



## SPORTS JOURNALISM: GOOD MEDIA FIT

by Sheila Jones, CJE

As professional journalism has evolved to offer more specialized coverage, so too has scholastic journalism. A small, but growing, addition to secondary school media programs is the appearance of sports journalism courses.

Launching a sports journalism program requires planning and forethought, so if you are thinking of starting one, here are the suggestions of three advisers who have already forged the way: Patrick Moring, Rampart High School, Colorado Springs, Colo.; Adam Dawkins, Regis Jesuit High School, Aurora, Colo.; and Patrick Johnson, Antioch Community High School, Antioch, Ill.

Based on their experiences, there is no one way to create the course. Each adviser has put a different spin on it based on the needs of his students, school, and community.

Moring's and Dawkin's programs first began as clubs, growing out of broadcast journalism classes.

### Sports Broadcasting Club

Moring's program existed for three years as a club. During that time his students covered the home games for football, boys'/girls' basketball, boys'/girls' soccer, volleyball, wrestling and lacrosse, broadcasting live on a small site provider called City Link TV, using a single camera. Sports Broadcasting, as a course, is now in its fourth year on Rampart's class schedule.

"By the time we introduced the class, we had purchased a six camera switcher," Moring said. "Over the years we have added graphics, slow motion instant replay, sideline interviews, halftime programming and a scoreboard system that integrates with the actual game scoreboard. We also started streaming events other than sports, for example, assemblies, talent shows, and group events."

### Broadcast Journalism Course

Dawkins' initial club program also grew from his RJTV Broadcast Journalism Course. Now in its second year as a class, students can enroll in Raider Sports



Raider Sports Network's Jack Mann (Stats), Michael Manoogian (Play by Play), Earl Stephens (Color Commentary), Jake Stuart (Producer) and Nolan Meriwether (Camera Operator) call a regular season football home game from the highest point possible in the stands. "The crew adapts to so many unique situations on our campus and on the road," adviser Adam Dawkins, CJE, says. "One of the most important experiences for the students is being able to adjust on the fly in tense, time sensitive situations, troubleshoot, and put their crew in the best possible scenario for a seamless broadcast. Here, they run a 100 ft. Ethernet cable out the back of the visitor stands, across the sidewalk, up through the window of a mobile classroom and across the desks to the Internet port under the classroom whiteboard."

*Photo provided by Adam Dawkins, Regis Jesuit High School*

Network: Media Production or Raider Sports Network 2: Advanced Media Production, separate courses for enrollment purposes that take place during the same class period.

Both classes "highlight our student-athletes through multimedia production, including live event broadcasts, feature and graphic packages, highlights and studio shows," Dawkins said, where, in addition to broadcasting, students work on both print and radio stories on an "ESPN-style sports media team to create, package, publish and promote content to the wider community."

Though these programs broadcasted independently in their early days, in order to be able to cover state championship games, both now use the NFHS Network, which in 2015 partnered with the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA). NFHS is available nationwide and partners with 56 different associations, allowing schools proprietary access to their digital technology, services and support, according to its website.

In addition to the network's access, NFHS has "great tech support, a user-friendly platform" and provides "help

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with equipment, troubleshooting, and training,” Dawkins said.

However, Dawkins does have concerns with NFHS’ contract with CHSAA since the contract allows NFHS to make money streaming high school sports. Though parents and subscribers in the community can get a code to watch Rampart’s and Regis’ sports coverage for free all season, Dawkins said, “When it comes to the later round playoff games and championship games, the local association restricts access for student broadcasters because they bring in adults to broadcast the games and charge viewers to watch them online. Though our community still gets the free code to watch, our student broadcast team is not allowed to cover the deeper playoff and championship games.”

Dawkins finds this frustrating because “it’s difficult to understand why students who have been covering their team’s season all year are told they can’t do it anymore.”

Therefore, advisers thinking of launching a sports journalism program should make sure to look into support and access to broadcast. For Dawkins, “support and access are a constant battle.”

