Texas Intercollegiate Press Association

2026 BetterBNC Contest Rules

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS DEC. 31, 2026

Contest open to 2026-27 Texas Intercollegiate Press Association members who have paid the $100 contest entry fee.

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MEMBERSHIP & STUDENT MEDIA ELIGIBILITY

For purposes of this contest, **student media** is defined as a student-led media organization in which students make the final editorial decisions and produce the final product that is also published or aired through a platform recognized by the college/university.

Content produced solely for a class that is not published or aired by student media is not eligible.

Schools with more than one recognized student media outlet with separate advisers/budgets may purchase one membership per outlet. Each outlet would then compete individually. Schools whose advisers supervise multiple outlets under one umbrella budget are not eligible for separate memberships.

Memberships for 2026-27 and the $100 contest fee must be **submitted and paid** in order for your entries to be eligible.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY & ORIGINAL WORK

- All work must be original student work published in a student media outlet described above.
- Individual entries must be produced by undergraduate students who were enrolled at the institution when the work was produced.
- All entries must be submitted exactly as originally published or broadcast. Do not retouch, edit, modify or clean up any story, photo, layout, headline, advertisement or other portion of an entry specifically for the contest.
- No work that has been extensively edited by an adviser or other professional will be accepted.
- No material with known factual errors may be entered in any contest.
- Contestants must not use ChatGPT or other forms of generative AI to write or create any portion of their work. Transcription software, such as Otter, and proofreading tools, such as Grammarly, may be used for transcription, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Submissions that do not adhere to these rules will be disqualified.

ENTRY LIMITS & SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Each school may submit two entries per category, unless otherwise noted. Entries may be by the same contestant.
- For schools with multiple memberships, each member publication may submit two entries per category, unless otherwise specified.
- All entries must have been published (print or online) or broadcast from Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2026.
- Entries must be submitted as hyperlinks or PDFs unless otherwise noted.
- If submitting a PDF, use a red arrow to mark items for judging.
- Give the complete first and last names of all student contestants. Do not use initials in place of names.
- The same entry may not be entered in more than one Major Category (e.g., Narrative Reporting, Production, etc.).
- Failure to follow submission requirements will result in the specific entry being disqualified.

JUDGING & AWARDS

- Judges' decisions are final.
- First-, second- and third-place awards shall be given in each contest if there are four or more entries. Honorable Mention awards are given at the discretion of the judges.
- Judges are requested to provide general and/or specific comments for individual and collective contests. Providing comments is optional.
- In open divisions, if there are fewer than four entries in a category, the judge shall declare there is no contest, and no awards will be given. Any potential exceptions to this rule will be decided by TIPA officers.
- In divisions, if there are fewer than four entries in a category, the entries shall be advanced to a higher division.

SPECIAL RULES & CATEGORY-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- Any school may compete in a higher division. The adviser must notify the executive director in writing of the school's desire to compete in a higher division.

- For Overall Excellence and design categories, no more than 10 percent of a publication's content or production may be produced by graduate students.

- Digitally altered photos and digitally created photograph-like images cannot be entered in any photo category. They may be entered in the photo illustration category.

- All photo submissions for photo categories must have cutlines. Photos without cutlines will be disqualified.

OVERALL EXCELLENCE

(One entry per school)

Newspaper — Entry consists of three complete editions from Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2026. A designed newspaper published to ISSUU but not printed is eligible in this category.

JUDGING: Newspapers will be judged on:

- Local/general/departmental news
- Editorial comment/page
- Thoroughness of local coverage
- General appearance/style/design
- Photo use and graphics

News Production VIDEO — Entry consists of three 10-minute segments of three broadcasts from Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2026. Audio and video files must be hosted on a third-party site such as Google Drive, YouTube or SoundCloud. You will then provide the link to those sources.

JUDGING: Students will be judged in multiple areas:

- Ability to stack/produce the video content
- Written transitions and teases between videos
- Quality of talent and selection of guests
- Quality of news packages, VOs, VO/SOTs and RDRs
- Graphics, switching and technical ability of the crew
- Overall professional look and feel of the newscasts

News Production AUDIO —Entry consists of three 10-minute segments of programs from Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2026. Audio and video files must be hosted on a third-party site such as Google Drive, YouTube or SoundCloud. You will then provide the link to those sources.

