

adviser academy

Day 1: Wednesday, June 24

*All times listed are in Central Time

Opening

9:50 a.m.

Opening Session

Kate and Tripp Walsworth, Sabrina Cady, CJE, Jim Jordan, Danielle Finch, Walsworth Yearbooks
It all starts here as we kick things off with a message from the team about the ins and outs of Adviser Academy.

New Advisers

Morning Session

10-11 a.m.

Beginner Advisers, Day 1

New Adviser Track with Leland Mallett, CJE, Kathy Beers, Walsworth Yearbooks
New to yearbook? Still learning? Looking to refresh your skills? This is the track for you. Don't be intimidated by the all-day run time; we'll take plenty of breaks.

Experienced Advisers

10-11 a.m.

Long-form Session

Diving Into the Deep End with Theme

Theme with Makena Busch, CJE, Mead High School

If your staff has ever struggled to connect visuals to the verbal, this session is for you. Participants will take a deep dive into the creative and unique ways staff members can layer and weave the theme visually from the first page to the last spread. The session explores how to break down a verbal theme and search for symbolism and meaning to help designers find structure and purpose in every spread.

10-10:25 a.m.

“Do It” Sessions

Critiques That Teach: Submitting Your Yearbook for Judging

Organization with Lindsey Shirack, CJE, James Bowie High School

Learn the ins and outs of submitting yearbooks for critiques and contests, from shipping books and communicating with judges to presenting feedback to staff. This session focuses on turning critiques into meaningful teaching tools that help improve future books.

Using Spread Templates Effectively

Design with Stephanie Zeman, Walsworth Yearbooks

Discover the magic of templates and how to create your own with versatility in mind. Provide structure for your staff while still allowing them to be creative in their storytelling.

From Hallways to Headlines: Getting Middle Schoolers in the Yearbook Game

Middle School with Andrew Young, CJE, Woodland Junior High School

Learn from a junior high yearbook adviser how to actively engage your staff in every step of production, empowering students to take ownership and create a book that truly reflects their voices and experiences.

10:30-10:55 a.m.

AfterShot: Editing Photos Like a Pro

Photography with Alyssa Moses, CJE, Walsworth Yearbooks

One of the biggest things yearbook staffers and advisers alike overlook is photo editing. In this session, learn Walsworth's photo editing software and its capabilities to take your photos to the next level. But wait, there's more. Photopea can also do some very cool things with fonts. Upload and edit fonts to create amazing, curated looks that will dazzle.

Welcome to Yearbook: Recruiting Students to Your Team

Staff Management with Tucker Love, Shawnee Mission South High School

Build a yearbook staff that is going to get the job done. This lesson will go over different methods of finding and recruiting students to the team and getting them to stay.

11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Lunch and Chat

Grab some lunch and chat with our trainers, ask questions and get feedback.

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New Advisers

Afternoon Session

12-3:55 p.m.

Beginner Advisers, Day 1

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Experienced Advisers

12-1 p.m.

Long-form Sessions

The Basics: Essentials for Award-Winning Yearbooks

General Topic with Tucker Love, Shawnee Mission South High School

Award-winning yearbooks do a lot to earn those awards. Starting with the essentials, you can create a strong yearbook foundation that pushes your students to produce award-winning work.

Designing a Spread Workshop

Design with Stephanie Zeman, Walsworth Yearbooks

Learn the basic formula of spread design and recreate an example spread in Online Design with the help of instructors, asking questions while you work. From there you will learn how to vary your spread design and create templates to utilize throughout your publication. Please note that this workshop focuses on design strategies rather than the technical aspects of Online Design.

12-12:25 p.m.

“Do It” Sessions

It's Good to Be Boxed In: Using Grids in Design

Design with Christy Porcelli, H.B. Plant High School

Want your design to have that clean, professional look? Then you need to work with grids. Join us to learn how to set up your grids and why they are so important.

12:30-12:55 p.m.

Inconceivable! I Do Not Think It Means What You Think It Means: Exploring Senior Quotes, Superlatives & How You Can Make a Change

Coverage with Karen Johnson, MJE, Lawson High School

Many yearbook staffs and students think it's inconceivable to give up their tradition of senior quotes and/or senior superlatives. In this course, we'll explore the pitfalls and how to potentially conceive a change at your school ... as you wish.

