

JOURNALISM STAFF SELECTION PROCESS

The Flagstaff journalism team comprises approximately seventh and eighth grade students hand-chosen by school leadership to produce the monthly Dragon Spectrum newspaper. The Spectrum is the only middle school newspaper in the district, and represents the high quality of Flagstaff Academy's student body. The class is taught in tandem by Language Arts teacher Lisa Wilkins, who came to Flagstaff from the high school level, and parent advisor Dana Willett, who has worked in the communications field for 25 years (including the Omaha, Los Angeles, Kansas City and Chicago markets), and has a degree in Journalism.

Because the publication's mission is to both entertain and inform, student reporters are selected as much for their composition skills as their creative thinking. Assignments include a range of topics including student opinion pieces, sports, photo journalism, current events, advice columns, creative writing, comics, puzzles, trivia, staff profiles, student features, movie reviews, school policy discussions, contests, calendars and advertisements. However, all staff members must demonstrate a healthy respect for deadlines and both ability and willingness to extend additional effort to accommodate the demanding production schedule and advanced reporting skills required for such an endeavor.

Students interested in applying for the journalism team must be realistic about what will be expected of them: the ability to juggle journalism assignments with regular school work, timely submissions, accountability, mature approach to middle school topics, accurate reporting, professional demeanor, excellent writing skills, and most importantly, teamwork. Only applicants with a very strong overall GPA, and a "B" or above in Language Arts for their sixth grade year, will be considered.

Because team members and staff rely so heavily on one another, rewards are plentiful for such a tight-knit group. The 2010-2011 staff enjoyed great autonomy with their work, professional photos for their bylines, a prize box for meeting deadlines, prestigious Flagstaff "Press" I.D. badges with photos, corporate gifts from newspaper sponsors, and lots of donuts! While some of these items are not guaranteed for the 2011-2012 school year (i.e., they were provided by donors/volunteers), as long as the newspaper continues to be a quality publication, the journalism team responsible for its production is sure to reap many benefits, not the least of which is excellent journalism skills when entering high school.

The application process for the 2011-2012 Dragon Spectrum journalism staff will begin February 14, 2011. All current sixth and seventh grade students are eligible to apply. Applications are available for downloading from the Flagstaff Academy Middle School web page. All applicants must download and print their own applications.

Completed applications will be submitted to Julian McCrandall at the front desk. Once the application has been checked for complete information, the applicant will be notified with a confirmation email. **ALL APPLICANTS MUST PROVIDE THEIR FSA EMAIL**

ADDRESS. Applications will then be processed, removing the applicants' names and assigning application numbers for anonymity. Applications will be "blind," with all names removed.

THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. There will be NO applications accepted after this deadline. No exceptions – no extensions.

The REVIEW COMMITTEE will begin considering applications after the application window has closed. The Review Committee will review and discuss the applications, and choose the 2011-2012 journalism staff.

The Review Committee will include (but is not limited to) the Principal, the Journalism instructor, the Parent advisor, the current Student Editor of the newspaper, and any students editors who have been assigned for the 2011-2012 school year . For the 2011-2012 selection process, these individuals will be: Andrew Moore, Lisa Wilkins, Dana Willett, Calvin Riss, Jesse Conser, Ashley Nicoll and Sam Willett.

Chosen students will be notified by April 8, 2011, and will work with the current journalism staff in late April to help compile the May issue as a training period. This will ensure the incoming staff is trained and ready to work when school begins after the summer break.

Applications will require a sample of non-fiction work, description of skills related to journalism, proof of above-average grades, a teacher recommendation, and brief answers to other related questions.

Please visit the Middle School web page to download the application. Questions regarding the journalism staff, the Dragon Spectrum publication, and the application process may be directed to Dana Willett (willetlongmont@aol.com).

Sample non-fiction writing (400-500 words)

Special skills related to journalism (i.e., comics, layout, research, leadership)

A one-paragraph (approx. 125-150 words) description of the meaning of “teamwork”

A one-paragraph (approx. 125-150 words) description of the importance of meeting deadlines.

2010-2011 FLAGSTAFF SPECTRUM JOURNALISM STAFF APPLICATION

Name

Grade (for '10-'11)

Current GPA (roughly)

School Gmail Address:

Please list two teachers who know you well enough to be a reference for you. Mrs. Wilkins may not be one of the two.

Please rank in order of interest (1 being the highest interest, 5 being the lowest), the journalism-related skills you enjoy the most:

Non-fiction writing

Fiction/creative writing

Research

Layout/Publishing (computer graphics, layout, design)

Investigative work/In-depth reporting

Leadership/Managing a team

Please explain in 50 words or less why you ordered these skills the way you did.

What do you know about the Dragon Spectrum?

What do you like about this publication?

What do you think could be improved?

Why are you applying to be part of the journalism team?

What does teamwork mean to you?

What computer skills do you have? (If you have experience in Microsoft Publisher, please note it here.)

Would you be willing to work in August on a back-to-school issue of the Spectrum?

Please attach on a separate sheet write a two-paragraph summation discussing why you would like to be a part of the journalism/newspaper staff.