JUDGING: Students will be judged in multiple areas:

- Ability to stack/produce the audio content
- Written transitions and teases between stories
- Quality of talent and selection of guests
- Quality of the audio stories run during the newscast
- Technical aspects of production, such as consistent audio levels and appropriate bumps and breaks
- Overall professional audio quality of the production

Website — Entry consists of the homepage plus up to three supplemental links highlighting specific work. FOR EXAMPLE: If your students produced a fantastic breaking news package three months ago, showcase it as one of the links. Select up to three to highlight overall web excellence. Entry must be from Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2026.

JUDGING: Websites will be judged on:

- Organization, content and navigation
- Clear page organization, such as (but not necessarily) news, sports and editorial
- Overall writing, photography, design and video professionalism

Literary Magazine — One issue of choice (Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2026). This category recognizes excellence in creative, effective and accurate storytelling and production.

JUDGING: Entries will be judged on:

- Quality of literary content, including effective language and use of literary devices throughout the selections
- Strong editorial identity, design and branding that communicates the magazine identity
- Editing and proofreading
- Unity of design and effective use of art and design that complement the writing
- Effective layout and typography

General Magazine — One issue of choice (Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2026).

JUDGING:

- Human Interest
- Visual Hierarchy
- Entry Points
- Creativity
- Use of Space
- Visual Elements

Yearbook

Upload PDF of the 2026 book to a Google Drive. Copy that link into the Better BNC category. Make sure your PDF allows judges to view the spreads correctly.

JUDGING: Yearbooks will be judged on:

- Clarity and development of theme throughout the book
- Organization
- Breadth of coverage
- Writing
- Design
- Photography
- Creativity and originality

Social Media

An entry consists of up to five posts that can be a combination of news, feature, sports, opinion, humor and promotional content. One of the five can be a bundle of multiple posts on the same subject made within the same week.

Submit posts through screenshots and links to videos. Attach a document that explains how the posts represent your school's strategy for using social media.

JUDGING: Judges will consider the entry in terms of quality, variety and creativity

In-House Marketing

This category recognizes excellence in cross-marketing multiple components of the student media outlet throughout a variety of platforms. Include no more than 10 screenshots from various platforms and/or links to social media videos.

Submit a document describing:

- The media components included
- The primary message(s) of the campaign
- The intended outcome(s)

JUDGING: Judges will evaluate entries based on teamwork, consistency and clarity of messaging, effectiveness, creativity and professionalism

INDIVIDUAL OVERALL EXCELLENCE

Individual Overall Excellence honors the best work of individual students who produce consistently high-quality work. Students' work often crosses categories but is in the same general area of production from any media. Review page one for eligibility requirements.

Division 1: Students from four-year schools

Division 2: Students from two-year schools

NOTE: If there are fewer than three entries in one division, entries from both two- and four-year schools will be combined.

Submission: Please upload all materials to the BNC website. Entrants must submit a letter of support from their faculty adviser. If there is not a faculty adviser, a letter of support from a faculty member, professional mentor or student media staff member will be required. Students must also submit five samples of their work.

Broadcast examples: Video files must be hosted on a third-person site such as Google Drive or YouTube. You must provide links to those sites.

EACH SCHOOL MAY ENTER ONE STUDENT PER CATEGORY

Reporter of the Year – Any reporter on any platform can enter. Entry should include five stories that show the student's best work, which can include news, features or in-depth reporting in any form. Entrants must submit a letter of support from their faculty adviser. If there is not a faculty adviser, a letter of support from a faculty member, professional mentor or student media staff member will be required. Entries will be judged on thoroughness of reporting, an understanding of news values, multisource storytelling, strong ledes/hooks, engaging quotes and accuracy.

Photojournalist of the Year – Any photojournalist on any platform can enter. Entry should include five examples that show the student's best work, which can include visual journalism in any form. Entrants must submit a letter of support from their faculty adviser. If there is not a faculty adviser, a letter of support from a faculty member, professional mentor or student media staff member will be required. Entries will be judged on photographic quality, visual storytelling, consistency, news value, editing and caption writing.

Designer of the Year – Any designer on any platform can enter. Entry should include five examples that show the student's best work, which can include design in any form (Web, ad design, pages, etc.). Entrants must submit a letter of support from their faculty adviser. If there is not a faculty adviser, a letter of support from a faculty member, professional mentor or student media staff member will be required. Entries will be judged on the principles of good layout, including compelling use of photography and graphics, clear sense of hierarchy and engaging font choice.

Editor/News Director of the Year – Any editor/news director/primary student leader on any platform can enter. Entry should include five examples that show the student's best work and leadership of staff, which can include news judgment, news play, editorial decisions and bylined content. Entrants must submit a letter of support from their faculty adviser. If there is not a faculty adviser, a letter of support from a faculty member, professional mentor or student media staff member will be required. Entries will be judged on comprehensive leadership qualities demonstrated across multiple areas. Entry must include one or more specific instances of the entrant's leadership decisions and the outcome of those decisions.