#### Print, Broadcast and Marketing

Johnson’s Sports Media program in Illinois, in addition to print and broadcast coverage of his school’s sports teams, partners with the school’s athletic department to create public relations and marketing materials.

The now two-year-old course was “set up for students to produce print magazines specific to each season, create promotional products for the athletic department and manage/monitor the social media presence of the athletic programs individually,” Johnson said. “Essentially, the group works as their own mini-publication relations firm in addition to a traditional news room.”

Students in the Sports Media class publish work daily. “We have control over the number of materials both in terms of the journalistic production of our website and our print publication, but also in regards to our programming in conjunction with the athletics department,” Johnson said.

Johnson introduced this class to his journalism program because “sports are a core part of my school, and students wanted the ability to specialize.”

“Additionally, I had plenty of students who had no desire to write about sports;

“*Advising sports broadcast journalism is so much fun because you get to help students make quick decisions on the fly and work with all kinds of scenarios at home and on the road. It’s like being a mini production crew. You bond pretty quickly.*”

~Adam Dawkins, Regis Jesuit High School, Aurora, Colorado



Rampart camera operator Kenisha Collins carefully determines if she is getting all the action in the frame for a live volleyball game against league rival, Cheyenne Mountain.

Photo by Robin Cook, Rampart High School

therefore, we split the program and developed this new class,” Johnson said. “It also is an awesome opportunity for kids to be exposed to different facets of mass communication as they produce the integrated marketing content for the athletics department.”

Johnson’s program has experienced what he described as “traditional” growth in its second year. “More students are involved, which means we can cover more program levels than the first year, and we are also able to more effectively produce work more frequently. We did bi-weekly magazines in the program this year.”

#### Multi-year Programs

Each adviser has taken a different path in growing sports journalism from a single course to a multi-year program with opportunities for students to extend their skills and expertise.

At Rampart, the Sports Broadcasting course is “both entry level and challenging for multi-year participants,” Moring said.

In addition to Moring’s class, interested students can register for other courses that “produce a weekly 15-minute news broadcast to the school, or take a special effects and motion graphics class that produces the graphics used in both the live and weekly news broadcasts. I have more video courses than anyone else I am aware of,” Moring said.

New students combine with veterans in his class. “We have mixed ability groupings, so the more experienced students teach the newbies. For the students that has become my leadership; it becomes their passion. It’s become a thriving part of our school and community.”

Students at Regis can “matriculate” through a sequence of courses, Dawkins



Rampart adviser Patrick Moring explains to camera operator Justin Como how to use the audio meter effectively when getting sideline interviews during a live broadcast.

Photo by Robin Cook, Rampart High School

said, “beginning in Journalism 1 and moving into Advanced Journalism, RJTV Broadcast Journalism or Raider Sports Network. What’s nice about having the variety of courses is that your producers, editors and other program leads, like commentators, always have somewhere to go.”

Dawkins said this course diversity improves students’ transcripts for college in addition to broadening their high school journalism experiences. Multi-platform publishing is for Dawkins the program’s strength. “Sure, you can focus on being on-air talent or a behind the scenes producer or editor, but you had better also know how to write for the web, for the magazine, cover a game or an event live on social media, research and take photos, and conduct and interview.”

This increase in expectation and responsibilities “encourages students to be leaders and delegate to new students on their reporting teams.”

At Antioch, Johnson said that students should take the Introduction to Print and Digital Journalism class prior to taking Sports Media. After that, students can take Sports Media multiple times. Since it is a production class, it is always different. Essentially, the group works as their own mini-public relations group.” As seniors, students can co-enroll in both Sports Media and Print and Digital Journalism classes.

Each of these programs has become successful and integral to their schools.

That’s not to say that the advisers did not experience growing pains.

#### Recommendations, Advice

For those considering launching a similar program, Moring offers these words of advice. When it comes to technology, be patient. “Getting your technology to work the way you want it to takes a couple of years. I spend a lot of time writing grants to add tech and reading manuals to get it to work the right way.”

Like Moring, Dawkins also believes its necessary to make sure that you do the research necessary to get the equipment that best fits your needs.