The 10-Point Page Check: What to Do Before Submitting

General Topic with Lindsey Shirack, CJE, James Bowie High School

Before you submit, make sure your pages are truly ready. This session covers 10 essential checks, from design consistency and coverage to captions, copy and deadlines, that help staffs catch common mistakes and produce stronger, more polished pages.

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Experienced Advisers

1-2 p.m.

Long-form Sessions

Blink and You'll Catch It: Design That Emphasizes Balance & Hierarchy

Design with Lindsey Shirack, CJE, James Bowie High School

Great design is more than making a page look good. It's about guiding readers through a story with intention. This session explores how visual balance, hierarchy, spacing, contrast and dominant elements work together to create stronger, more engaging yearbook spreads that capture attention and improve storytelling.

Building Better Photographers: Skills for Middle School Yearbook Staff

Middle School with Andrew Young, CJE, Woodland Junior High School

Examine outstanding middle school photography and discover techniques to make your own photos more captivating and dynamic.

1-1:25 p.m.

"Do It" Sessions

Theme-a-thon: Generating (Quality) Theme Ideas

Theme with Tucker Love, Shawnee Mission South High School

This lesson focuses on generating theme ideas. Students will learn what a theme can be, how to find themes and how to begin developing them. The content of this lesson can be extended across multiple classes as needed.

Communicate with Parents More to Communicate with Parents Less

General Topic with Christy Porcelli, H.B. Plant High School

Sounds counterproductive, but the more advisers proactively communicate with parents, the less they have to deal with complaints. This session covers quick ways to reach out throughout the year to help the end of the year run smoothly.

Creating a Cohesive Color Plan

Design with Stephanie Zeman, Walsworth Yearbooks

Color communicates at a top level to your reader. It is often more impactful than the design itself in evoking emotion and providing a message. Start with a primary color that matches the book's mood, then build a supporting palette that will help you develop a cohesive color plan.

1:30-1:55 p.m.

Folders, Not Frustration: Online Design File Management

General Topic with Andrew Young, CJE, Woodland Junior High School

Learn from a junior high yearbook adviser how to keep your photos, files and interviews organized with clear systems that save time, reduce stress and keep your staff on track.

Write Now or Never: Tips for Writing Theme Copy

Theme with Makena Busch, CJE, Mead High School

If your staff struggles to write theme copy, this session is for you. Find out all the tricks and tips for writing award-worthy copy as we explore the process of developing tone, voice and personality in your theme writing.

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Experienced Advisers

2-3 p.m.

Long-form Sessions

What? Where? When? Managing Coverage

Writing with Christy Porcelli, H.B. Plant High School

Running a chronological yearbook is a lot of work. Keeping up with events and making sure everything gets covered takes even more work. During this session, we will deep dive into various ways to find out what event are happening, how to track assignments and manage workflow.

The Other Stuff: Beyond the Photography Basics

Photography with Alyssa Moses, CJE, Walsworth Yearbooks

This session will examine how to train and guide your staff to see beyond the main event they are photographing and begin looking for other coverage while out covering sports and events. Help them understand their role as not just photographers but story finders when they cover events.

2-2:25 p.m.

“Do It” Sessions

From Pinterest to the Page: Translating Design Inspiration into Reality

Design with Makena Busch, CJE, Mead High School

Want to learn how to turn your inspiration into reality? This course will give you a step-by-step guide to turning design inspiration into a real yearbook spread. Using real examples from a high school yearbook, students will learn how to identify key design elements and adapt them into usable content for the book.

Let Your Cover Be Your Guide: Cover Design Basics

Design with Stephanie Zeman, CJE, Walsworth Yearbooks

Your cover is more than the eye-catching part of your publication – it is the guide for the rest of your book. Learn what details your cover needs, as well as the design rules it will create, from font pairing to color combinations to graphics and photo treatments.

2:30-2:55 p.m.

The Greatest Showman: Marketing & Selling Your Masterpiece

Marketing with Karen Johnson, MJE, Lawson High School

Hundreds of hours may go into perfecting every aspect of a yearbook, but if those books just sit in boxes in the back room, does any of it matter? This short lesson explores the benefits of a “sell-out” strategy and the process for creating FOMO on campus. Participants will leave with tools to turn staff members’ hard work into a “must-have” event that has students lining up to see the show.