Strategic Communicator of the Year – Any strategic communicator on any platform can enter. This includes, but is not limited to, social media editors/managers, PR managers, ad managers, and web editors. Entries should include five examples that show the student's best work, which can include strategic planning and execution in any form. Entrants must submit a letter of support from their faculty adviser. If there is not a faculty adviser, a letter of support from a faculty member, professional mentor or student media staff member will be required.

TIPA T-SHIRT DESIGN

The winning design will be placed on the front of the official 2027 Texas Intercollegiate Press Association Convention participant T-shirt. Design theme must include TIPA, the year of the convention (2027) and the location (Denton).

- It does not require the official TIPA logo.
- Colors: The design must only use one (1) basic color. Please note that the design color submitted may be different than that of the final product.

RULES AND GUIDELINES

1. **Original Work:** All designs must be original creations of the contestant. Submissions must not include AI-Generated content. Submissions must not have been previously published and must not contain profanity, trademarks, other organizations' logos or any copyrighted works of any other person or business.

2. **Original Files:** Contest winner must agree to submit a high-resolution layered vector art file within seven (7) days of notification and agree to work with the printer if slight changes/modifications are necessary for production. If not, an alternate winner may be chosen to meet production deadlines.

3. **Agreement:** By submitting an entry, contestants agree to these rules and to the Publicity, Use and Rights Agreement below.

HOW WINNER IS SELECTED

Entries will be evaluated by the TIPA Executive Committee and will be reviewed for:

- Concept and originality of design
- Visibility/readability from a reasonable distance
- Adherence to design and submission rules
- Successfully capturing the spirit of TIPA and its mission
- Overall design and production readiness

Fine Print Publicity and Agreement: Contest entry constitutes an agreement by the submitting designers to grant free license of all copyrights of the submitted works to the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association in perpetuity, for publicity and promotional purposes. Participants are encouraged, however, to place their designs on their professional portfolios.

Media Release: By submitting artwork, you agree that if your design wins, the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association retains first printing rights and a free license, in perpetuity, to utilize the design on T-shirts and other promotional items, and marketing, fundraising, and public relations materials. You are guaranteeing that your design does not contain any copyrighted material, including images/copy found on the internet, unless clearly marked as published under a Creative Commons (cc) license.

NARRATIVE REPORTING

(No more than two entries per school, per category)

Description: Any text reporting published in any media: Newspaper, Website, Yearbook, General Interest Magazine, Social Media, Literary Magazine, Radio, Television.

Entries consist of a link (preferred) or PDF of the page(s) containing the individual entry. Audio and visual files must be hosted on a third-party site such as Google Drive, YouTube or Soundcloud. You must then provide links to those sources.

If submitting a PDF, the individual entry MUST be identified by a **RED ARROW**, unless otherwise stated.

1. **General News** – An article written about a news event or issue. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives, news value and a strong lede.

2. **Breaking News** – An article written about a breaking or spot news event. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives, news value and a strong lede.

3. **In-Depth Reporting** – Schools may submit one entry for this category. Entry can be a series, but articles should be limited to 3-5 articles. A story or series of stories that demonstrate extensive research and several attributed sources designed to give the reader a comprehensive understanding of a subject in any area: news, feature, sports. If the articles were published in separate editions or platforms, they must be clearly identified as part of a series in each publication. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, focus on quality of research, clear writing, multisource perspectives, news value, story development.

4. **Feature Story** – A trend story, human-interest story, personality profile or any type of feature that is not general or breaking news. An article entered in this category may also be a sports feature story, not a game story or breaking story. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives, news value and human interest, creative approach to storytelling, strong lede/hook.

5. **Editorial** - An editorial written as a statement of opinion of the publication, not an individual or personal opinion. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, news value, effective persuasion and a clear stance, focus on quality research.

6. **General Column** – A bylined blog post or column by a single writer on any topic outside of sports. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, creativity, news value and/or human interest.

7. **Sports Column** – A bylined blog post or column by a single writer on a topic related to sports. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives, news value and human interest.

8. **Critical Review** – A bylined blog post or column by a single writer expressing opinion on a creative work. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, quality of critique, knowledge of medium/subject reviewing.

9. **Sports Game Story** – An article covering a single athletic event. Judging: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives, news value, strong lede/hook, knowledge of the sport.

