

Paige Lehman
Johnston Senior High School
“The Dragon”

Contributions:

- Reorganized our entire program when we grew from about 20 students in one class period to over 70 students across three periods by creating a system that supported a bigger staff
- Created clear roles (photo management, story editing, senior content, organization, etc.) for a staff of 76 students, while managing a group of 8 editors by defining their roles and responsibilities, setting weekly task lists, and using a weekly structured production schedule so everyone knew what they were responsible for, which made our staff more organized and efficient
- Developed a multi-step editing process that included draft reviews, peer editing, editor review with the chance to work one-on-one with an editor for any part of a spread. Ensuring all content in our 212-page book met high standards for accuracy, consistency, and quality
- Led the overall content and design of *The Dragon*, by creating and teaching an in-depth style guide that was accessible to all staff members, making sure, despite having 76 staff members across three class periods, all content stayed consistent and aligned to our theme and looked cohesive
- Managed deadlines for both staff and editors, and production timelines for a multi-period staff to keep the book on track for submission
- Mentored 60+ new staff members and helped them grow their skills in writing, design, and leadership
- Communicated consistently with administration, parents, and the community about yearbook sales, senior tributes, and program updates
- Created a yearbook website to better include our community and make all information and purchasing more accessible

- Increased social media presence from 100 to nearly 500 followers on Instagram and from 20 to over 400 on TikTok by creating consistent, student-focused content and driving engagement, reaching the highest number of interactions our program has ever seen.
- Organized and led a school-wide club picture day to ensure all student organizations were included in the book, coordinating over 35 clubs and 1,700 students
- Coordinated a makeup photo day for students who didn't have a school picture and worked with our English Language Learners (ELL) teacher to take complementary senior photos, increasing representation and inclusion.
- Led marketing and fundraising efforts to raise over \$7,500 to add more pages to the yearbook without raising the cost of the book
- Intentionally expanded coverage to include more students and activities, including launching online pages on our website to further represent underrepresented groups

Positions Held:

- Editor-in-Chief (Senior Year): Led the entire yearbook program, overseeing staff, production, deadlines, and the overall vision of the book.
- Junior Editor-in-Chief (Junior Year): Assisted in managing staff, editing content, and helped strengthen organization and workflow.
- Social Media Manager: Created and managed content to increase engagement and promote yearbook sales.
- Website Creator & Manager: Built and maintained the yearbook website to improve communication, accessibility, and community involvement.

Leadership Philosophy:

My leadership philosophy is centered on structure, trust, and respect. I've learned that people do their best work when they understand what's expected of them and feel supported. In a large, student-run program, my goal is to make it feel smaller by building relationships with each individual. Clear systems keep everyone aligned, but relationships are what make people feel confident in their roles.

I try to lead in a way that balances guidance and independence. I want my staff to feel supported and capable of taking ownership of their work and growing from it. I don't believe in doing everything myself—instead, I focus on building a team that can work independently. I split responsibilities between editors and staff so the workload is manageable and everyone has a clear role.

At the same time, I never see myself as above the staff. These are my peers, and I treat them with respect. I've built strong relationships with my editors, allowing me to trust them with leadership decisions and responsibilities. I also make an effort to be present—spending my open period in the lab—so staff not only feel supported, but feel my presence as someone they can rely on.

Proudest Leadership Moment

One of my proudest leadership moments came during a shift in our editor team mid-year. Two senior editors had to step away, and bringing in new editors changed the dynamic and created tension, including conflict outside of class. Instead of avoiding it, I addressed it directly and professionally. One editor shared that communication felt unclear, which pushed me to reflect and make changes. I created more transparent systems and clearer expectations moving forward. Over time, that tension turned into trust, and our team became stronger. That

experience showed me leadership is about listening, adapting, and growing alongside your team.

Statement From Adviser:

Paige Lehman is the most dedicated student leader I have worked with. As editor in chief, she manages eight editors and a staff of more than 70 while personally coaching writers and designers every day across all three of my yearbook classes. She created an organizational system that transformed our workflow and independently prepared training materials for next year's leaders. Paige leads by example, spending her open period in the lab, stepping in wherever needed, and elevating the work of everyone around her. Her initiative and genuine care make her an exceptional candidate for this award.