

ASSIGNING STAFF TO PAGES FROM THE START

PRO TIPS TO STRATEGIZE & MAXIMIZE IN eDESIGN

Some advisers prefer to assign pages to students as the year progresses, which works as long as you have coverage teams and photographers who are getting content for all pages all year. If that is not the case for you, consider these benefits to assigning ALL the pages of your book to staff members at the START of the year

IMPROVE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF PAGE CONTENT

When staff members know from the get-go their assignments, they can be looking for photo opps all year before the pages are due.

AN EXAMPLE — Let's say Wrestling is due in February after their season is over, but they hold a car wash in October.

Missed Photos — If you don't assign a staff member to Wrestling until closer to the deadline, it's likely no one will take photos of the car wash.

Vague Answers — Plus, if you wait to ask wrestlers about the car wash in February, they are likely to forget some of the details and to give you blah-blah answers to your questions about it.

On the other hand . . .

Quality Content — When staff members DO know they are assigned to a topic near the beginning of the year, they can be on the lookout all year long for coverage.

AN IDEA — A great use of time during the first month of school is for yearbook staff members to meet with contacts for each assignment. Doing so will reduce stress AND improve quality and quantity.

Contact these people:

TEAMS — coaches, captains, managers, booster leaders

CLUBS AND ORGS - advisors/sponsors, student leaders

FINE ARTS - Directors, teachers, student leaders

ACADEMICS - Department chairs, counselors, admin

EVENTS - leaders, organizers

To achieve those goals:

ESTABLISH YOUR PURPOSE — Introduce yourself

DISCOVER THEIR PREFERENCES — Ask them if they have any preferences/suggestions. Don't make any promises, but be a good listener and strive to honor their preferences if it fits your coverage goals and journalistic principles. Doing so will help you reduce friction and increase satisfaction after distribution.

IDENTIFY A PERSON — Find the best person to be the contact.

CREATE A PLAN — Establish a list of important events/topics to be covered and plan the who/what/where/when/how the content will be gathered.

PREVENT PAGES FROM GETTING FORGOTTEN

Things get busy in Yearbook Land, and if pages go unassigned, it's possible they could get overlooked until it's too close for your comfort. Assigning all pages to a staff member at the start of the year makes sure every single page has someone who knows it's their job to create that page.

CREATE CLEAR COMMUNICATION

Sometimes there can be confusion about who is doing what, especially when there's shared responsibility. This can easily happen with pages the editors want to create (the opening, dividers, index, colophon, closing, etc.). A way to prevent confusion is to check the "Assign" box next to editor's name in the Staff Assignments field so that the editor's name will show up on the ladder and will be included in their filter. That will prevent one editor from saying, "I thought the other editors were going to create that page."

BE READY TO ADJUST YOUR PLAN

Keep in mind that basically all production plans — even the most thorough ones — need to be modified throughout the year.

You should *plan well* and *plan well ahead* anyway because doing so is the very best way to minimize stress and maximize quality.

Set aside time for frequent inspections of your staff's progress, and adjust the due dates and staff assignments as needed to stay on track.

The filter menu is a speedy way to monitor productivity and spot pages that need adjustments made to due dates or staff assignments.

To learn more, search eDesign Help for "The Power of Filtering the Ladder."