“I think the most difficult thing about the live event coverage is Internet connections and streaming capabilities. Making sure you have everything you need and that it’s compatible can be frustrating,” Dawkins said.

He recommends looking at what neighboring schools in your area are doing. “Ask to go and shadow them. We have hosted many of our area schools for games.”

Additionally, he suggests contacting a live stream platform to inquire about what services, support, and options they can offer you in building a sound technology base for your program. In particular, “go with someone who has education in mind and will help the students be successful.”

Johnson emphasizes the need for communication to “make sure everyone is

on the same page” in a program like Antioch’s, with its advertising, PR and broadcast components that require collaboration with the athletics department. “This isn’t always easy because we aren’t in the same office and sometimes information gets lost in translation.”

He also offers one word of caution as advisers expand their journalism programs. If your purpose is to reach part of your school population beyond what is the “traditional journalism student,” sports journalism is a great option. However, “if you already struggle with numbers, then I would be cautious. Kids are stretched thin, so we don’t want to kill off our other programs just to bring in this specialized one.” In other words, don’t create your own competition for enrollment.

Without a doubt, each of these advisers feels that sports journalism adds value to their journalism programs as a whole.

“Advising sports broadcast journalism is so much fun because you get to help students make quick decisions on the fly and work with all kinds of scenarios at home and on the road. It’s like being a mini production crew. You bond pretty quickly. When they watch professional sports or live event coverage like the Olympics, they have a feel for the work that goes into it behind the scenes,” Dawkins said.

And as Johnson notes, “We’re doing so with authentic experiences and assessments that a lot of other classes don’t have or are unable to provide.”

Not to mention the long term impact for some students, as Moring points out. “I have students pursuing careers in broadcast because of this course.”

### SPORTS MEDIA SITES

- ▶ Rampart HS, Colorado Springs  
<http://www.nfhsnetwork.com/schools/rampart-high-school-colorado-springs-co>  
<https://vimeo.com/channels/rhskram>
- ▶ Regis Jesuit HS, Aurora  
<https://www.nfhsnetwork.com/schools/regis-jesuit-high-school-aurora-co>  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpJUUVc1bdKvL34yamtCaA>
- ▶ Antioch Community HS  
<https://www.sequoitmedia.com/>

# MENTEES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

MENTEES GRADUATE FROM THE PROGRAM AFTER TWO YEARS

**KEY:** MENTEES TEACH IN SHADED STATES.

\* STATES WHERE MENTORS LIVE.

## MAP

To see the overview map of all mentees' locations since 2007, go to <http://tinyurl.com/mentee-map>



### California

- Dana Dooley**  
Roseville HS, Roseville  
Mentor: Casey Nichols
- Marjorie Hollander**  
Canoga Park HS, Canoga Park  
Mentor: Kim Messadieh
- Mari Kono**  
Birmingham Community Charter School, Lake Balboa  
Mentor: Carol Strauss
- Karie Lynch**  
Westlake HS, Westlake Village  
Mentor: Jo Zimmerman
- Lindsay Porlier**  
Gunderson HS, San Jose  
Mentor: Karl Grubaugh
- Trever Roddick**  
East Nicolaus HS, Trowbridge  
Mentor: Casey Nichols
- Augustine Rene Sanchez**  
Mesa Verde HS, Citrus Heights  
Mentor: Casey Nichols
- Jase St. Peter**  
Rio Norte JHS, Valencia  
Mentor: Jo Zimmerman
- Alexas Sueiras**  
Mater Dei HS, Santa Ana  
Mentor: Carol Strauss
- Melody Velasco**  
Oak Hills HS, Oak Hills  
Mentor: Nancy Olson, Vermont
- Christina Willson**  
Granite Oaks MS, Rocklin  
Mentor: Casey Nichols
- Deb Wycoff**  
Aviara Oaks MS, Carlsbad  
Mentor: Jo Zimmerman

### Nevada

- Carrie Teller**  
Ed W. Clark HS, Las Vegas  
Mentor: Kim Messadieh, California