More Than Filler: Effective Modules to Improve Coverage

Design with Lindsey Shirack, CJE, James Bowie High School

Modules should do more than take up space – they should add depth, variety and stronger storytelling to your spreads. See examples of purposeful modules that expand coverage, highlight additional voices and perspectives and help readers engage with the story in meaningful ways.

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Experienced Advisers

3-4 p.m.

Long-form Sessions

Middle School Book by Its Cover ... and Everything Else

Middle School with Andrew Young, CJE, Woodland Junior High School

Explore the journalism standards set by NSPA and CSPA to gain insight into what judges prioritize when providing critiques and selecting award winners for middle schools.

In Other Words: Developing a Verbal Theme

Theme with Makena Busch, CJE, Mead High School

The most memorable yearbook themes don't just look good – they speak to the reader. This session pivots away from visual fluff to focus on the linguistic foundation of your book. We will dive deep into verbal discovery, learning how to brainstorm and how to refine and deploy a theme verbal that resonates through every caption, headline and story. If you've ever felt stuck with a cheesy slogan, this course will help you find an authentic narrative that defines the year.

3-3:25 p.m.

“Do It” Sessions

Where Did I Save That File? File Management as an InDesign School

General Topic with Christy Porcelli, H.B. Plant High School

Making a yearbook takes hundreds of pictures. Keeping track of them doesn't have to be a nightmare. Explore file management strategies as an InDesign school.

Vary Your Writing Formats

Writing with Sabrina Cady, CJE, Jim Jordan, Walsworth Yearbooks

With an unlimited number of engaging ways to tell the story of the year with words, there is no need to settle for just one or two. This session explores as many storytelling options as possible in 25 minutes.

The “Late Show”: The Process & Benefits of a Fall Delivery Book

General Topic with Karen Johnson, MJE, Lawson High School

Ever wonder why the best memories happen in June, but most yearbooks stop in March? Welcome to the world of fall delivery, where we trade the stress of spring deadlines for the coverage of a complete school year. In this short lesson, we'll do a quick overview of the benefits of fall delivery and then cover the process for optimizing your opportunity to include everything from the year in your book.

3:30-3:55 p.m.

Do It with STYLE: Developing a Style Guide for Your Yearbook

General Topic with Tucker Love, Shawnee Mission South High School

Learn more about what a style guide should include, what it can include and how to build one for easy staff access. Student leaders will learn how to build the style guide, while staff members will learn how to understand it and implement it during the design process.

Congratulations! You made it through Day 1!

adviser academy

Day 2: Thursday, June 25

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New Advisers

Morning Session

10-11 a.m.

Beginner Advisers, Day 2

New Adviser Track with Leland Mallett, CJE, Kathy Beers, Walsworth Yearbooks

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Experienced Advisers

10-11 a.m.

Long-form Sessions

No Chaos, Just Clarity: Take the Guesswork Out of Grading

General Topic with Marie McCulloch, Rocky Mountain High School

It can be hard to be fair while grading favorite students, especially editors. Systems and procedures are essential to encourage responsibility, communication and teamwork. Shared resources include checklists, grading rubrics and visuals that can be adapted to fit the needs of any staff.

No Room for Heroes: Making Editors into Leaders

Staff Management with Brit Taylor, Hagerty High School

It's no secret that your best underclass staffers generally become your upperclass editors. The trick? Turning them into leaders and not yearbook superheroes who try to do it all themselves. This session will look at leadership training and setups that will keep everyone working efficiently (and not let your editors crash and burn when they realize they can't do the whole book themselves).

10-10:25 a.m.

"Do It" Sessions

Yearbook as a Club in Middle School

Middle School with AJ Adams, First Flight Middle School

Explore the structure, management and teamwork behind a successful middle school yearbook club, focusing on recruitment, organization, collaboration and deadline management while fostering student leadership and creativity in yearbook production.

Interview like a Pro

Writing with Chris Heady, Shawnee Mission Northwest High School

Once a story or coverage idea is in place, the next step is getting the right material. This session focuses not on simply getting quotes but on gathering great anecdotes and moments from interviews to bring the school year to life through storytelling.

Breaking Up with Last Year's Book

Theme with Sabrina Cady, CJE, Walsworth Yearbooks

If you're having yearbook déjà vu, then it's time to learn how to break up with last year's book. Learn how to break out of your old design aesthetic and traditional coverage topics to drive your yearbook in a fresh, unique direction. Out with the old and in with the new!

10:30-10:55 a.m.

