

# BECOMING A MENTOR



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Thank you for considering Walsworth's Adviser Mentor program! Taking a first-year yearbook adviser under your wing will be an incredibly rewarding experience. You've spent years cultivating your skills, now it's time to share your knowledge. Think back to your first year on the job. How much easier would it have been if you'd had a mentor?

To be clear, you are NOT replacing the Walsworth Yearbooks sales representative. They'll still be the front line for all things yearbook. However, you have insider knowledge. You will be providing unique perspective to complement the rep's services. You know how to handle grading, deal with parents and work with the school administration. You also can provide encouragement and a calm voice.

If you're an experienced adviser looking to share your wealth of knowledge, there are a few requirements. Walsworth asks that you:

- Be a current Walsworth customer
- Have three or more years of experience under your belt
- Commit to contact once a month – meet with your mentee for coffee, chat on the phone or simply send an email or text.
- Stick with it for the entire school year

You won't be left "high and dry" if you agree to be a mentor – Walsworth will provide resources to you. You'll receive the Mentor Minute email. This bi-weekly bulletin is full of ideas, tips and suggestions.

You'll also have exclusive access to Jim Jordan. Jim is an award-winning, nationally recognized adviser from Del Campo High School in Fair Oaks, California. He's learned a lot in his 35+ years working with the *Decamhian* yearbook.

Walsworth has compiled some tips from Jim to make mentoring easier for you.



## PLAN YOUR YEAR

During your monthly advisee check-in, see how they're doing in the following areas:

- **Ladder** — Is the ladder in place? Does the yearbook team know what they plan to cover and what will be on each spread? This can be somewhat fluid, but it needs to be complete early in the year. It's reasonable to start planning before the school year begins.
- **Training** — How is training going? Does the staff know how to write captions as more and more photos are being taken? It's a good idea to have all members of the staff write captions for the best photos weekly. Has your mentee made clear what type of writing will be used in the book?
- **Photography** — How is the image gathering going? How is the photo quality?
- **Caption writing** — Are staff members writing captions that can actually go into the book?
- **Theme package** — How is the design of the yearbook cover, endsheet, title pages, theme pages and dividers going? Is the theme clear? Will readers see theme elements that tie pages together?
- **Deadline 1** — When is it? How many pages are in it? What mini deadlines has the mentee set to be sure the yearbook team is on track to meet it?
- **Fun** — Is your mentee building fun and team building into the process?
- **Ads and mug pages** — Your mentee may want to consider starting with these pages on the first deadline. They are a great place to begin and build up the number of pages submitted.
- **Support** — Ask your mentee — what are they most concerned about and how can you best support them? Tell them that you have been there too and it's going to be all right. Let them know what a special role they fill and how they are going to feel when the book comes out.

And remember, just be there to listen.

## PRIMARY YEARBOOK PRODUCTION MONTHS

As you move into the heart of yearbook production, Jim suggests you review these topics with your mentee:

- **Connect** with their yearbook rep and be sure pages are completed correctly, properly prepared and ready to upload. Tell your mentee it's OK to ask their sales rep to come in the first time they upload pages. Frequently, there is a glitch that needs to be worked through.



- **Double and triple check** the ladder to be sure they have not forgotten anything. Compare last year's index to this year's ladder. Let your mentee know it's a good idea to gather all the editors together for the final ladder check. Nothing is worse than discovering in March that you've left out a sport or club and have nowhere to cover it.
- **Review** with the staff how things went on Deadline One. What worked well? What part of the process needs improving? This is a crucial step that needs to be in place. This is where important learning can take place that will really make an impact in making Deadline Two even more successful.
- **Celebrate** what they've accomplished when submitting pages for the first time. Your mentee must keep pushing forward to make the next deadline, but remind them to take time to celebrate all they've done. They can also recognize Deadline One superstars — those who have done amazing work and finished everything that was needed.
- **Recognize** that the first deadline in many ways is the most difficult and that it is an amazing accomplishment to actually have completed pages. At the start of the year, the editors and staff have literally thousands of decisions that need to be made. Possibilities are infinite. With each deadline, the number of decisions remaining gets dramatically reduced until the final deadline, when all decisions have been made and the book is complete! Remind your mentee how much they've accomplished by meeting this deadline.

At the start of second semester, continue to provide support to your mentee with these tips they can use with their students.

- **Celebrate a job well done.** Start by giving them a big pat on the back for getting this far. Jim says the two most difficult parts of the production process, for him, are always submitting the first pages in the fall, then making the big deadline before winter break. Hopefully your mentee and their team are on track. If so, that's worth celebrating.
- **The end is near.** Remind them that when school starts back in January, there are barely three months left until the book will be done. Hooray!





- **Chart the course.** Jim used to draw big calendars on the board for January, February, March and April. His team would revisit the deadline schedule, discuss every spread that was left and determine when each could be done. They'd then slot each spread into one of the deadlines. This method can make everything seem much more doable.
- **It can be done. It has been done. It will be done.** The previous step serves as a reminder. To a new adviser, it may seem like an insurmountable amount of work. However, it was finished last year, the year before that, and every year before that. Build up your mentee's confidence. They will get every page done on time. Encourage them to take it one page at a time.
- **Make time for fun.** Your mentee has time to enjoy themselves a little, but may need to be reminded. Even when stressed, they can take a few moments to celebrate birthdays, bring in pizza or play a game. Even when it seems like the worst time to do it, stop and play.
- **Plan to attend a spring convention.** Have you ever benefited from a spring journalism convention? Your mentee would, too! Depending on your experience, you might be able to recommend some good programs. In addition to picking up useful skills and knowledge, it will also be good for your mentee and staff to see how many other kids across the country are working just as hard as they are, maybe even harder, to create a quality yearbook.
- **Encourage. Encourage. Encourage.** Just being in touch with your mentee is a great encouragement to them. Celebrate them and what they are doing. And don't forget to celebrate yourself.