### Utah

- Lisa Griffin**  
Murray HS, Murray  
Mentor: Katherine Patrick, Wyoming
- Dana Savage**  
Innovation Early College HS, Salt Lake City  
Mentor: Katherine Patrick, Wyoming
- Kathryn Wilkins**  
Kearns HS, Kearns  
Mentor: Linda Ballew, Montana

### Arizona

- Marcus Hall**  
Paradise Valley HS, Phoenix  
Mentor: Peggy Gregory
- Colleen Koblinski**  
Verrado HS, Buckeye  
Mentor: Peggy Gregory
- Brandi Rasmussen**  
Chandler HS, Chandler  
Mentor: Carmen Wendt
- Amy Spiwak**  
Desert Edge HS, Goodyear  
Mentor: Peggy Gregory

### Idaho

- Allison Knoll**  
Lakeland HS, Rathdrum  
Mentor: Kim Messadieh, California

### Oregon

- Eric Ballas**  
Southridge HS, Beaverton  
Mentor: Bill Flechtner
- Breanna Carlisle**  
Gresham HS, Gresham  
Mentor: Bill Flechtner
- Siri Carlson**  
Gladstone HS, Gladstone  
Mentor: Bill Flechtner
- Brittany DiVincenzo**  
Damascus Christian School, Damascus  
Mentor: Bill Flechtner
- John Fitzgerald**  
Wilsonville HS, Wilsonville  
Mentor: Bill Flechtner
- Matt Fox**  
Bend HS, Bend  
Mentor: Karen Boone
- Donald Gillham**  
Tillamook HS, Tillamook  
Mentor: Ray Hopfer
- Angela Liesching**  
Redmond HS, Redmond  
Mentor: Karen Boone
- Mindy Mendenhall**  
Summit HS, Bend  
Mentor: Karen Boone
- Renee Mitchell**  
Roosevelt HS, Portland  
Mentor: Bill Flechtner
- Mary Rechner**  
Lincoln HS, Portland  
Mentor: Bill Flechtner

### Montana

- Meggan Cirrincione**  
Fergus HS, Lewiston  
Mentor: Linda Ballew
- Jennifer Lannen**  
Sweet Grass County HS, Big Timber  
Mentor: Linda Ballew
- Kate Lende**  
Park HS, Livingston  
Mentor: Linda Ballew
- Lauren Wright Zent**  
Billings West HS, Billings  
Mentor: Linda Ballew

### Colorado

- Adrienne Marko**  
Dakota Ridge HS, Littleton  
Mentor: Sheila Jones
- Hannah Shapiro**  
Eagle Valley HS, Gypsum  
Mentor: Sheila Jones
- Karla Shotts**  
Englewood HS, Englewood  
Mentor: Sheila Jones
- Meghan St. Clair**  
Renaissance Expeditionary Secondary School, Castle Rock  
Mentor: Sheila Jones

### Oklahoma

- Jennifer Hill**  
Putnam City West HS, Oklahoma City  
Mentor: Carmen Wendt, Arizona

### Kansas

- Joanna Chadwick**  
Derby HS, Derby  
Mentor: Mary Anne McCloud
- Shelbi Markham**  
Maize South MS, Wichita  
Mentor: Mary Patrick
- Robin Montano**  
Newton HS, Newton  
Mentor: Mary Anne McCloud
- Julie Mooney**  
Flinthills HS, Rosalia  
Mentor: Mary Patrick
- Julia Walker**  
Olathe West High School, Olathe  
Mentor: Mary Anne McCloud
- Rogie Wiswell**  
St. Francis Community HS, St. Francis  
Mentor: Mary Patrick

### Iowa

- Amy Blanton**  
Pella HS, Pella  
Mentor: Gary Lindsay
- Mariah Reeves**  
Prairie HS, Cedar Rapids  
Mentor: Gary Lindsay
- Carly Triplett**  
Dowling Catholic HS, West Des Moines  
Mentor: Ann Visser

### Nebraska

- Lynn Hofmann**  
Shelby-Rising City HS, Shelby  
Mentor: Bob Bair
- David Stevens**  
Scribner-Snyder Community Schools, Scribner  
Mentor: Bob Bair

