

# The Cougar Staf

Clague Middle School, Ann Arbor

*The following information is provided by the adviser to help the critique judge better understand the media program. Please review this information before you enter your comments into the critique form.*

**Adviser:** Sara-Beth Badalamente

**Editor:** Annabella Mi and Jay Tavane

## IN THIS CRITIQUE, WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW:

*To help ensure the student staff and adviser get information from their critique that they can use right away, we ask them to provide up to three specific questions they have for you. We ask that you address these questions at some point in your critique - either in the specific area of the critique guide where it best fits and/or in comments at the end. This staff asks:*

Lead writing  
storytelling techniques  
overall content

## ISSUES FOR CRITIQUE

*Publications should have been produced during the current academic year.*

**11/04/2024**

I am submitting a PDF version of the edition as it appeared in print

R\_6lCslozIHsXa4P7\_Cougar\_Star\_Volume\_2\_Issue\_1\_2024\_November\_compressed.pdf

**01/06/2025**

I am submitting a PDF version of the edition as it appeared in print

R\_6lCslozIHsXa4P7\_Cougar\_Star\_Volume\_2\_Issue\_2\_2025\_January\_compressed.pdf

**02/12/2025**

I am submitting a PDF version of the edition as it appeared in print

R\_6lCslozIHsXa4P7\_Cougar\_Star\_Volume\_2\_Issue\_3\_2025\_February-compressed.pdf

## ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- **This school is a:** Middle School
- **School enrollment:** 500
- **Is the newspaper produced as part of a class or club?** club or extracurricular activity
- **Staff size:** 25

## ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

- **Frequency of publication:** Bi-Monthly (Every other month)
- **Printing facility:** Commercial printer // The Argus Press
- **Format (size/design):** Tabloid

- **Number of pages per typical issue:** 12
- **Does the publication contain paid advertising?** Yes
- **Website:** thecougarstar.com

## **Distribution & Circulation**

- **This publication is distributed:** Free to student and faculty
- **Price per copy, if sold:** 0
- **Total publication circulation:** 500
- **Number of teachers buying paper:** 0
- **Number of students buying paper:** 0
- **Number of copies sold to members of the public:** 0
- **Number of students and others receiving free copies:** 500

## **Income**

- **Circulation:** \$0
- **Advertising:** \$2500
- **School/Budget:** \$0
- **Fundraising:** \$500
- **Grants:** \$0
- **Other:** \$0
- **Total Income:** \$3000

## **Expenses**

- **Printing:** 2000
- **Supplies:** 0
- **Technology & Equipment:** \$0
- **Website or Digital Edition Expenses:** \$0
- **Training, Workshops and Conferences (paid for by the program):** \$0
- **Other:** \$500
- **Total Expenses:** \$2500

## **Breakdown of Student vs. Non-student Work**

*It takes a team to publish a newspaper or newsmagazine. The following information is provided to help us understand more about this program and the team of people who worked on it. Advisers are asked to estimate the amount of work done on the following elements by the student, adviser or others. There is no right or wrong answer here. Advisers may provide additional information about their selections in other areas of the entry form, including in the adviser's statement.*