10. **Sports News Story** — An article written about a sports news topic or issue. Season recaps and game previews fall under this category. (Note: Game stories should be entered in Category 9. Sports feature stories should be entered in Category 4.) JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives, news value and a strong lede.

11. **Headline Writing** – An entry consists of a group of three to five headlines covering any topic and written by a single person or writing team. JUDGING: On the basis of clear writing and communication about the topic, creativity, news value, use of space, hook and appropriate tone.

ELECTRONIC REPORTING

(No more than two entries per school per category)

Audio and visual files must be hosted on a third-party site such as Google Drive, YouTube or Soundcloud. You must then provide links to those sources. Note the updated time limits.

1. **In-Depth News Reporting – AUDIO** – This category is for in-depth audio reporting originally airing on a radio station or posted to a student media website. The total run time of the segment should not exceed 10 minutes and may consist of one story or a series of stories that develop over a period of time (not more than 10 minutes combined). Entries may focus on, but are not limited to, topics such as coverage of governmental activities, politics, court cases, public safety issues, education and community news. Coverage may be news, extended interview or a combination. JUDGING: Focus on quality of research, reporting, story development and audio production.

2. **In-Depth News Reporting – VIDEO** – This category is for in-depth video reporting originally televised or posted to a student media website. The total run time for the segment should not exceed 10 minutes and may consist of one story or a series of stories that develop over a period of time (not more than 10 minutes combined). Coverage may be news, extended interview or a combination. Entries may include, but are not limited to, topics such as coverage of governmental activities, politics, court cases, public safety issues, education and community news. Entries must contain at least THREE of the following components: Video, Sound Bites/Actualities, Reporter Narration, Sourced Cellphone Video, Graphics, Photos, Animation, Story Text or Hyperlinks. JUDGING: Focus on quality of research, reporting, story development and production quality.

3. **General News AUDIO story** — This category is for objective audio news packages that may air during a radio newscast or be posted online to a media outlet website. Topic coverage may include hard, single issue, spot or beat coverage. Packages must be under 3 minutes in length and contain at least THREE of the following components: Reporter Narration, Nat Sound, Actualities, Story Text or Hyperlinks. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear and consistent writing, strong production quality and overall interest.

4. **General News VIDEO Story** — This category is for objective video news packages that may air during a televised newscast or be posted online to a media outlet website. Topic coverage may include hard, single issue, spot or beat coverage. Packages must be under 3 minutes in length and contain at least THREE of the following components: Video, Sound Bites, Reporter Narration, Sourced Citizen Video, Graphics, Photos, Animation, Story Text or Hyperlinks. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives, strong production quality and overall interest.

5. **General News MULTIMEDIA Story** - This category is for multimedia reporting on a general news topic or issue published to a media outlet website. Packages should tell the story clearly and creatively and contain at least THREE of the following: Text, Graphics, Video, Audio, Photos, **Embedded Social Media Content or other Multimedia Elements. Note: Embedded social media content must be content created by the student media outlet. Simple reactions from the audience on social media does not count as a multimedia element.** JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives, strong production quality and overall interest.

6. **Feature Reporting - AUDIO** - This category is for human interest news packages that are not time-bound. The package should not be longer than 5 minutes in length, tell the story in a creative manner and contain at least THREE of the following components: Reporter Narration, Nat Sound, Actualities, Story Text or Hyperlinks. The package may have originally aired on a radio station or been posted on a student media website. JUDGING: Focus on quality or research, clear writing and reporting, creative approach to the story and production quality.

7. **Feature Reporting - VIDEO** - This category is for human interest news packages that are not time-bound. The package should not be longer than 5 minutes in length, tell the story in a creative manner and contain at least THREE of the following components: Video, Sound Bites, Reporter Narration, Graphics, Photos, Animation, Story Text or Hyperlinks. The package may have originally aired on a television station or was posted online at a student media website. JUDGING: Focus on quality of research, clear writing and reporting, creative approach to the story and production quality.

8. **MULTIMEDIA Feature** - This category is for multimedia reporting on a feature topic published to a media outlet website. Packages should tell the story clearly and creatively and contain at least THREE of the following: Text, Graphics, Video, Audio, Photos, or other Multimedia Elements. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives, strong production quality and overall interest.

9. **Sports Reporting – AUDIO** - This category is for objective audio sports packages that may air during a radio newscast or be posted online to a media outlet website. Packages must be under 3 minutes in length and contain at least THREE of the following components: Reporter Narration, Nat Sound, Actualities, Story Text or Hyperlinks. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear and consistent writing, strong production quality and overall interest.

