sheets should be returned (if applicable and available).

**10.** The IHSA will continue to work with Ben Stewart to provide the *Journalismwire* tournament scheduling and scoring program. This web based program was successful this year. The committee suggested that the student ID numbers for competition should be single digit letters because schools are allowed to only enter one student per category. The school ID needs to be clearly communicated to the schools' adviser(s) and all participants. The committee preferred that the categories be written out in full rather than initials such as: Editorial cartooning – EC.

**11.** The committee **reviewed the notes from the advisers meeting** from all contest sites. This meeting continues to be a positive contribution to the improvement of the contest. Some sites have also utilized the advisers meeting as a way to share publications, ideas and network. If at all possible advisers should not be used as room proctors or judges.

The Committee also agreed that at the state final advisers meeting an overview of the IHSA website would be useful.

**12.** The committee **reviewed the current competition categories, prompts and ranking sheets and updated any editorial revisions.** Sally suggested cleaning up the layout of the prompts. The side rail will be omitted and conflicting directions will be omitted on the prompts for next year. A final review of the terms and conditions will include doubling checking that there is no conflicting information between the prompts, ranking sheets, and category rules.

**13.** There was discussion to **eliminating headline writing.** Dave Porreca supported headline writing as a viable category and recommended some adjustments to the event. James Tidwell was concerned regarding the format of the category. The recommended new format will add three more headlines where students will read stories, designs headline sizes, and spaces. The group agreed that this would be a more substantive journalistic task.

**14.** Herman Albers supported **adding a broadcasting** category. The committee discussed concerns with sectional sites, technology, implementation and judging. They recommended that the new category would require students to provide all of the necessary equipment to create a two (2) minute audio news clip (headphones must be used for recording device replay).

**15.** The committee discussed the idea of **review writing being a two block** event where the first block is spent viewing the talent and the second block is used for writing. The group had concerns with implementation at the sectional level in addition to the fact that by making it a double blocked event that could take a student away from another writing category.

**16.** The committee discussed the possibility of a **photography entry** being allowed to compete in block B if they so choose. Overall, the committee felt that the competing students need two blocks of time to take photographs and correctly download and enhance their work.

**17.** Students are responsible for their own time in the **photography category** and need to be prepared if there is a technology glitch. Extra time is not allowed if a student's camera malfunctions or there are problems with software. Judging for this category is on the computer so printing should not be an issue. Caption in Photoshop or In-design can be embedded in photo or be placed at the top or bottom of the picture at the students' discretion.

**18.** The committee discussed the use of **clip art in the info graphics** category. No clip art is allowed. Images are not allowed to be taken off the internet. Students may create info graphics in In-design and Photoshop. A graph can be used in a word document to place statistics.

**19.** Feedback was positive regarding the **live press conference addition** to news and feature writing. This format will be used again next year. It is the host site's responsibility to secure the live talent. The live portion can be a fictitious character or a real interview. A fact sheet shall be provided at the beginning of the category and students should have a few minutes at the start of the press conference to review the material (Read fact sheet for approximately 10 minutes then conduct press conference for approximately 20 minutes then write story for approximately 60 minutes).

**20.** Electronic recording devices may be used (headphones must be used for replay). Judges will need to sit in on the press conference as an observer. One of the judges can be the live prompt (make sure judge is objective). The judge can provide the fact sheet. Judges noted that students did not note that it was a press conference, students did not indicate attribution, and students did not utilize a news peg. The committee discussed if those items were listed on the ranking sheets.

**21.** The committee discussed using a live press conference format for **sports writing** however no recommendation to change the format was made at this time. The group discussed using highlight tapes or video game clips for sports writing with actual game notes. Further discussion and input will be gathered for next year.

**22.** The committee agreed that there should be **no extra stipend for the interviewees** for the two live prompted press conferences. There is also no line item stipend for the room **proctors**. However, site managers can utilize their supply budget to offset some of these requirements.

**23.** The committee confirmed that **students are allowed to leave the competition room** once they submit their work. They also reiterated that the room proctors are crucial in the success of running a contest. The room proctors can remind students of required word counts and confirm that the student code is correctly identified to avoid any issues in the judging room with material not being able to be identified.

**24.** The committee agreed that the **genre of the review writing category** will be posted on the journalism menu page no later than two weeks before sectionals and one week before the state final. The same genre may not be used from sectionals to state level competition. This timeline will give schools an equal amount of time to research unfamiliar genres.

**25.** It was recommended to use the **journalism menu page at IHSA.org** to create a link for each competition category which includes event description, requirement, material needed, sample prompt, and sample ranking sheet. Sally Turner recommended **utilizing the announcement section** of the IHSA Journalism menu more. She suggested highlighting deadlines and fees because advisers are more inclined to refer to the webpage. The committee suggested a point of emphasis section on the Journalism page at IHSA.org that highlights any rules revisions or notifications.