**Copywriting** Completed by **Students:** 95%

Copywriting Completed by **Adviser:** 5%

Copywriting Completed by **Printer:** 0%

Copywriting Completed by **Other - :** 0%

**Headlines/Cutlines** Completed by **Students:** 95%

Headlines/Cutlines Completed by **Adviser:** 5%

Headlines/Cutlines Completed by **Printer:** 0%

Headlines/Cutlines Completed by **Other** - : 0%

**Editing** Completed by **Students**: 85%

Editing Completed by **Adviser**: 15%

Editing Completed by **Printer**: 0%

Editing Completed by **Other** - : 0%

**Proofreading** Completed by **Students**: 90%

Proofreading Completed by **Adviser**: 10%

Proofreading Completed by **Printer**: 0%

Proofreading Completed by **Other** - : 0%

**Photography** Completed by **Students**: 95%

Photography Completed by **Adviser**: 5%

Photography Completed by **Printer**>: 0%

Photography Completed by **Other** - >: 0%

**Photo Editing and Photoshop Work** Completed by **Students**: 100%

Photo Editing and Photoshop Work Completed by **Adviser**: 0%

Photo Editing and Photoshop Work Completed by **Printer**>: 0%

Photo Editing and Photoshop Work Completed by **Other** - >: 0%

*Who created page templates and developed standing design elements?*

**Design Concepts and Page Templates** Completed by **Students**: 90%

Design Concepts and Page Templates Completed by **Adviser**: 10%

Design Concepts and Page Templates Completed by **Printer**: 0%

Design Concepts and Page Templates Completed by **Other** - : 0%

*Who did the work to put content (photos, writing, etc.) onto pages?*

**Page Layout** Completed by **Students**: 90%

Page Layout Completed by **Adviser**: 10%

Page Layout Completed by **Printer**: 0%

Page Layout Completed by **Other** - : 0%

**Social Media Strategy, Content Production and Posting** Completed by **Students**: 95%

Social Media Completed by **Adviser**: 5%

Social Media Completed by **Other** - : 0%

## **Coverage Decisions**

*How does the program staff determine what to cover?*

Students work through a brainstorm process. They decide all content.

## **STUDENT PRESS FREEDOM**

**Judge:** *Students should not be penalized for censorship/press freedom issues by school administrators, but please feel free to offer suggestions to how to handle any circumstances reported here.*

**Have you had any censorship problems with your publication? If so, please explain.**

no

*Does your administration exercise prior review?* No

## **COPYRIGHT & PLAGIARISM**

*We take copyright issues seriously. MIPA has developed a [Copyright and Plagiarism Policy](#) governing copyright violations and plagiarism in contest entries. Programs may be penalized for violating copyright or failing to credit work that is not their own. Please contact the MIPA director if you have any questions.*

**Has the adviser reviewed [MIPA's Copyright and Plagiarism Policy](#)?** I have read MIPA's Copyright and Plagiarism policy

**To the best of the adviser's knowledge, is this publication free of copyright infringement and plagiarism?**

Yes

**What are your media program's sources of non-student photographs or other visuals?**

Contributed by non-staff students, teachers or school personnel, Creative Commons. Please see additional question below

**If you have a subscription to a photo service, what service(s) do you use?**

**If you use Creative Commons-licensed materials ...** Creative Commons has numerous licenses that restrict under what circumstances a work can be used and how it should be attributed. Have you verified that the terms of the specific Creative Commons license are being followed? **Yes**

## **ADVISER'S STATEMENT**

*The adviser has provided a brief statement for additional background on this publication. This statement may describe any special concerns, school situations or other circumstances the adviser and/or staff may have encountered. We hope this information will help you, as the judge, understand reasons why things were done in certain ways. **Critique judges are under no obligation to change scores because of the adviser statement** (standards do not change just because an adviser has an explanation for why they were not followed), but we do hope the adviser statement will help guide comments in the critique.*

### **Adviser's Statement - Website**

*If the publication also operates a website, we ask the adviser to explain how the website affects coverage decisions for what appears in print. This may impact your comments and/or your scores in Coverage.*

We use the website for jumps from the newspaper, but has separate content

### **Adviser's Statement - Additional Background**

To Whom it may concern,

Five years ago, my editor-in-chief of the high school newspaper let me know the middle school newspaper needed an adviser. So I contacted the principal and asked if I could restart the club. With his approval, the first meeting of The Cougar Star was the second week of January 2020. We printed one edition by the end of February. In the middle of our second edition, Covid hit. The crew stayed in touch through the end of the year but we were unable to continue printing due to schools being closed.

The next year our school did not return to in-person so our principal gave the green light and funding so we could start a website. We decided that was the best platform for our group. We meet once a week after school on Mondays from 3:15 to 4:30 p.m. and all students are able to join our club (there is no application).

At the end of last year, a seventh grade editor asked if we could print. I said, "If you can fundraise for it, I will support it." Within 24 hours she had received \$500 in donations. So we got to work. I taught students how to use InDesign and basics of newspaper design. We printed our first edition in May of last year. Going into this year, the editorial board wanted to continue both our website and printing. I am pleased to have you critique our middle school print edition---the first time it will ever be critiqued by MIPA.

Our acting principal supports freedom of the press and does not prior review our website.

We use photos we took along with artwork created by the students. They use Creative Commons and have a subscription to The Tribune News Service. They also use Spark, Canva, and Photoshop.

I couldn't be prouder of this group of students for helping bringing back our print edition. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do advising it.

-Sara-Beth Badalamente

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