Read Mike Taylor’s yearbook tips for going back to school

Written by Sarah Scott

It’s the beginning of the year, and you and your staff are falling (or will fall) into a routine. You’re deciding on coverage and settling into a rhythm.

Hopefully you looked at [The Mike Taylor Back-to-school Checklist for New Advisers](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/mike-taylor-back-to-school-checklist-ebook/) before the school year began. If you haven’t, check it out! There’s lots of useful information from Mike, Walsworth’s journalism specialist and a Certified Journalism Educator, and he covers a few things you should focus on.

Staff and parent contracts

Get these written as soon as possible. Establish a set of consequences for failure by students to follow the guidelines.

It is important that all involved agree on a set of expectations from the beginning. The first of these expectations is that this publication is a student-driven, student-created product. Use the forms, such as student and parent contracts, found in the “[New Advisers Field Guide to Yearbook](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/units/new-advisers-field-guide-yearbook/)” or [create](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/5-simple-ideas-for-staff-manual-contents/) [your](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/habits-of-highly-effective-yearbook-staffs/) [own](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/guide-your-yearbook-with-a-staff-manual/) [manual](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/ingredients-for-a-hearty-yearbook-staff-manual/).

You may want to begin with an informal meeting between returning staff and editors. You can do this one-by-one or as a group. Listen, but do not promise that you will continue the program as a status-quo situation. Let them know you are ready to listen, talk and work as a team, but you are the new adviser.

Next, hold a formal meeting. Include parents and your administration. In this meeting, you should explain your expectation, your plan to communicate with everyone and consequences for non-compliance to the rules and formats of your program.

Keep the meeting light, but keep it structured and informative. You may also want to spend some time coming up with a P.O.P.S. Program.

Seek outside help

* **Parents**

What is P.O.P.S.? Parents of Publication Students.

This is a simple program where parents sign up to bring food and snacks during yearbook work nights. Set up a calendar of planned work nights and let parents volunteer to bring in food.

A P.O.P.S program can go much further. Parents can chaperon during field trips and conventions, raise funds for equipment and serve as a sounding board for growing the program. Like all booster-type programs, you are still in charge of the day-to-day activities; they are simply a resource and a help system.

* **Photographer**

Ask your school photographer if they will help train your staff photographers before any sporting events.

* **Social Media**

As you begin lesson planning, check out Walsworth’s [*Yearbook Suite*](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/resources/yearbook-suite/) curriculum, which covers the topics you need to teach.

Walsworth has an extensive social media presence. You will be able to access some great ideas and inspiration on the [Walsworth Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/walsworthybks/) and on [Ask Mike Taylor](https://www.pinterest.com/taylormjc/)’s many boards.

You should also follow Walsworth on Twitter [@yearbookforever](https://twitter.com/yearbookforever) and Mike Taylor at [@yrbkmiketaylor](https://twitter.com/yrbkmiketaylor). Feel free to #askMike all your yearbook questions. Your Walsworth sales representative may also have a social media presence. All these social media accounts are updated regularly.

Use your publication’s social media to sell books and gather information and photos. Find out how to create, use and learn from your social media in the [*Yearbook Suite*curriculum](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/resources/yearbook-suite/) unit called “[Engage Your Audience and Sell More Yearbooks with Strategic Marketing](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/units/engage-your-audience-and-sell-more-yearbooks-with-strategic-marketing/).”

* **Walsworth**

Beyond social media, Walsworth can be a wonderful [resource](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/resources/new-adviser-content/) for new advisers. The company has several useful eBooks on their website, including [12 Essential Yearbook Tips](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/new-advisers-get-12-tips-first-year-new-walsworth-ebook/), [The Big Book of Themes](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/the-list-every-yearbook-staff-needs-the-big-book-of-yearbook-theme-ideas/) and [Our Best Advice for New Advisers](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/walsworth-yearbooks-releases-new-best-advice-ebook/).

Walsworth has a whole website devoted to yearbook help. The address is easy to remember – [yearbookhelp.com](https://login.walsworthyearbooks.com/login). The site provides information on every yearbook topic for both students and advisers.

You can sign up for the monthly e-newsletter, [Timely Tips](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/get-yearbook-tips-month-new-timely-tips-email/), which features information relevant to the time of year. Each email includes a list of reminders that advisers need to be aware of that month.

Walsworth’s [Parent Email Program](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/resources/pep/) – known as PEP – sends emails straight to the parents at your school. It can be a great resource for helping you sell yearbooks.

Walsworth hosts monthly webinars, which cover a wide range of topics. If you’re not able to catch the live webinar, they [post](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/watch-the-replay-of-may-webinar-why-workshops-work/) [replays](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/catch-replay-march-distribution-webinar/) on their [website](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/watch-replay-recruiting-webinar/).

Consider attending an [Elite Weekend](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/resources/workshops/elite-weekend/). These workshops are a great opportunity to develop your yearbook theme with your editors.

* **Professional organizations**

Finally, there are organizations for you, your students and your publication.

The [Journalism Education Association](http://jea.org/) (JEA) is a group devoted to assisting journalism teachers. They have an extensive library of publications in their book store and offer certifications. Along with the [National Scholastic Press Association](http://studentpress.org/nspa/) (NSPA), they offer two huge conventions each spring and fall.

JEA will also be able to point you toward your state or regional association. These associations will offer state conventions and even regional or local workshops.

[NSPA](http://studentpress.org/nspa/) provides journalism education to students, teachers and advisers throughout the United States. Their goal is to “promote the standards and ethics of good journalism as accepted and practiced by print, broadcast and electronic media in the United States.” They offer writing, editorial, and legal information of interest to student journalists.

The [Columbia Scholastic Press Association](http://cspa.columbia.edu/) (CSPA) is an international student press association. Their goal is to unite student journalists and faculty advisers at schools and college. CSPA hosts educational conferences and idea exchanges, and publishes text books. This group holds three annual competitions and conventions.

The [Student Press Law Center](http://www.splc.org/) offers a source for regularly updated [legal guide](http://www.splc.org/page/knowledge-base) and answers to your questions about the First Amendment.

You may want to contact your local [Society of Professional Journalists](https://www.spj.org/). They will happily supply guest speakers and opportunities.

Define your role

Remember, your title is adviser. This is not *your* publication. You are there to guide the students in creating *their* publication. Here is a list of your duties:

* Create an environment conducive to learning and production of the publication.
* Track the progress of the editors and all staff members to maintain an accurate publication that meets deadlines and budget restrictions.
* Teach both basic and advanced skills so your publication meets deadlines with accuracy and efficiently.
* Establish a system for evaluating both the editors and the staff members on assignments.

Let us help

We want to help make your school year as streamlined and uncomplicated as possible. In addition to the resources listed above, the [Adviser Mentor Program](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/resources/adviser-mentor-program/) is a great way to develop a relationship with an experienced adviser.

There are many reasons to fall in love with yearbook, and you’ll discover them as the year goes on. The start of the year is usually the scariest part for new advisers, so reach out to your sales rep and use the Walsworth resources that are available, especially [The Mike Taylor Back-to-school Checklist for New Advisers](https://www.walsworthyearbooks.com/mike-taylor-back-to-school-checklist-ebook/).

Happy yearbooking!Bottom of Form