Lock Down the Ladder: Meeting Deadlines Early

Coverage with Jim Jordan, Walsworth Yearbooks

Make time early in the year to build your ladder and set up a deadline structure that ensures pages are submitted in a timely manner throughout the year.

Check It Out! (And Stop Losing Equipment)

General Topic with Savannah Miller, CJE, Montverde Academy

Practical organization tips, inventory systems and accountability strategies to keep your classroom resources from walking away week to week.

11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Lunch and Chat

Grab some lunch and chat with our trainers, ask questions and get feedback.

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Experienced Advisers

12-1 p.m.

Long-form Session

Ready to Leave the Green Box Behind? A Lesson on Manual Photography

Photography with Mark Murray, Association of Texas Photography Instructors

Getting photographers off program mode on their cameras is the first step to capturing better photos. Participants will learn methods for teaching shutter speeds, apertures and ISO, along with a little white balance, so photographers determine what a photo looks like rather than letting the camera do all the work. Participants should bring a camera and a lens to class.

12-12:25 p.m.

"Do It" Sessions

From Good to Great: Five Things to Do First

Staff Management with Marie McCulloch, Rocky Mountain High School

Good programs produce books; great programs build a culture for feedback, leadership and consistency. If you are looking to level up your program, here are five things that will make an impact without creating more work.

Think Like a Journalist: Skills for Everyday Life

General Topic with Susan McNulty, CJE, J.W. Mitchell High School

This lesson helps students apply journalistic thinking, like questioning, verification, bias awareness and ethics, to everyday situations they encounter in school, media and personal decision-making.

Signed, Sealed, Supported: Securing Admin Support

General Topic with Savannah Miller, CJE, Montverde Academy

Build stronger communication with school administration (and community) by learning when to advocate, how to present your needs and how to position your program as an essential part of campus culture.

12:30-12:55 p.m.

Keeping It Real: Turning Student Mistakes into Student Success

Staff Management with Savannah Miller, CJE, Montverde Academy

Stop rewriting captions, redesigning spreads and fixing student mistakes at midnight. Learn how to coach students through revisions, implement meaningful feedback and keep ownership where it belongs: with them.

Who are These Ads for Anyway?

Marketing with Brit Taylor, Hagerty High School

Ad sales are a pain. Whether it's business ads, sponsorships or senior/8th grade ads, answer the questions: Who are we doing this for? Why are we doing it? Streamline your process, share what works (or what doesn't work) for your staff and make some money while you're at it.

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Experienced Advisers

1-2 p.m.

Long-form Session

What Comes Around Goes Around: Copy Editing in Teams

Writing with Susan McNulty, CJE, J.W. Mitchell High School

In this lesson, students practice Round Robin Copy Editing, a collaborative editing method where copy moves through multiple editors, each with a specific focus. Students learn that strong yearbook copy is the result of systems, not shortcuts, and that multiple perspectives improve accuracy, clarity and publication quality.

1-1:25 p.m.

“Do It” Sessions

Middle School Marketing Strategies

Middle School with AJ Adams, First Flight Middle School

See how middle school students create engaging video announcements to market yearbooks, ad space and school events. Explore video production, social media strategies and student-driven marketing techniques that boost sales and engagement. Discover real-world applications of creative advertising and digital storytelling in a school setting.

Post Like a Pro: Make Your Yearbook Go Viral (in a Good Way)

Marketing with Marie McCulloch, Rocky Mountain High School

How to make social media manageable for busy staff while creating content that helps promote your program and increase book sales. Learn helpful tips on branding, trends and scheduling.

If Your Story Had a Baby: Caption Writing

Writing with Brit Taylor, Hagerty High School

Caption writing doesn't have to be so hard. Hook the reader at the start, tell them what they're looking at and give them something they didn't know. We'll share ideas for making captions more than just duh-mb information.

1:30-1:55 p.m.

It Isn't “Just” Yearbook Copy: Finding Unique Story Angles

Writing with Chris Heady, Shawnee Mission Northwest High School

Admit it: in most yearbooks, copy is the last priority. In this session, we'll talk about why that's a mistake, and how great copy – from short form to long form – can transform your book from one with pictures of the year to telling the story of the year.

The Envelope, Please! A Simple Strategy for Student Storytelling

Writing with Chrissy Baumaister, River Ridge Middle School

See how creating anticipation, personalization and purpose can elevate student writing and lead to more authentic, impactful yearbook content.

