



Texas School Bell Awards

Sponsored by the Texas State
Teachers Association

About the awards

Community understanding and support for public education have been significantly advanced by many Texas newspapers, radio stations, and television stations through their interpretation of issues affecting public schools in our state.

The Texas State Teachers Association takes pride in sponsoring the annual TSTA School Bell Awards program in order to provide appropriate recognition of these outstanding contributions. The various classifications and categories are described below. Winners will receive coveted School Bell trophies, consisting of a school hand bell which rests on an engraved base.

Award presentations will be made at the annual TSTA House of Delegates in April. We hope that you will share our enthusiasm as we nominate and award deserving Texas media with the TSTA School Bell.

Categories

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

1. Outstanding continuous coverage of education news throughout the year in both news coverage and editorial support (see Judging Criteria).
2. Outstanding news or feature story interpreting school programs or education issues.
3. Outstanding collection of news or feature stories based on a single subject or theme. (Unlike a news or feature series, the collection of stories may be published intermittently over a longer period of time.)
4. Outstanding news or feature series interpreting school programs and education issues. Usually composed of several parts which run consecutively to give an in-depth report on a single subject or theme.
5. Outstanding editorial interpreting educational or school achievements, issues, and/or needs.
6. Outstanding collection of editorials supporting public education.
7. Outstanding continuing column interpreting school programs and educational issues.
8. Outstanding special supplement featuring special events and educational programs.
9. Outstanding regular supplement featuring educational news and features.

10. Outstanding editorial cartoon featuring educational issues. Must be locally originated by the newspaper or magazine.
11. Outstanding magazine article pertaining to educational issues.
12. Special consideration (see Judging Criteria).

Nominations for awards in each of the above categories will compete in one of seven classifications.

1. Dailies
 - (a) Circulation: over 100,000
 - (b) Circulation: 99,999-50,000
 - (c) Circulation: 49,999-25,000
 - (d) Circulation: under 25,000
 - Metropolitan market
 - Suburban market
 - Medium market
 - Small market

2. Semiweekly

3. Weekly

4. Magazine

RADIO

1. Outstanding continuous coverage of education issues and events.
2. Outstanding locally produced program interpreting school programs or issues.
3. Outstanding locally produced program series interpreting school programs or issues.
4. Outstanding station editorial on school related matters.
5. Special consideration (see Judging Criteria).

Nominations for awards in each of the above categories will compete in one of four classifications.

1. County population: over 100,000
2. County population: 99,999-25,000
3. County population: 24,999-10,000
4. County population: under 10,000

TELEVISION

1. Outstanding continuous coverage of education issues and events.
2. Outstanding locally produced single program interpreting school programs or education issues.
3. Outstanding locally produced news series interpreting school programs or issues.
4. Outstanding collection of station editorials interpreting school achievements, issues, and needs.
5. Special consideration (see Judging Criteria).

Nominations for awards in each of the above categories will compete in one of three classifications.

1. Metropolitan market
2. Other
3. Public television

(Note: See definition of classifications on Official Nomination Form.)

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

1. Outstanding Education Web site.
2. Outstanding Education blog (Web log).

Nominations

Nominations for the annual contest period cover the calendar year of publication or broadcast from January 1 through December 31.

Each TSTA local has a vital role to play in the TSTA School Bell Awards Program. The easiest means for a newspaper, magazine, or a radio or television station to be considered for an award is by being nominated by a TSTA affiliate local association within its circulation, listening, or viewing area, or by nominating itself or one or several of its reporters or photographers.

Local associations of TSTA may submit nominations in all categories and classifications. Make certain that your nomination specifies the category and classification in which it is to be considered.

1. Newspaper nominations should consist of the following:
 - (a) All nominations must be documented. Compile and mount individual

clippings in such a manner as to facilitate evaluation by the state judging committee. Entries are to be bound in scrapbooks no larger than 19"x24", although more than one volume may be compiled per entry.

- (b) If the same newspaper is to be nominated in more than one category, a complete presentation should be prepared for each nomination.
- (c) Be selective in the materials to be included in the documentation. Omit masses of materials on sports and other promotional publicity. Excellence of interpretative reporting regarding the school program, education issues, and pupil and faculty achievements is given greater consideration by the judges.