26. The committee reviewed the **judging** of the contest. Concern on the criteria for judges and their knowledge of the requirements of the category was reviewed. Sectional managers will be reminded of the criteria for judging. At the managers meeting the IHSA will remind all sites that college students judging should only be used in emergency situations and possibly the yearbook categories. The primary pool of judges should be professional journalists especially for the news writing categories.
27. The committee also shared that several judges commented that student(s) need to make sure they **voice an opinion in their editorial**.
28. The committee added additional criteria to the **news writing ranking sheet** standard of excellence: Are all quotes attributed accurately and appropriately?
29. The committee suggested that judges are reminded to put the **major basis for ranking**/rationale on the ranking sheets. Often times ranking sheets are being returned stating “excellent” but placing 6<sup>th</sup>. The committee also wanted to reiterate at sectional that the judges can guide the top three students on what to improve on for the next level of competition (state final). Judges also need to be reminded that this may be the first contest for some students so feedback needs to be appropriate, professional and enrich the educational experience.
30. The suggestion for a more **systematic rubric** numbering system brought up concerns regarding time and errors. The Committee preferred the current ranking system of 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>.
31. It was discussed to create a **database of judges** that could be shared with sectional sites. Often times, media professional contact the IHSA with interest in assisting and judging the event. IHSA Assistant Executive Director, Matt Troha shared some ideas regarding the IHSA Media Advisory Committee’s willingness to provide judges.
32. The committee suggested that once the judges’ ranking decision is made then that recorded result is final. Any judges’ mistakes presented after awards can not affect **changes in advancements or scores**. The parallel was made that once an official makes a call the call is final and the game continues. The same philosophy should occur at the journalism contests. A judge’s decision is final.
33. The committee discussed with **Division 1** advisory member Sylvia Nelson ways to continue to increase participation in contest with the Chicago Public Schools.
34. The committee shared that the **advantage of the IHSA journalism state final** is the development and awareness of scholastic journalism across the state. Attempts to share workshops, resources, and write off information will be made to continue to provide education and awareness of the IHSA competition. IPA and Yearbook representatives are also supporting the contest and assisting in getting the message out to schools regarding the opportunity to compete. Conferences are starting journalism contests as



precursors to the state finals. Other schools are also looking into creating an invitational competition format for competition prior to the IHSA state series.

**35.** The committee reviewed the **contest entry, substitution-name changes and withdrawal process.** Advisers need to make sure the sectional manager (or appointed person at the site) keeps track of any changes at registration and reports them correctly into the scoring program. The numbers of contest entry drops have decreased. The fourth place student (or next in line for advancing) should always be prepared if any of the top three students withdraw from the state final. If a student withdraws from the state final the adviser must submit in writing the reason for the withdrawal on school letterhead with the principal’s signature. Schools must also refer to the terms and conditions for the listed acceptable reasons for withdrawal. Any other reason not listed will result in a breach of contract for the withdrawing school and applicable penalties will be administered from the IHSA. We had several cases of that this year. One in which the fourth place advancer ended up being a state champion!

**36.** The committee recommended that the **List of Participants (LOP)** line includes adviser(s) rather than assistants. Most advisers are either yearbook or newspaper and not assistants. Susie will work with Scott Johnson to make the LOP’s format a better fit for journalism entries. James Tidwell also suggested that the IHSA website list adviser(s) for journalism, yearbook and broadcasting.

**37.** The committee reported that schools were still attending the sectional **without fees.** Advisers are unaware that they are responsible for the \$10.00 event fee per category. Better communication from the sectional managers will hopefully clear up this problem.

**38.** The state final **awards ceremony** was reviewed. Future plans will include incorporating music and video to run before awards and during the transitions between announcing finalists and categories.

**39.** The future **standardized dates** of competition are listed below so schools and host sites can make long range plans. This calendar is also posted on the journalism menu page at IHSA.org.

<b>Journalism</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
<b>List of Participants Due On-Line (Mon.)</b>	<b>Mar. 29</b>	<b>Mar. 28</b>	<b>Mar. 26</b>	<b>Mar. 25</b>
<b>Sectionals (Sat.)</b>	<b>Apr. 24</b>	<b>Apr. 23</b>	<b>Apr. 21</b>	<b>Apr. 20</b>
<b>State Final (Fri.)</b>	<b>Apr. 30</b>	<b>Apr. 29</b>	<b>Apr. 27</b>	<b>Apr. 26</b>

**40. Eastern Illinois University** was commended for being such a wonderful state final host. State final managers Sally Turner and James Tidwell have done an outstanding job implementing the contest!

**41. Stephen Steel was recognized** for his service to the IHSA journalism advisory Committee. Advisers interested in serving on the IHSA journalism advisory committee can express their interest online through the schools center at [IHSA.org](http://IHSA.org).