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12-3:55 p.m.

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Experienced Advisers

2-3 p.m.

Long-form Session

Save Your Sanity: Calming the Deadline Chaos

Staff Management with Savannah Miller, CJE, Montverde Academy

Tired of being the deadline police and panicking at midnight? Replace the chaos with systems that keep your book moving forward. Learn timeline systems, checkpoints and accountability structures that keep your staff on pace from ladder creation to that final deadline.

2-2:25 p.m.

"Do It" Sessions

Put the Future into Focus: From DSLR to Mirrorless

Photography with Susan McNulty, CJE, J.W. Mitchell High School

This lesson guides students through the benefits, pitfalls and practical steps of transitioning a high school journalism photo lab from DSLR cameras to mirrorless systems. Students learn how evolving technology impacts photojournalism workflows while maintaining core photographic and journalistic principles.

Go Deep: Covering Every Angle in Your Book

Coverage with Chris Heady, Shawnee Mission Northwest High School

A yearbook that only covers the good things that happen in a school year is a waste of everyone's time and money. In this session, we'll talk about why it is important to include the hard topics in your yearbook, and how to write and cover those stories with grace, care and journalistic integrity.

Typography Trends: Say it with Style

Design with Marie McCulloch, Rocky Mountain High School

Typography sets the tone and personality of your book, so it's important to be intentional with choices. See examples of how fonts can create a visual impact and make spreads that pass your theme's vibe check.

2:30-2:55 p.m.

Middle School Volunteer Retention

Middle School with AJ Adams, First Flight Middle School

Develop a loyal core of volunteers to help at every stage of production and development for your yearbook program without the layer accountability from grades in a designated yearbook course. These retention strategies program are focused on fostering a sense of ownership and belonging to the collective with numerous opportunities for leadership experiences that include incentives and privileges.

Speed Dating: A Go-To Strategy for Every Stage of Yearbook

Staff Management with Chrissy Baumaister, River Ridge Middle School

Learn how a structured "speed dating" approach can engage students in quick, purposeful conversations that support team building, interviewing practice, idea generation and ongoing yearbook production.

Let's Talk about Shot Lists!

Photography with Mark Murray, Association of Texas Photography Instructors

Planning possible photographs helps photographers and designers identify which images will best tell the story. It also ensures there is a variety of images on each spread. This session explores effective ways to implement this planning process with a staff.

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Experienced Advisers

3-4 p.m.

Long-form Session

Look Into My Crystal Ball: Coverage Planning

Coverage with Brit Taylor, Hagerty High School

Things happen, and the yearbook covers them. The trick is to have a plan for that before it happens. In this session, we will analyze systems of organization that will keep your coverage fresh and won't involve hiring a psychic.

3-3:25 p.m.

"Do It" Sessions

Organizing Your Staff Workflow

Staff Management with Jim Jordan, Walsworth Yearbooks

Set up your staff's leadership and organizational structure and develop a page creation workflow to help you sail smoothly through the raging storm of deadlines.

Thinking Fancy Thoughts: Cultivating Creativity on Staff

Staff Management with Sabrina Cady, CJE, Walsworth Yearbooks

Don't just think outside the box ... tear the box apart by learning how to think creatively. Get fancy with tips, tricks and activities to inspire creative thinking among your staff.

This Headline Now Has Your Attention

Writing with Chris Heady, Shawnee Mission Northwest High School

OK, the photos on the page trap the reader, but how do you get them interested in the copy on the page? We'll talk all things headlines and sub headlines and how to get your reader to spend two or three times longer on a yearbook page.

3:30-3:55 p.m.

Finding the Funding for your Middle School Publication

Middle School with AJ Adams, First Flight Middle School

Grant proposal writing for middle school yearbook and advocating for your program in a productive way. Advocating for the time necessary to do all the extra work we do, advocating for the digital storage necessary for all the extra storage space we need and educating your staff on how they can play a part in advocacy work, finding funding opportunities and/or donation opportunities to benefit your program.

AI with Integrity: Journalism in the Age of Algorithms

General Topic with Susan McNulty, CJE, J.W. Mitchell High School

This lesson introduces students to responsible, ethical and effective uses of artificial intelligence (AI) in the yearbook classroom. Students learn how AI can support brainstorming, writing, design, organization and accuracy without replacing student voice or journalistic judgment.

Congratulations! You made it through Day 2!