10. **Sports Reporting — VIDEO** - This category is for objective video sports packages that may air during a televised newscast/sportscast or be posted online to a media outlet website. Packages must be under 3 minutes in length and contain at least THREE of the following components: Video, Sound Bites, Reporter Narration, Sourced Citizen Video, Graphics, Photos, Animation, Story Text or Hyperlinks. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives, strong production quality and overall interest.

11. **MULTIMEDIA Sports Story** - This category is for multimedia reporting on a sports topic or issue published to a media outlet website. Packages should tell the story clearly and creatively and contain at least THREE of the following: Text, Graphics, Video, Audio, Photos or other Multimedia elements. JUDGING: On the basis of thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives, strong production quality and overall interest.

12. **Sportscast - AUDIO** - This category is for sports segments that air during the sports segment of a radio newscast or a stand-alone pre/post- game or half-time program of a sporting event. The entry should contain pre- produced packages and narration by a sports anchor. Maximum time of 5 minutes. Entries may originally air on a radio station or online. JUDGING: Criteria will include journalistic quality, thoroughness of coverage, anchor/reporter quality and overall appeal of the newscast.

13. **Sportscast - VIDEO** - This category is for sports segments that air during the sports segment of a televised newscast or a stand-alone pre/post- game or half-time program of a sporting event. The entry should contain pre- produced packages and narration by a sports anchor. Maximum time of 5 minutes. Entries may originally air on a TV station or online. JUDGING: Criteria will include journalistic quality, thoroughness of coverage, anchor/reporter quality and overall appeal of the newscast.

14. **LIVE Newscast - AUDIO** - A 5- to 30-minute regularly aired radio news program that includes anchor narration, pre-produced packages and a clearly defined format. The entry must have been presented live, without post-production. Entries may originally air on a radio station or online. One entry per school. Winners will be given a certificate in the program's name. In addition, each staff member listed on the entryform will receive a certificate if that staff wins first place. JUDGING: Criteria will include journalistic quality, thoroughness of coverage, anchor/reporter quality and overall appeal of the newscast.

15. **LIVE Newscast - VIDEO** - A 10- to 30-minute regularly televised news program that includes anchor narration, pre-produced packages and a clearly defined format. The entry must have been presented live, without post-production. One entry per school. Winners will be given a certificate in the program's name. In addition, each staffer listed on the entry form will receive a certificate if that staff wins first place. JUDGING: Criteria will include journalistic quality, thoroughness of coverage, anchor/reporter quality and overall appeal of the newscast.

16. **Newscast – AUDIO** — A 5- to 30-minute regularly aired radio news program that includes anchor narration, pre-produced packages and a clearly defined format. **This category is designated for entries that have undergone post production.** Entries may originally air on a radio station or online. One entry per school. Winners will be given a certificate in the program's name. In addition, each staff member listed on the entry form will receive a certificate if that staff wins first place. JUDGING: Criteria will include journalistic quality, thoroughness of coverage, anchor/reporter quality and overall appeal of the newscast.

17. **Newscast – VIDEO** — A 10- to 30-minute regularly televised news program that includes anchor narration, pre-produced packages and a clearly defined format. **This category is designated for entries that have undergone post production.** One entry per school. Winners will be given a certificate in the program's name. In addition, each staffer listed on the entry form will receive a certificate if that staff wins first place. JUDGING: Criteria will include journalistic quality, thoroughness of coverage, anchor/reporter quality and overall appeal of the newscast.

18. **Live Sports Coverage - AUDIO** - This category is for on-site coverage of a single sporting event. Play-by-play and commentary may be provided by an individual or a team. Entry should be a 10-minute uninterrupted segment of the event coverage. Entries may originally air on a radio station or online. JUDGING: On vocal quality, knowledge of the event sport and quality of coverage and overall production quality.

19. **Live Sports Coverage - VIDEO** - This category is for on-site coverage of a single sporting event. Play-by-play and commentary may be provided by an individual or a team. Entry should be a 10-minute uninterrupted segment of the event coverage. Entries may originally air on a TV station or online. JUDGING: On vocal quality, coverage to video, and overall production quality.

20. **Podcasts** - This category recognizes excellence in content, production quality and innovative use of audio in a podcast. An entry should be a 10-minute segment of a longer podcast. JUDGING: On story development, thoroughness of research, innovative approach to the subject, production quality and overall interest.

