

WHY JOURNALISM?



SCHOLASTIC JOURNALISM MATTERS

Robust scholastic journalism programs can help schools improve academic standards through the practical application of writing, development of strong research skills, real-world use of technology and encouragement of civic engagement. Few language arts programs are as naturally well aligned as journalism to the aimed outcomes of Common Core State Standards, 21st Century Skills and similar efforts to prepare youth for the modern workforce and to be engaged citizens.

MEETING TODAY'S STANDARDS

The Common Core State Standards Initiative, of which Michigan is a member, offers this profile of students who are "College and Career Ready in Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language:"

- › They demonstrate independence.
- › They build strong content knowledge.
- › They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.
- › They comprehend as well as critique.
- › They value evidence.
- › They use technology and digital media strategically and capably.
- › They come to understand other perspectives and cultures.

Journalism is uniquely suited to help students develop each of these skills, which are ingrained in the experience of producing student-led media.

The National Council of Teachers of English long has supported the inclusion of robust journalism programs in English curriculums.

RAISING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

There also is a growing body of evidence supporting academic value of scholastic journalism. A national study, "Why Journalism Matters" by Indiana University Professor Jack Dvorak, found that students who work on high school newspapers and yearbooks:

- › get better grades in high school;
- › earn higher scores on the ACT;
- › achieve better grades as college freshman.

PREPARING YOUNG CITIZENS

A growing number of organizations conclude that students need more hands-on participation in civic activities.

Journalism meets this need for student. In addition to the practical application of

writing and visuals, development of strong research skills and real-world use of technology, journalism classes encourage of civic engagement. This includes knowing how to seek credible information and how to make positive change in a community. Students learn about social responsibility, the importance of education and how to produce news and information that is accurate, fair and responsible.

This kind of hands-on participation early in life plays an important role in motivating young people to be engaged citizens as adults. A new study by the University of Kansas found that students who are in a supportive environment as student journalists feel a greater sense of civic efficacy.

"Journalism is about civics in action," said research team leader Peter Bobkowski, a professor at the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas. "It's about, how do you make things happen? How do you take issues and address them in your communities? How do you make people care about issues? I think it's so much richer than something like an exam."



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