

One-Page Statement

This was my second year taking Broadcast Journalism, and I was afraid that, having covered many of the major holidays and staples of McLean High School last year, I would find myself either burnout or lacking fulfillment this year. I was sorely mistaken. What I discovered was that a news story can always be rewarding, always be exciting if I go on to cover and explore new things.

This year, a lot of my coverage focused on theater productions. Prior to this year, I had never even seen one of TheatreMcLean's shows, a fact I now regret. Being able to cover their performances, I not only enjoyed the shows themselves, but I learned a lot about how to get close, high-quality shots of the actors even from afar. I learned how to get clear and audible shots even with the audience's noises around me, loud audio from the actors' microphones, and vastly different lighting situations. Not only that, while I was certainly tempted to focus on the actors alone, the TheatreMcLean news features reminded me to also cover other perspectives, such as those of the directors, crew, and audience. These news features not only taught me new ways to film and report, but I found the coverage itself was well-received, both by the theater community, who enjoyed seeing the product of their efforts, and by the many students who delight in their productions.

Also this year, I focused on covering events and changes that would directly impact McLean students. From the very start of the year, I looked not only to schoolwide changes but to changes in our county and state. These changes pushed me to cover the Superintendent visit to our school and later Senate Bill 656. Both topics were sensitive ones, since the topics caused controversy and unrest among parents, students, and teachers alike. However, the stories reminded me to stay neutral even as I searched for how to inform the McLean community of what they needed to know, whether that be the vision of the new Superintendent or the tangible impacts of Senate Bill 656. These features also pushed me to cover topics that I was not necessarily immediately comfortable with. Additionally, I had to conduct interviews, more professionally than usual with the gravity of the topics, and secure B-roll that still engaged audiences, regardless of the less visually-stimulating topics of parent meetings and new regulations. In that sense, these features not only informed the McLean community on the changes in their daily lives, but it informed me too, as well as taught me how to handle more serious issues in a way that audiences could grasp.

In retrospect, this year was not at all what I expected it to be. I continued to learn more about Broadcast Journalism and filming, and I was able to cover stories that interested me and the greater community. Each of my stories directly catered to McLean High School students, whether because of their human interest (such as from TheatreMcLean) or their impact (such as the new law). I was able to explore what I never thought possible.

New FCPS Superintendent visits McLean

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldA2qOCiq7Q>

In September, when Fairfax County Public Schools adopted new Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid, I covered one of her first meetings with McLean High School families as she learned McLean parents' most pressing concerns. Along with professional interviews of the Superintendent, parents, and students, the video is unique in that the B-roll of the event comes in snippets through the new package to summarize Dr. Reid's goals to parents and students who did not attend, which was especially important amid concerns over a new superintendent.

McLean implements new program: McLean, Did You Know?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBX-gnTkjNc>

The implementation of "McLean, Did You Know?" directly impacted nearly every student at McLean High School as it would replace the county-mandated Advisory lessons of last year in a test to see if it would work for the larger county. The video features the opinions of creators of the program, teacher, and students, both in favor and against the new program, as well as B-roll of the production and behind the scenes.

Much Ado About Nothing Takes the Stage

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXFenquytZm0>

Covering "Much Ado About Nothing" was my first opportunity to film a TheatreMcLean production, which are immensely popular in the school and great human interest pieces. I secured quality shots of the performance as well as creative close-ups and shots of the set, crew, and production itself.

TheatreMcLean Presses "Play" on Video Game Musical

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKqgOaogkHg>

In my second theater production coverage of the year, I had to adjust to a different setting than the auditorium, specifically the different lighting. In addition to securing footage even with difficult lighting, I was able to portray the production of a first-of-its-kind musical, and both the rewards and difficulties that came along with it.

New Bill Promises Changes in Class

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sY1AuWtqbs>

The newly passed Senate Bill 656 targets the presentation and distribution of "sexually explicit content" in schools, including Sexual Education courses and English classes' reading materials, and went into effect at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. The law aims to provide more control to parents in the instruction of their children, but I interviewed teachers and students to see how they expected to be affected, including creative angles of student work as well as B-roll of the law itself.