

Go For It!

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR YEARBOOK ADVISERS



We know many of you have read this article before. We have distributed it in many forms, including this newsletter. For those who are experienced advisers, we encourage you to reread the resolutions and see if there are any that apply to you this year that didn't last year. For those of you who are new advisers, we humbly present our annual list of resolutions. Many long-time advisers tell us that this is the best advice they have ever received about yearbook. We hope you will take the time to peruse these resolutions and you will find them just as valuable and that they will give YOU the happiest 2010 yearbook-wise!

BE AN ADVISER

Don't be a yearbook staff member. Your job is to teach yearbook, stand back and advise. Advising means giving advice, not doing the work yourself. We have always maintained that the entire job of a yearbook adviser can be summed up in saying, "Yes," "No" and "That's nice." Try it. It can work.

BE ENTHUSIASTIC!

If you are motivated, there is a much better chance that your staff will be motivated. Get excited about yearbook.

RECRUIT WELL

Hand-picked students who are responsible, intelligent and motivated will make your yearbook life easier. Start a real journalism program. If you can get a basic journalism class added to the curriculum, do it. The best yearbook staffs have well-trained, long-time journalism students.

TAKE TIME

Take time for yourself, your family, your other classes, your school, your friends and the rest of your life. Don't get so wrapped up in your yearbook that it becomes your whole life. And take time to organize. If you don't, things fall apart—quickly. It is vitally important that you set aside time to get organized weekly.

MAKE SURE THAT PEOPLE UNDERSTAND YOUR JOB

That means a little self-promotion on your part about the work that you do. Let others know the difficulties in this job. You know they are boundless. We don't mean you should be a whiner; we just want you to make sure others know all you have to do.

ATTEND A WORKSHOP

Really learn how to advise and teach yearbook. It is important that you go back to a workshop at least once every few years. The best advisers go every year and take their entire yearbook staff.

DON'T SAY NO

At least not at the beginning of a school year. If the staffers want a different cover, endsheets, more color or more pages, give your students the chance to earn them. But don't pop their balloon until you let them try to inflate it by themselves.



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DO SAY NO

When they don't follow through. Give them every reasonable chance to have the book they want. But set deadlines. If your staff miss the deadlines, be firm. Never go in the red financially just to be friends with your staff. They will be graduated and gone long before the debt is paid off.

STAY ON TOP OF TECH

Some advisers are scared of technology. The best embrace it. Don't be afraid. Jump in and learn. You will be amazed how cool and fun it can be. And you never know, you may discover you like it and will find a new hobby. Take a workshop, join a user group or just read a book about InDesign, Photoshop or YearTech. Set a goal to know as much (or more) than your staff does. If you want to have fun with Photoshop, there are thousands of online tutorials available for free. Just Google Photoshop tutorials. You will be amazed.

READ ABOUT JOURNALISM

Read this newsletter. Subscribe to magazines. Look at other schools' yearbooks. Check out yearbook-related websites. Grow as an adviser, just as you do as a teacher. At the minimum, set aside an hour every other week just to read about yearbook and journalism-related topics.

CONSIDER MAKING A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO YEARBOOK

Adviser turnover is high all over the United States. One of the big reasons is that many advisers have the job forced on them or take it reluctantly and then set out to see how soon they can get out of it.

Try taking the job, no matter how you got it, with the attitude that you will keep it for at least three years. Seasoned advisers (with 10+ years of experience) tell us that you need to learn for a year before you can start putting your own successful system into place.

Those same advisers, also tell us that after that second year, if you have done it right and recruited well, your third year should be the way yearbook will always be for you. At that point, you can make a decision about a longer term commitment. You may want to stay as long as many of your counterparts, who have found that yearbook advising can be a rewarding job for many years to come. Many would not consider continuing to teach without being able to advise the yearbook. ○