

# Recruiting *primer*

**Compiled by Elizabeth Braden, CJE**

A solid, reputable yearbook program will attract talented, enthusiastic and dedicated students to the staff. To build such a program, you need those students. So the best place to start this entire process is with an organized recruiting process that helps you find the best students.

Use the tips and information in this primer to set up your process for recruiting and interviewing potential staff members. While the process is generally provided here, list the steps that need to be taken and when they should occur. Then you will have a plan in place that is ready for you to use each year. Remember to include fun ideas for notifying students they have been selected – a few are listed at the end.

Whether running a high school or middle school program as a class or a club, use these ideas as stated, adapt as needed or brainstorm to develop more ideas.

## Recruiting

If your yearbook program is a class, recruiting needs to begin before students select their classes for the next year. For clubs, consider recruiting editors and managers in the spring, so they are in place to begin work before the next school year starts.

Remember, yearbook is competing with AP classes, sports and jobs. The students you want on staff are usually the ones involved in a lot of activities or taking a heavy class load. Think about how to show these students what they can gain from the experience of being on the yearbook staff.

Ask teachers about other students – a B English student who hasn't found her place in high school may blossom in the yearbook room. A freshman photography student who is constantly taking pictures may need to be told that yearbook is the best place to improve. Ask counselors about students with near-perfect attendance – many times students who understand the importance of attendance are people who understand dedication.

## Help with recruiting

Walsworth has created recruiting materials, such as posters, fliers with staff applications, stickers, locker notes/info cards, and social media graphics, to help you seek out and find the best students to be on staff. Some items are available as editable PDFs so you can personalize for your school, and are available for download at [walsworthyearbooks.com/marketing](http://walsworthyearbooks.com/marketing). For customization with school colors or other copy, email [schoolmarketing@walsworth.com](mailto:schoolmarketing@walsworth.com) with your request.

Posters and fliers may be what you need to attract the attention of students who would be good yearbook staffers, but never thought about it before. You will find these posters, fliers, staff applications and other recruiting items, in the recruitment materials at [walsworthyearbooks.com/recruiting](http://walsworthyearbooks.com/recruiting).



**MOST WANTED**  
**PHOTOGRAPHERS**  
LIKE TAKING PICTURES? SEE PHOTO OPS EVERYWHERE?  
YEARBOOK NEEDS YOUR HELP!  
**TURN YOURSELF IN**  
To (name) in (room number)  
HAVE FUN · GET CREATIVE · GAIN EXPERIENCE  
Walsworth yearbooks  
walsworthyearbooks.com

| Find students to recruit  | Create posters   | Fliers, invitations, notes   | Speaking engagements  |
|---|--|--|---|
| Have current staff brainstorm for names of potential staff members.   | Use posters from <a href="#">Walsworth's recruitment materials</a> (see previous page).  | Create a flier, or use the flier, special event cards or stickers in <a href="#">Walsworth's recruitment materials</a> .   | Ask permission for a staff member to briefly speak to English, art, Intro to Journalism or other classes. Have them take applications.  |
| Ask English, art, photography, technology, business or marketing teachers for the names of students who excel in their classes.   | List reasons why students should join yearbook, for example: Reason #398 to join yearbook: you get better food in this class than in FACS. | Have staff write personal notes to students they recommend for staff, encouraging them to try yearbook.  | Hold an informational meeting before or after school so students can meet editors and learn about the yearbook process. Interested students can ask questions and pick up applications. |
| Make friends with the counselors. They can provide names, and maybe arrange schedules so students can fit in yearbook class.  | Use quotes from current staff members about why yearbook rocks.  | Create formal, printed invitations to invite students to apply for staff to make them feel special.  | Take editors to meet with Communications or English classes at feeder schools. Bring candy or reporters' notebooks to give away.  |
| Email teachers to make it easy for them to respond with names. Describe traits you are looking for in potential applicants, such as abilities to write, be creative, manage time, lead and be a team player.                      | "Yearbook Wants You" (similar to the Uncle Sam "I want you" campaign)  | Create personal invitations for recruits for a pizza lunch, telling them only it's an event for outstanding students. At the lunch, editors talk about being on yearbook and tell the students they are being recruited.                               | While editors make good recruiters, so are students who were hesitant about taking yearbook at first but now love it.   |
| Send emails to teachers at feeder schools (intermediate, freshman center or middle schools) and ask them to promote journalism in their classes and recommend students.   | Create a poster invitation to invite interested students to attend an informational meeting to learn what it's like to be on staff.        | Have staff members use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to reach out to potential staffers.   |   |
| After emailing teachers at school, leave a \$5 gift card (Starbucks) and thank-you note in their box, thanking them for their help. Email them a few days later if they have not responded, asking if they enjoyed the gift card. |  | Have your current staff make <a href="#">locker signs</a> for students they recommend, encouraging them to try yearbook.   |   |
| Create a recruitment video for the daily announcements and for posting on social media.   |  | What to say? Tell them their good work has been noticed by you, a staff member or teacher; invite them to visit the yearbook room; invite them to pick up an application; invite them to talk to a current staff member about what it's like on staff. |   |

## Ask for help

Contact teachers by email to make it easy for them to respond with names. Describe the qualities and traits you are looking for in potential applicants, such as writing, creativity, time management and leadership.