21. **Documentary - VIDEO** - This category is for a nonfictional program, originally aired on a TV station or a student media website, intended to document some aspect of reality for the purpose of maintaining a historical record. Submit a 10-minute segment of the video. Multiple sources should be incorporated into the program. JUDGING: On story development, thoroughness of research, innovative approach to the subject, production quality and overall interest.

22. **Social Media – Breaking News –** This category recognizes excellence in social media content encompassing breaking news. Attach a document with screenshots and a synopsis of the content. Links to social media videos are encouraged. An entry consists of one post, or multiple posts related to the same breaking news subject matter posted within the same week. JUDGING: Judges will evaluate the entry on its quality, creativity and use of social media to deliver a message.

23. **Social Media – General Coverage –** This category recognizes excellence in social media content encompassing newsworthy information, feature content or sports. Attach a document with screenshots and a synopsis of the content. Links to social media videos are encouraged. An entry consists of one post, or multiple posts related to the same subject matter posted within the same week. JUDGING: Judges will evaluate the entry on its quality, creativity and use of social media to deliver a message.

24. **Livestreaming – General Coverage –** This category recognizes excellence is social media coverage through livestreaming. Entries should include a 5-minute segment of a chosen livestream. The livestream must have been conducted on a social media platform affiliated with the student publication and produced between Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2026. Submit entries by downloading a video of the livestream along with a written explanation of the livestream OR submit a link to the livestream with the cue in/cue out times noted. JUDGING: Judges will evaluate the entry on its quality, creativity, interactive elements, audience/guest engagement, news value, public interest and use of social media to deliver a message.

VISUAL REPORTING: All Media

(No more than 2 entries per school per category, unless otherwise stated)

All photo submissions for photo categories must have cutlines. Photos without cutlines will be disqualified.

Digitally altered photos and digitally created photograph-like images cannot be entered in any Photo category. They can be entered in the Photo Illustration category.

Entries consist of a link (preferred) or a PDF of the page(s) containing the individual entry. If the online entry is unclear, upload a document describing which photo is to be judged. For example, if the photo entry is part of a slideshow, submit the link to the slideshow and upload a document describing the photo and noting whether the photo is the first, second, third, etc.

If submitting a PDF, the individual entry **MUST be identified by a RED ARROW**, unless otherwise stated.

1. **Breaking News Photo** - Single photo of an unplanned and newsworthy event. Posed photos or photos that have been manipulated or digitally altered are not eligible in this category. All photos must have cutlines. JUDGING: On technique, news value, impact, human interest with emphasis on people in their environment, good composition, sharp production quality, cutline information and the photo's ability to convey a story.

2. **General News Photo** - Single photo coverage of events planned in advance. Posed photos or photos that have been manipulated or digitally altered are not eligible in this category. All photos must have cutlines. JUDGING: On technique, news value, impact, human interest with emphasis on people in their environment, good composition, sharp production quality, cutline information and the photo's ability to convey a story.

3. **Feature Photo** - Single photo, not sports-related, with strong human interest that captures a person, place or idea rather than event. Photos that have been manipulated or digitally altered are not eligible. All photos must have cutlines. JUDGING: On technique, news value, impact, human interest with emphasis on people in their environment, good composition, sharp production quality, cutline information and the photo's ability to convey a story.

4. **Sports Feature Photo** - Single sports-related photo (not a sports event), with strong human interest that captures a person, place or idea rather than event. Photos that have been manipulated or digitally altered are not eligible. All photos must have cutlines. JUDGING: On technique, news value, impact, human interest with emphasis on people in their environment, good composition, sharp production quality, cutline information and the photo's ability to convey a story.

5. **Environmental Portrait** - Single image that captures a subject in its environment, creating or adding to a compelling narrative. Can be staged. All photos must have cutlines. JUDGING: On technique, news value, impact, human interest with emphasis on people in their environment, good composition, sharp production quality, cutline information and the photo's ability to convey a story.

6. **Sports Action Photo** - Single photo that captures the action of a sports event or activity. All photos must have cutlines. JUDGING: On technique, news value, impact, human interest with emphasis on people in their environment, good composition, sharp production quality, cutline information and the photo's ability to convey a story.

7. **Photo Story** - A group of three or more photos that tells a story through a slideshow, gallery or photo page. All photos must have cutlines. JUDGING: Includes the sequence and placement of images, the quality of the images and the completeness of the cutlines.

8. **Editorial Cartoon** - A single cartoon panel that visually illustrates an opinion on timely news issues. JUDGING: clear expression of an idea or viewpoint, creativity, technique

9. **Cartoon Strip/Panel** - A single cartoon strip or panel with a strong artist viewpoint. JUDGING: Clear artist viewpoint, creativity, technique.