2. Radio nominations should consist of the following:

Nominations in all categories should include actual scripts of summaries, a log of broadcast dates of the programs dealing with education during the contest period and an actual cassette tape of the broadcasts.

3. Television nominations should consist of the following:

- (a) Nominations in all categories should include actual scripts or summaries and a log of telecast dates of the programs dealing with education during the contest period.
- (b) At least one videotape of the entry must accompany logs. The videotape may be submitted on standard 3/4" or 1/2" video cassette tape. TSTA does not have facilities to view Beta size cassettes.

4. Electronic media nominations should consist of representative samples of printouts bound in folders or notebooks, along with URL addresses.

DEADLINES

Nominations must reach TSTA headquarters no later than the following January 31. Address all entries to the TSTA Center for Public Affairs, School Bell Awards, 316 West 12th Street, Austin, Texas 78701.

Judging Criteria

NEWSPAPERS

Outstanding Continuous Coverage: Broad significant coverage reflecting a regularity of items during the entire year. New angle and fresh information showing a continuity of freshness, uniqueness, and creative editing. Objectivity on all items. Use of pictures or graphics with effective cutlines to supplement and enhance stories. Evidence of follow up. Overall treatment to help reader interpret the future in light of past and present events. Orderly presentation for ease of judging.

Note: No consideration is given for the decoration of the scrapbook. To the contrary, judges prefer to not have presentation artwork interfering with the news articles to be judged.

All areas of coverage should be included, but do not submit masses of materials in one specific area. It is suggested that your clippings be divided into categories, such as student activities, school board meetings, teacher activities, etc. Arrange clippings complete with date line in chronological order starting with January 1 and continuing through December 31. This permits the judges to see readily that your nominee has definitely given continuous coverage to educational news in your community.

Outstanding News or Feature Story: Evidence of good structuring with all aspects of the story being well organized and fitting logically into the total picture with indication that the writer has done some advance planning, research, interviewing, and checking of various sources of authoritative materials. Background, explanation of causes and results, interpretation, and clarification of the significance of the facts in a blend of information, instruction, or entertainment to give the reader a feeling of satisfaction and time well spent in reading it. Content of both truth and facts with emphasis on factual proof to substantiate opinions expressed. Content of most or all of the “four basic elements of reader interest”: human interest, oddity, drama, and significance. Judges expect newspaper to support story with graphics and/or photos.

Note: No consideration is given for artwork, decoration, or cleverness in the scrapbook presentation of the entry.

This nomination is based on one single subject, but may also have side stories accompanying the article.

Outstanding Collection of News or Feature Stories: Refer to the criteria for the single feature story as they apply to the individual articles within the collection. This category is reserved for a collection of articles on one theme or on one continuing story that develops over a period of time, such as a bond issue, hiring a new superintendent, investigation of misapplication of funds. The collection should have a beginning, an on-going report of developments, and a conclusion.

Outstanding News or Feature Series: All of the single news or feature criteria as they apply to the individual articles within the series. Add the following as they apply to the total impression of the whole series:

Each article in the series answers questions and provides information on a certain aspect or aspects of the issue, person, or other subject of the series,

independent of the other parts.

All parts of the series blend to provide objectivity (both sides of the question), full information, and interpretation by authorities on both sides.

Each article in the series inspires the reader to continue to the next one with a sense of satisfaction and new insights, and information gained upon completion of the series. Entire series is well planned for good continuity from the first to the last installment.

Note: No consideration is given for scrapbook decoration.

Outstanding Editorial: Presentation of all of the facts in a concise, logical, pleasing order to entertain, influence opinion, or interpret significant news developments by explaining and supplying background, forecasting possible future developments, and passing judgment. Provision of an expression of the newspaper's conscience, courage, and convictions, showing evidence of being well planned, researched, authoritative, truthful, honest, and tolerant of other viewpoints even in driving home its own opinion.

Clearness of style, moral purpose, sound reasoning, and power to influence public opinion in what the writer conceives to be the right direction. Well-written and clear presentation and organization. Somewhat unique and original in writing style, provoking the reader to think, discuss, act, or at least react. Provision of background with a broad context to put the new facts into perspective.