### Missouri

- Jennifer Bender**  
Wheatland High School, Wheatland  
Mentor: Nancy Olson, Vermont
- Amanda Goering**  
Smithville HS, Smithville  
Mentor: Mary Anne McCloud, Kansas
- Leigh Rogers**  
Hermann High School, Hermann  
Mentor: Peggy Gregory, Arizona
- Nicole Smith**  
Rockhurst HS, Kansas City  
Mentor: Mary Anne McCloud, Kansas
- Kathleen Turner**  
Jefferson City HS, Jefferson City  
Mentor: Susan Newell, Alabama

### Wisconsin

- Laura Bengs**  
Pewaukee HS, Pewaukee  
Mentor: Linda Barrington
- Erik Farrar**  
**Kelly Kallien**  
Belleville High School, Belleville  
Mentor: Dave Wallner
- Breja Fink**  
Memorial HS, Beloit  
Mentors: Dave Wallner and Gary Lindsay, Iowa
- Elizabeth Miller**  
Middleton HS, Middleton  
Mentor: Dave Wallner
- Ellen Linnihan**  
Brookfield Central HS, Brookfield  
Mentor: Linda Barrington
- Laura Streyle**  
Stoughton HS, Stoughton  
Mentor: Dave Wallner

### Ohio

- Mary Erste**  
Strongsville HS, Strongsville  
Mentor: Wayne Dunn
- Kate Maciulewicz**  
Stephen D. Badin HS, Hamilton  
Mentor: Wayne Dunn
- Emily Rogers**  
Ursuline HS, Youngstown  
Mentor: Wayne Dunn
- Andrea Jeniger**  
**Nicole Silvado**  
Cuyahoga Falls HS, Cuyahoga Falls  
Mentor: Wayne Dunn

### Georgia

- Heather Wickham**  
Wheeler HS, Marietta  
Mentor: Susan Newell, Alabama

### Alabama

- Carrie Rice**  
Charles Henderson HS, Troy  
Mentor: Susan Newell

### Ohio

- Mary Erste**  
Strongsville HS, Strongsville  
Mentor: Wayne Dunn
- Kate Maciulewicz**  
Stephen D. Badin HS, Hamilton  
Mentor: Wayne Dunn
- Emily Rogers**  
Ursuline HS, Youngstown  
Mentor: Wayne Dunn

### Vermont

- Marilee Attley**  
Brattleboro HS, Brattleboro  
Mentor: Nancy Olson

### New York

- Michael DeNobile**  
Dr. Richard Izquierdo Health & Science Charter School, New York City (Bronx)  
Mentor: Kathleen Zwiebel, Pennsylvania

### North Carolina

- Anna Barefoot**  
West Brunswick HS, Shallotte  
Mentor: Carol Eanes
- Marie Matthews**  
Riverside HS, Durham  
Mentor: Candace Brandt
- Matt Spence**  
Providence Day School, Charlotte  
Mentor: Kathy Zwiebel, Pennsylvania

### Tennessee

- Shannon Carney**  
Wilson Central HS, Lebanon  
Mentor: Joy McCaleb
- Renee Craig**  
**Joe Davis**  
Upperman HS, Baxter  
Mentor: Joy McCaleb
- Cammie Greevey**  
Knoxville West HS, Knoxville  
Mentor: Joy McCaleb
- Brittany Lawton**  
Mt Juliet HS, Mt. Juliet  
Mentor: Joy McCaleb
- Allison Mahan**  
Cookeville HS, Cookeville  
Mentor: Joy McCaleb
- Courtney Schultz**  
Hume-Fogg Academic Magnet HS, Nashville  
Mentor: Joy McCaleb
- Kaela Sweeney**  
Nashville East Magnet, Nashville  
Mentor: Joy McCaleb