10. **Illustration** - A single hand-drawn or computer-generated illustration or photo illustration that accompanies and complements works of text. Any related text should be submitted with entry. May also stand alone. JUDGING: Connection to text, visual representation of an idea/message, creativity, technique.

11. **Photo Illustration** - A single computer-generated or hand-drawn illustration that incorporates a photograph or a photograph that is staged to illustrate the story topic. All photos must have cutlines. JUDGING: Connection to text, visual representation of an idea/message, creativity, technique

12. **Static Information Graphic** - A single, visual graphic element that illustrates data or other information in a creative, compelling way. JUDGING: Effective data illustration, news value, creativity, organization, design

13. **Interactive Graphic** - An interactive graphic that displays a complex set of data, allowing users rich levels of interactivity in a creative, compelling way. Entry consists of a working link to exhibition of the interactive graphic. JUDGING: Effective data illustration, news value, creativity, organization, design, interactivity

PRODUCTION

(No more than two entries per school per category, unless otherwise stated.)

Entries consist of a PDF of the page(s) containing the individual entry. The individual entry MUST be identified by a RED ARROW on the PDF, unless otherwise stated. Audio and video files must be hosted on a third-party site such as Google Drive, YouTube or Soundcloud. You will then provide the link to those sources.

1. **Cover design - Newspaper** JUDGING: News value, Human Interest, Visual Hierarchy, News Judgment, Entry Points, Creativity, Rack Sale, Organization, Use of Space, Visual elements

2. **Op/Editorial page/spread design - Newspaper** JUDGING: News value, Human Interest, Visual Hierarchy, News Judgment, Entry Points, Creativity, Organization, Use of Space

3. **Feature page/spread design – Newspaper** JUDGING: News value, Human Interest, Visual Hierarchy, News Judgment, Entry Points, Creativity, Organization, Use of Space

4. **Sports page/spread design – Newspaper** JUDGING: News value, Human Interest, Visual Hierarchy, News Judgment, Entry Points, Creativity, Organization, Use of Space, Visual Elements

5. **Special Edition design - Print** JUDGING: News value, Human Interest, Visual Hierarchy, News Judgment, Entry Points, Creativity, Organization, Use of Space, Theme

6. **Special Edition design – Online** JUDGING: News value, Human Interest, Visual Hierarchy, News Judgment, Entry Points, Creativity, Organization, Use of Space, Theme

7. **Ad design - Static** JUDGING: Creativity, concept, target market, use of space, organization. clarity of writing

8. **Ad design - Interactive** JUDGING: Creativity, concept, target market, use of space, organization, interactivity, clarity of writing

9. **Advertising campaign** - Three to five ads, either in print or online or video or audio, for a single client. JUDGING: Creativity, concept, target market, use of space, organization, branding, message, clarity of writing

10. **Advertising/PSA/Promo - AUDIO** - This category recognizes excellence in the production of 30- to 60-second persuasive audio spots that originally aired on a radio station or student media website/social media account. An advertisement for a local client (not national) sells a specific product, service or corporate brand. A PSA encourages positive behavior among listeners. Promos raise awareness for a campus or community organization/event. JUDGING: On clarity in writing, adherence to time, production quality, creativity and innovative use of audio.

11. **Advertising/PSA/Promo - VIDEO** - This category recognizes excellence in the production of 30- to 60-second persuasive video spots that originally were televised or posted on a student media website/social media account. An advertisement for a local client (not national) sells a specific product, service or corporate brand. A PSA encourages positive behavior among viewers. Promos raise awareness for a campus or community organization/event. JUDGING: On clarity in writing, adherence to time, production quality, creativity and innovative use of video.

12. **Program Production - AUDIO** - This category recognizes excellence in the writing, directing, editing and production in telling the story. Entries may be news, sports, entertainment or specialty oriented. **This contest recognizes members of the production crew.** Entries should be no longer than 10 minutes and originally been aired or viewed online. (This may be a segment of a longer audio piece.) JUDGING: Students will be judged in multiple areas: Their ability to stack/produce the audio content. The written transitions and teases between stories. The quality of talent and selection of guests. The quality of the audio stories run during the newscast. The technical aspects of the production, such as consistent audio levels and appropriate bumps and breaks. The judges will consider the overall professional audio quality of the production.