**YEARBOOK STAFF APPLICATION**

<School name>  
<Advisor name>

**Directions:** Fill in all information requested below. If you need additional space, attach a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper. You will also need at least two recommendations to complete your application. Give the attached recommendation forms to two teachers to complete. One recommendation must be from a Language Arts teacher or a Photography teacher; the other may be from any other teacher you have had in the last year. Completed applications should be returned to: \_\_\_\_\_

All applications and recommendations must be turned in by: \_\_\_\_\_

1. List the two teachers who can give you a recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Grade level next year (circle one): sophomore junior senior

4. Cumulative G.P.A. \_\_\_\_\_

| Year in H.S.                | L.A. Course | Teacher | Letter grade:<br>1st semester | Letter grade:<br>2nd semester |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Freshman                    |             |         |                               |                               |
| Sophomore                   |             |         |                               |                               |
| Junior                      |             |         |                               |                               |
| Senior                      |             |         |                               |                               |
| Other<br>L.A.<br>electives? |             |         |                               |                               |

## Applications

Student applications not only provide information and insight about the quality of the applicant, they demonstrate a desire by the student to be on staff and give the student a glimpse of life on staff.

1. If a student misses the deadline for getting their application in, do not allow them to be on staff. It's an indicator that the student can't meet deadlines.
2. A student may read the application and determine on their own that this isn't the class or club for them.
3. Parents may look at the application and determine this is not the class or club for their child.

Consider sending the application with the notes to possible recruits, as well as to counselors and other teachers who may know good candidates. Some items to include on the application might be: why they are interested in yearbook, other commitments they will have next year, how they feel about working in groups, and their suggestions for improving the book next year.

Help parents understand the commitment that yearbook requires from their child. Include a Parent Contract or consent form with the application. See an example of one in the "New Advisers Field Guide to Yearbook," which can be downloaded at [yearbookhelp.com](http://yearbookhelp.com).

A staff application that is ready to use is available with the other recruiting materials at [walsworthyearbooks.com/recruiting](http://walsworthyearbooks.com/recruiting). Use it as-is or adapt it to suit your needs.

The ideas contained here came from Elaine Grace, former yearbook adviser at Monarch High School, Louisville, Colo.; Crystal Kazmierski, yearbook adviser at Arrowhead Christian Academy, Redlands, Calif.; Bailey McBride, former yearbook adviser at Bishop Kelley High School, Tulsa, Okla.; Kim Praser, former yearbook adviser at Thornton Fractional South High School, Lansing, Ill.; Allie Staub, yearbook adviser at Westfield Middle School, Westfield, Ind.; Jill Chittum, former yearbook adviser and current Walsworth Yearbooks sales representative and field trainer; and Walsworth's *Yearbook Suite* curriculum, including the "New Advisers Field Guide to Yearbook."

## Selecting your staff

Interviews are a great way to evaluate and select staff members. Consider including your editors in the process as a way to empower them and to get more information about applicants. If pre-selection interviews are not an option, consider interviewing students in the spring for editor positions and in the fall to fill other key positions.

### Selecting your leadership team

- Select your top editors and the marketing manager first, so they can help select the rest of the staff.
- Even if you know who the next editor-in-chief will be, make them fill out an application and go through an interview to ensure they are still dedicated.
- Consider using a committee to help you select next year's leadership, comprised of this year's editors, or maybe a few teachers if more than two students want the job.
- Start with these questions, and add others depending on the editor or manager position being filled. Make copies of this chart to use.

| Questions for future editors/managers   | Note answers here |
|---|-------------------|
| What did you like the <b>best</b> about this year's book?   |                   |
| What did you like the <b>least</b> about this year's book?  |                   |
| Explain your vision for next year's yearbook.   |                   |
| Explain your vision for marketing and promoting next year's yearbook.   |                   |
| Explain how you believe you are able to lead and give direction to people who are your peers. Give an example.  |                   |
| How would you handle this situation? (Give them a hypothetical situation and ask them to talk you through how they would handle it, such as plagiarism, a conflict between two staff members or an angry parent.) |                   |

Once the leadership team is selected, assist them in interviewing remaining students for staff.

- Keep the interviews short.
- Schedule time afterward to discuss the interview with your editor. For example, schedule 30 minutes for the interview, using 15-20 minutes for the interview and the remaining time for discussion of the candidate.
- Provide direction to the editors prior to interviews, as this may be their first time interviewing applicants. Remember, this is also a great learning opportunity for them.
- Make a copy of this chart to use if you need it.

| Staff interview questions   | Note answers here |
|---|-------------------|
| What did you like the <b>best</b> about this year's book?   |                   |
| What did you like the <b>least</b> about this year's book?  |                   |
| What personal strengths would you bring to the staff?   |                   |
| Describe your impression of what it is like to be on staff.   |                   |
| Describe a situation in which you did something to help a "team."   |                   |
| Can you complete work independently under deadline?   |                   |
| Describe your attitude under pressure.  |                   |
| Note red-flag items on the application, such as other commitments, and ask the student to clarify whether they can meet expectations, such as attending workshops and work nights, selling ads and meeting deadlines. |                   |

## Make notification fun

Start next year's staff off right by creatively informing them they are part of the team. Make them feel welcome and a part of something special.

- Make a fun poster, listing the names of next year's staff and putting it up outside the yearbook room.
- Make formal announcement cards or candy-grams and hand-deliver them.
- Create "I made the <year> yearbook staff" pins, and hand-deliver them to pin them on.
- Make a video for the daily announcements. If you have told no one, make it like a big-reveal. Or if the new members know, use footage of them being pinned, or use a clip of an interview with the new editor-in-chief explaining her direction for the yearbook.