### Florida

- Jennifer Araujo**  
**Joseph Winters**  
Four Corners Upper School, Davenport  
Mentor: Vicki Brennan
- Shelly Hunsucker**  
Armwood HS, Brandon  
Mentor: Vicki Brennan
- Mary Maraghy**  
Westside HS, Jacksonville  
Mentor: Vicki Brennan
- Erin Miller**  
Trinity Preparatory School, Winter Park  
Mentor: Vicki Brennan
- Caroline Murphy**  
Epiphany Catholic School, Miami  
Mentor: Megan Fitzgerald Dunn
- Nancy (Joanie) Oben**  
TR Robinson HS, Tampa  
Mentor: Vicki Brennan
- Melissa Rodriguez**  
Palm Glades Preparatory Academy, Miami  
Mentor: Megan Fitzgerald Dunn
- Paige Stephens**  
Vanguard HS, Ocala  
Mentor: Julie Mancini

### Illinois

- Andrew Crivillare**  
Griggsville-Perry HS, Griggsville  
Mentor: Carol Smith
- Katie Curtin**  
Pritzker College Prep, Chicago  
Mentor: Stan Zoller
- Matthew Ernst**  
St. Francis HS, Hanover Park  
Mentor: Stan Zoller
- Nichole Folkman**  
Hartsburg-Emden HS, Hartsburg  
Mentor: Carol Smith
- Morgan Healy**  
Effingham HS, Effingham  
Mentor: Carol Smith
- Kendall Huffman**  
Arthur Lovington Atwood Hammond HS, Arthur  
Mentor: Carol Smith
- Kim Lampa**  
York Community HS, Elmhurst  
Mentor: Stan Zoller

### Pennsylvania

- Colin Chrestay**  
Franklin Learning Center, Philadelphia  
Mentor: Kathy Zwiebel
- Lauren Hopkins**  
Clearfield County Career & Technology Center, Clearfield  
Mentor: Kathy Zwiebel
- Susan Norwood**  
Cambridge Springs J/S HS, Cambridge Springs  
Mentor: Jane Blystone
- Laurie Scaggs**  
Villa Maria Academy, Malvern  
Mentor: Kathy Zwiebel

### New Jersey

- Dara Martin**  
The Hun School of Princeton, Princeton  
Mentor: Ron Bonadonna
- Aimee Melillo-Repko**  
Brick Township HS, Brick  
Mentor: Ron Bonadonna

“I have been so impressed with the way Patrick immediately immersed himself in the documentation of the committee’s 10-year history to gain understanding and insight. All the while, he has also been looking ahead to new goals to push our work forward to include more mentors helping more mentees.”

~Peggy Gregory, JEA mentor in Arizona and committee member

## Johnson brings tech skills, energy, organization, passion to Mentor Program

by Linda Barrington, MJE

“I find mentoring to be one of the most critical components to our JEA programming, and teaching in general,” Patrick Johnson said, when he was appointed to chair the Mentor Committee in December.

“So many teachers are thrown into journalism and find it difficult to figure out who they are, what they need, how to balance, when to grow and change, how to budget, when to ask for legal help, and so on,” Johnson said.

“Our mentors provide an extension of teaching and leadership that is both unique and necessary: a teacher who has been through it and can offer thoughtful advice and encouragement,” he said.

After graduating from Marquette University with a degree in journalism, Johnson returned to his home town at Antioch (Illinois) Community High School to teach journalism. He encountered the expected resistance from the editors (“but we always did it this way...”) and handled it effectively. One of his first editors, Sara Petty, wrote in a letter about how unsure the staff had been at the beginning, not knowing what to expect from this new adviser.

“I’m not quite sure how to explain it,” she wrote, “but he has a way of motivating the staff that made us into better journalists and better writers.”