Outstanding Editorials: Refer to the criteria for the single editorial as they apply to each individual editorial within the collection. The collection award is given for continuous attention to education issues within the community.

Outstanding Continuing Column: Wide range of subject matter with inclusion of items to make reader feel that he is getting the inside information. Reader appeal through the names of local people doing things, a dash of humor, personal philosophy and opinion well identified, local color, and entertainment along with information, inspiration, and freshness.

Presentation of facts with the writer's opinion expressed and clearly identified as such. Uniqueness of style with a ring of truth and authority. Short and punchy sentences and paragraphs. Identification by heading format, or name of writer.

Column—Standing Special Supplement: Wide variety of information on a particular event or theme of special supplement. It is not published on a regular basis. Interviews with persons in position to know and tell—students,

parents, local merchants, as well as teachers and administrators. Good balance of news articles, features, pictures of local people, and artwork. Entries lose points when editorial material is overshadowed by advertising.

Outstanding Regular Supplement: Refer to the criteria for the special supplement as they apply to each edition of the regular, ongoing supplement. Published continuously throughout the year.

Outstanding Editorial Cartoon: The cartoon depicts educational issues of interest to readers in an entertaining, ironic, and thought-provoking caricature.

Outstanding Magazine Article: Refer to the criteria under Outstanding News or Feature Story. Subject should be Texas-based articles about teachers or other individuals in schools or Texas public education in general.

Special Consideration: Special consideration is given for coverage or promotion of a subject of unusual interest or concern that is not included in the categories mentioned above.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Outstanding Continuous Coverage: Broad significant coverage reflecting a regularity of items throughout the contest year. New angles and fresh information showing a continuity of freshness and creative writing and editing. Objective on all items. Answers to basic questions to help the listener or viewer understand public education. Evidence of follow-up, when applicable. Overall treatment to help listener or viewer interpret the future in light of past and present events. (See the section on Nominations for entry format.)

Outstanding Locally Produced Single Program: Indication of careful advanced planning, research and development of a theme. Interviews with persons to get authoritative or “common people” opinion on questions at hand. Subject presented in a unique or refreshing manner. Good use of audio and/or video to enhance script. Well-rounded program as intended to inform, instruct, entertain and/or inspire to action. ((See the section on Nominations for entry format.)

Outstanding Program Series: Must be wholly or partially produced at the local level. Indication of good planning in advance, research, and development of a topical theme. Interviews are conducted with persons to get varied opinions on the subject. Presented in a unique or refreshing manner. Good use of audio and video. In television there is continuity of graphics. Each part of the series leads logically to the next to make the listener want to return to hear or see subsequent installments to the last. (See the section

on Nominations for entry format.)

Outstanding Editorial: Presentation of all the facts in a concise, logical manner in order to entertain, influence or interpret significant news developments. Expresses the station's conscience, courage and convictions, showing evidence of being well planned, researched, authoritative, truthful, honest, and tolerant of other viewpoints even in driving home its own opinion. Clearness of style, moral purpose, sound reasoning, and power to influence public opinion in what the writer conceives to be the right direction.

Special Consideration: Special consideration is given for coverage of a subject of unusual interest or concern not included in the categories mentioned above.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

An entry must be devoted primarily (at least 75 percent of content, posts, etc.) to Texas public education topics, issues, personnel, etc., and must be regularly updated, at least twice weekly. Electronic media from any source (news media outlets, organizations, school districts, schools, individuals) is eligible EXCEPT for material written/posted by TSTA members, locals or staff. The source will not be considered in judging. Judging will be based on content and presentation.

Contest Judging

Judges will rate each entry as per the aforementioned criteria. Each entry is scored individually by three independent judges selected from the news media field. Entries are scored on a point system. The final selection of winners is determined by combining the scores of each of the three judges. For example, each judge rates an entry on a scale of one to 10, with 10 being the highest rating possible. The points are totaled. Any individual entry must earn a total score of 25 to be awarded a School Bell.

The awards are presented annually at the TSTA House of Delegates during the awards presentation ceremony. Winners and the nominating locals will be notified in advance of the House of Delegates to allow time for planning travel arrangements.