13. **Program Production - VIDEO** - This category recognizes excellence in the writing, directing, editing and production quality/visual appeal (shooting, lighting, sound) in telling the story. Entries may be news, sports, entertainment or specialty oriented. **This contest recognizes members of the production crew.** Entries should be no longer than 10 minutes and originally been televised or viewed online. (This may be a segment of a longer video piece.) JUDGING: Students will be judged in multiple areas: Their ability to stack/produce the video content. The written transitions and teases between videos. The quality of talent and selection of guests. The quality of news packages, VOs, VO/SOTs, and RDRs. The graphics, switching, and technical ability of the crew. The judges will consider the overall professional look and feel of the newscasts.

14. **Overall Design - Newspaper** (one published issue only - of choice) JUDGING: News value, Human Interest, Visual Hierarchy, News Judgment, Entry Points, Creativity, Organization, Use of Space, variety in content

15. **Overall Design - Website** (one link to current homepage) JUDGING: News value, Human Interest, Visual Hierarchy, News Judgment, Entry Points, Creativity, Organization, Use of Space, Variety in Content, Interactivity

*NOTE: Same published issue may be used for Overall Design and Overall Excellence entries.

SPANISH – OPEN DIVISION

(No more than two entries per school per category, unless otherwise stated.)

1. Spanish News Story — An article in Spanish about a news event or issue. JUDGING: Thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives and news value.

2. Spanish Feature Story — A trend story, human-interest story, personality profile or any type of feature written in Spanish that is not general or breaking news. JUDGING: Quality of research and storytelling, clear writing and reporting, creative approach to the story and human interest.

3. Spanish Opinion Writing — A blog post, column or editorial written in Spanish. JUDGING: Thorough and original reporting, clear writing, creativity, news value and/or human interest.

4. Spanish Multimedia News Reporting — This category is for objective news packages that may air during a Spanish-language newscast or be posted online to a Spanish-language student media website. Topic coverage may include hard, single-issue, on-the-spot or beat coverage.

Packages must be under two minutes in length and contain at least THREE of the following components:

- Video
- Sound Bites/Actualities
- Reporter Narration
- Sourced Citizen Video
- Graphics
- Photos
- Animation
- Story Text or Hyperlinks

JUDGING: Thorough and original reporting, clear writing, multisource perspectives, strong production quality and overall interest.

Spanish Multimedia Feature Reporting — This category is for Spanish-language human-interest news packages that are not time-bound.

The package should not be longer than two minutes in length, tell the story in a creative manner and contain at least THREE of the following components:

- Video
- Sound Bites/Actualities
- Reporter Narration
- Sourced Citizen Video
- Graphics
- Photos
- Animation
- Story Text or Hyperlinks

The package may have originally been broadcast or posted online at a student media website.

JUDGING: Quality of research, clear writing and reporting, creative approach to the story and production quality.

OPEN DIVISION

(No more than two entries per school per category, unless otherwise stated.)

Cover Design – General Magazine
JUDGING: News value, human interest, visual hierarchy, news judgment, entry points, creativity, organization, use of space and visual elements.

Cover Design – Literary Magazine
JUDGING: Human interest, visual hierarchy, entry points, creativity, use of space and visual elements.

Literary Writing — This open-genre category recognizes excellence in a single piece of effective literary writing. Work may be submitted from poets, fiction writers, graphic lit storytellers, creative nonfiction writers and/or other writers who achieve beauty in a single piece of writing.
JUDGING: Quality of literary content, including imaginative language, strong imagery, compelling subject and the thoughtful use of literary convention.

Inside News Package/Spread Design – Yearbook
JUDGING: Use of copy, typography, graphics, color, photos and captions to create cohesive and creative design of a news topic.

Feature Page/Spread Design – Yearbook
JUDGING: Use of copy, typography, graphics, color, photos and captions to create cohesive and creative design of a feature topic.

Sports Page/Spread Design – Yearbook
JUDGING: Use of copy, typography, graphics, color, photos and captions to create cohesive and creative design of a sports topic.

Story Package Design – General Magazine or Literary Magazine
JUDGING: Human interest, visual hierarchy, entry points, creativity, use of space and visual elements.

Overall Design – General Magazine One published issue only (of choice).
JUDGING: Human interest, visual hierarchy, entry points, creativity, use of space and visual elements.

Overall Design – Literary Magazine One published issue only (of choice).
JUDGING: Human interest, visual hierarchy, entry points, creativity, use of space and visual elements.

Overall Design – Yearbook Upload PDF to a Google Drive. Copy that link into the Better BNC category. The judge may request a physical copy. If so, you will be notified and given the mailing address.

JUDGING: Cover design, human interest, visual hierarchy, entry points, creativity, use of space and visual elements.