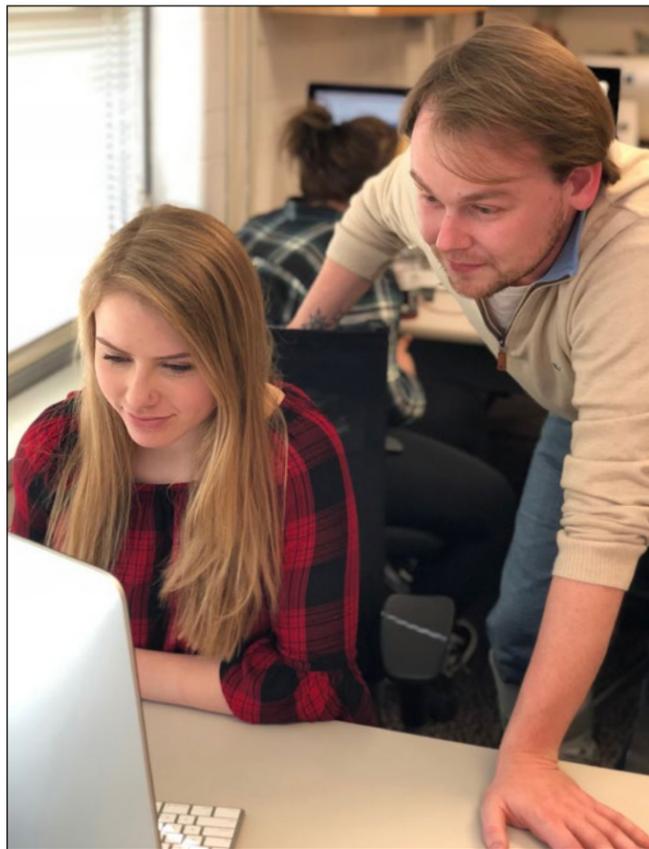
Also an adjunct instructor for Marquette University’s Diederich College of Communication, Johnson teaches journalism and media studies classes.

### Commitment to journalism education

A new teacher himself a handful of years ago, Johnson joined the board of the Kettle Moraine Press Association and wrote a monthly blog for the website that focused specifically on issues affecting new journalism advisers, like the need for mental preparation in becoming an adviser, ways to seek support from the administration, the importance of taking students to national convention, ways to maintain a healthy staff experience, and the importance of providing a solid culture for staff members.

Johnson has supported the Mentor Program in past years at summer training and convention forums by presenting on technology and organization, two of his strengths. On recent forum feedback, several mentors specifically cited Johnson as a valuable resource, saying they were “amazed at Patrick’s organization with technology” and “wanted to keep bringing Patrick back.”

With a passion for helping new advisers, Johnson seems to be a good fit for the Mentor Program, according to committee members.



Patrick Johnson, MJE, works with his creative director, senior Chloe Grass, on the Tom Tom magazine cover for April. Johnson teaches at Antioch Community High School in Illinois. Johnson said he believes that every student has an opportunity to succeed in various creative areas in his program, to which he attributes his growing numbers. “Chloe is an example of a student who is able to capitalize on the opportunities this program gives her,” Johnson said. “My students have chances to find their passion and expertise and execute that. I find my mentoring is more about life and honing skills than simple teaching. Storytelling is an chance to be the best version of yourself; getting to help coach these kids to that point is the most rewarding experience I think any teacher can have.”

Photo by Lauren Bluthardt

## BEST ADVICE FROM MY MENTOR

Mentees share what they’ve learned.

### CRITIQUES



John Fitzgerald

Wilsonville High School  
Wilsonville, Oregon

“We’re a new publication, so the critiques that Bill Flechtner has provided have been invaluable. I’m so grateful that he has given up his time to talk with me and my staff. The improvements we’ve seen after each session have been exponential.”

### PUBLICATION POLICY



Hannah Shapiro

Eagle Valley High School  
Gypsum, Colorado

“My students and I actually refer to my JEA mentor as “Sheila the Journalism Goddess.” The best advice I’ve received from my mentor changes every time I speak with Sheila (Jones), but the two best pieces of advice that I find myself treasuring lately are, “make sure that you have a district student publications policy that is in line with the Colorado Student Free Expression Law,” and “report on controversial topics as straight news.” Both of these pieces of advice have empowered my students to effectively report on difficult topics like the recent March 14th walk out and counter protest at our school.”

