

JEA/NSPA National High School Journalism Conventions

OVERVIEW:

The National High School Journalism Convention is a semiannual gathering of high school journalists and advisers co-sponsored by the Journalism Education Association and the National Scholastic Press Association. With typical attendance of more than 4,000 delegates, the JEA/NSPA convention is the largest gathering of student journalists in the country. The associations partner to prepare hundreds of practical and professional learning sessions, from high-profile keynotes to specific, problem-solving breakouts and hands-on workshops. Other convention activities include an exhibit hall, JEA's on-site National Student Media contests, NSPA's Best of Show contest, receptions, awards convocations, critiques and career roundtables.

WHO CAN ATTEND?

- **Trojan Epic and West Side Story editors** can attend with adviser permission, and interested staffers must submit an application to be considered. Students are required to take notes on breakout sessions, organize and present convention takeaways to staffers upon return. Non-editors can apply, but editorial applicants will be prioritized and an effort will be made to have representation from all three publications (West Side Story print, WSS online and Trojan Epic yearbook).
- **Students must be in good standing in the class** (produce consistent quality content, meet deadlines, collaborate well, be trustworthy and a strong leader, use work time effectively, behave professionally, etc.), have strong attendance records in ALL classes and be in good standing in ALL classes.
- **National conventions are ideal for motivated staff members who want to take their work to the next level.** Staff members interested in being game-changers and leaders on the Trojan Epic or West Side Story staff are especially encouraged to apply to attend these inspiring events. If a staffer isn't an editor but still hopes to attend a convention, the student can still complete an application for consideration.

WHEN IS THE CONVENTION?

Depending on student interest, cost and schedule – **we may not attend a convention every year.** We focus on attending **fall conventions instead of spring conventions** so students can apply what they learn to the current school year and to avoid conflicts with other school trips scheduled in the spring. **2025-26 conventions:**

- The fall convention is in [Nashville](#) Nov. 13-16, 2025
- **Future conventions:**
 - **Orlando** (Nov. 19-22, 2026)
 - **Boston** (Nov. 18-21, 2027)
 - **Washington, D.C.** (Nov 16-19, 2028)
 - **Notes:*
 - *Conventions take place Thursday-Saturday, but we usually leave on a Wednesday. We often return Saturday night and sometimes on Sunday mornings, depending on flight options.*
 - *We only attend conventions when there is enough student interest to warrant attending and when budget and schedules allow, so it is not guaranteed we will attend all of the listed conventions. Each convention is unique, offering hundreds of new breakout sessions, keynote speakers, competitions and opportunities.*

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Approximately \$1100-\$1500, which should include transportation, lodging, convention registration, TBD entertainment costs. I will share a more definite amount as we approach the convention date.

WHEN ARE PAYMENTS DUE?

- Payment #1: 1/3 of the cost on Sept. 3

- Payment #2 1/3 of the cost on Oct. 1
- Payment #3 1/3 of the cost on Oct. 29

FAQ:

- **How do I apply to attend?** Students need to complete the [application form](#) by the last day of school. If students didn't apply at that time, there may still be room, so they should talk to Ms. Whittaker ASAP.
- **How much does it cost, and what's included in that cost?** Approximately \$1100-\$1500, depending on the amount of students attending and the convention city (if we travel by bus or plane).
- **What is the itinerary for the trip?** Each convention is in a different city, so the itinerary varies by convention. I will include a detailed itinerary as we get closer, but here are some previous itineraries for reference: [Philadelphia \(2024\)](#), [St. Louis \(2022\)](#), [Los Angeles \(2022\)](#), [Chicago \(2018\)](#), [Seattle \(2017\)](#), [Los Angeles \(2016\)](#), [Indianapolis \(2016\)](#), [Boston \(2013\)](#)
- **Is it worth it?** Absolutely. I've attended 20+ conventions over the years, and the students and I always bond as a group and come back incredibly inspired and ready to put what we learned into action.
- **Who chaperones? How many kids usually attend?** I chaperone students (sometimes with my parents and/or husband), and generally 6-20 students attend each convention. We sometimes travel with the City High journalism adviser/chaperones/staff, as well. [If you are interested in being a chaperone or backup chaperone in case of illness, please reach out.](#)
- **What permission slips do I need to sign? What are the rules?** Please return signed [permission slips](#) with your first payment.
- **What transportation do we take?** If the convention is close, we take a charter bus. If it's further away, we fly out of the Cedar Rapids airport. In the past, we've flown to conventions in Philadelphia, San Diego, Seattle, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Denver, Washington, D.C., Boston, Orlando, San Francisco and San Antonio. We rented a bus to attend conventions in St. Louis, Kansas City, Indianapolis and Chicago.
- **How do students get around once you're at the convention?** We generally stay in the convention hotel or very close by. Depending on the convention city, we will take shuttles, taxis, Ubers and/or subway trains to navigate between airports, convention centers, hotels and other activities. As we get closer to the convention date, check the specific convention's detailed itinerary because it varies by convention city. No matter where we go, rest assured that we will do a lot of walking.
- **How much school will students miss?** Students will miss one to three days of school. We generally depart on a Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning and return on Saturday night or Sunday.
- More information:
 - fall.journalismconvention.org
 - spring.journalismconvention.org
 - studentpress.org/nsipa
 - jea.org
 - [Why conventions matter](#)