## SHARE RESOURCES WITH YOUR MENTEE

Walsworth has lots of resources for new advisers and experienced advisers can benefit from them, too. Make sure your mentee knows what is available and where to find it.

- The Walsworth Yearbooks [website](#) is a one-stop shop for all things yearbook.
- If your mentee uses Walsworth's Online Design program to create and submit pages, be sure to have them check out these new [30-second tutorial](#) videos on [yearbookhelp.com](#).



- Download [12 Essential Yearbook Tips for the New Adviser](#). This free eBook offers a wide variety of helpful tips such as developing a relationship with your school administration, building a support network and understanding the financial aspects of yearbook.
- Browse [Idea File magazine](#). This print and online publication is published twice a year – in the fall and in the spring. It contains a wealth of articles and training tips on all aspects of creating a yearbook.
- Share Walsworth’s [Parent Email Program \(PEP\)](#), which will help your mentees [reach more parents](#) about purchasing a yearbook and ads.
- Walsworth’s [Possibilities](#) book catalogues hundreds of great examples of award-winning books around the country. This is a great place to visit when searching for inspiration.
- Walsworth’s new eBook [Our Best Advice, Lessons for New Advisers from the Yearbook Experts](#), provides hundreds of helpful tips from experienced advisers from around the country.
- [Yearbook Suite](#) is a curriculum made up of 11 units. These include copywriting, coverage, photography, theme development, staff management, design, captions and headline, and more. [Yearbook Suite](#) is filled with lesson plans and student-focused interactive activities. This is the best place for a new adviser to start learning about teaching yearbook journalism and creating an outstanding yearbook.
- Our “[New Advisers Field Guide to Yearbook](#),” which is part of the [Yearbook Suite](#), explains everything first-year advisers need to know, as well as how and when to do it, to succeed their first year. It also provides great tips and serves as a refresher for veteran advisers, too.

## OUTSIDE INSPIRATION

Your mentee might need to be reminded they’re not alone. You’ve done this, and thousands of fellow teachers and yearbook advisers do it every year. If your mentee needs a little additional inspiration:

The 1999 JEA Yearbook Adviser of the Year, Susan Massy, from Shawnee Mission Northwest High School in Shawnee, Kansas, has some tips on team-building.



*“We’ve been doing a lot student-led team building in the past couple of weeks. We had a fashion show where all the clothes had to be made out of newspaper. The students worked in teams to ‘design an outfit’ and dress their model. Then we did the Journalism Olympics (France won) complete with country flags and national anthems for the winners of each event. The Olympic thing was modeled off of the Office Olympics from the show ‘The Office.’ We had a blast. We also came up with some unique ways to get students to get quiet. Instead of me doing the ‘clap once if you can hear me, clap twice if you can hear me’ thing or just yelling for students to be quiet, we now do call and response. The editor sings ‘Red Robin’ and the staff answers, ‘Yummmm!’ or the editor yells, ‘Shark bait’ and the staff responds, ‘ooo-ah-ah.’ Another one: the editor sings, ‘Sweet Caroline’ and the staff responds, ‘bup bup baaaah.’ The kids came up with this idea and it’s been great fun.”*

Walsworth’s Key Accounts Manager Mike Taylor, CJE, a former award-winning adviser, suggests yearbook advisers use their position to develop caring young adults.

*“I was determined to teach my students that giving a portion of themselves to the world around them is more important than constantly taking from that world.*

*Twice a year, my staffs would gather together to work as a team to give back to our community. We didn’t do this for headlines or acclaim, we did this to be decent human beings. I hoped I could instill acts of kindness into the group who are now doctors, teachers and other professionals living throughout the world.*

*Instead of giving gifts to each other during our holiday parties, we adopted a needy family from our local elementary school counselors. No one knew the family and did not have to.*

- *The school gave me a list of needs, which included groceries.*
- *They gave us the age, gender and clothing sizes for each family member.*
- *They gave us a list of wishes for each family member, ranging from socks to fun gifts.*



*Once we had this list, my staff gathered the money, gift cards and donations and proceeded to have a blast gathering everything on our lists. The editors and any staff member who wanted to go went out one night and purchased everything. The next day, at our staff party, they wrapped all the gifts and prepared for delivery.*

*Our other Giving Event came during the yearly Relay for Life events held in our community. Our staff would participate and have a great time doing so. So much so that Relay for Life Chairman was the second highest coveted position next to the EIC of the book.*

*Organization of both events was simple and took very little time. I placed students in charge. (By the way, this is a great way to see leadership potential for next year's EIC.)*

*The only thing I would do is communicate with the elementary school counselors to keep the family's personal business private."*

#### **JOIN IN**

Does being a mentor sound right for you? Please contact your sales rep. In becoming a mentor, you'll be able to use the title Walsworth Adviser Mentor on official correspondence. Mentors also receive special recognition in *Idea File* magazine, and on Walsworth's website and social media channels.