### REASSURANCE



Anna Barefoot

West Brunswick High School  
Shallotte, North Carolina

“My mentor (Carol Eanes)’s constant reassurance that I am doing my best and that I am providing valuable learning opportunities has been so important. I am the only student newspaper program in my county, so I have no one else to turn to; having her words of confidence has been very encouraging.”

### I FEEL VALIDATED



Deb Wycoff

Aviara Oaks Middle School  
Carlsbad, California

“The JEA mentor program has been an amazing support for me. My mentor (Jo Zimmerman) is like a little cheerleader I can reach out to with any question I have. She always makes me feel validated about whatever seemingly silly question I ask. She is always sending me materials and information, just as I need it in my development as a journalist adviser. I am so grateful for JEA and the support of the Mentor Program.”

### JE A COMMUNITY



Mary Rechner

Lincoln High School  
Portland, Oregon

“My mentor Bill Flechtner has been a huge support to me in my first year of newspaper advising. One of the most important things Bill has done is encourage me to be an active part of the JEA community — to bring my students to Media Day and to national conferences. These opportunities are helping me with professional development and invigorating our newspaper staff.”

### LEADERSHIP



Lauren Zent

Billings West High School  
Billings, Montana

“My mentor (Linda Ballew) has maybe not mentioned this, but she has demonstrated that leadership is a huge part of having a successful staff. My mentor has really tried to help me be organized, but also given me practical and fun ideas of how to motivate my staff to complete great work.”

# Mentor Program looking to expand, rebrand in future

by Patrick Johnson, MJE

For over a decade the Mentor Program has provided JEA members with one of the organization's most valuable resources. As we look toward the future of the program, the JEA board and mentoring committee are looking to innovate and push the mentoring program to be bigger and better than ever.

Since taking over the post as mentor program chair in December, I've also looked deeply and critically, with the help of both the committee and Director-at-large Julia Satterthwaite, at what the program has to offer our membership (and our mentors). After only a few months, plans are in place to allow the mentor program to expand and rebrand in the future.



Patrick Johnson

## CHECK OUT WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE FALL

**1** New mentees will now be grouped into cohorts with opportunities to communicate with one another about their experiences, meet up at conventions, and create bonds that will hopefully last a lifetime. The hope is that this will eventually evolve into distinct opportunities for the cohorts, such as special speakers at conventions and digitally, "graduation" and recognition and training.

**2** The mentor program will be implementing a badge system for new mentees so that they can work toward an ultimate goal of certification. This system will be aligned with the JEA Curriculum Initiative and the CJE exam. In a survey of current mentees, a significant majority of the mentees believe that a badge system would help them toward completing benchmarks that not only assist in their knowledge of journalism and advising, but also help them become certified and recognized in their schools.

**3** We're looking to add more mentors to the program that aren't just retired, which a number of JEA members assume is a requirement to be a mentor. We will be looking for mentors from all backgrounds to apply to be a part of the program and receive training to become a mentor in your state.

**4** Training, which is traditionally done in-person at the Advisers Institute, will be moving to a more digital platform after this year's AI. The committee and JEA board will be working together to create modules and resources that will allow for more mentors to be trained throughout the year and have more mentors available for new teachers and advisers across the country.

Questions? Contact me at [mentoring@jea.org](mailto:mentoring@jea.org).



*“Many years ago Peggy Gregory mentored me through being a newspaper adviser. Not only did I not know how to say Ah-Doh-be In-De-sign, I had no idea how the program worked. Today a multitude of new Arizona teachers are surviving their first years because of JEA mentors. Without their help, too many teachers might still be trying to say Ah-Doh-be In-De-sign.”*

~Melanie Allen, Arizona Interscholastic Press Association president

### ABOUT US

[www.jea.org](http://www.jea.org) [mentoring.jea.org](http://mentoring.jea.org)

**President:** Sarah Nichols

**Vice-president:** Val Kibler

**Past President:** Mark Newton

**Executive Director:** Kelly Glasscock

#### Mentor Program Committee

Patrick Johnson, chair Gary Lindsay

Linda Barrington Mary Anne McCloud

Peggy Gregory Carmen Wendt

Sheila Jones

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