NEWS STORY CHECKLIST

HEADLINE

- ☐ Follows guidelines for print headline if it is a print news story
- ☐ Includes and follows guidelines for print subheadlines if it is a print news story. Subheadline should clearly outline what the story is about
- ☐ Follows guidelines for an online story headline if it is being published online

LEAD

- ☐ Has a news lead that includes the 5W's and 1 H

NUTGRAPH

- ☐ Second paragraph contains a nutgraph, which justifies the story by telling readers why they should care

INVERTED PYRAMID

- ☐ Information in subsequent paragraphs is organzed from most important to least important

SOURCES/RESEARCH

- ☐ Story should be well researched and all information should be attributed to the proper source
- ☐ Information must come from reliable and verifiable sources
- ☐ Should have at least 3 sources and they should be relevant, not just students that you know
- ☐ Look for expert sources
- ☐ Look for sources that tell two sides of the story or add another perspective

QUOTES/ATTRIBUTES

- ☐ Quotes are interesting and add something to the story
- ☐ Don't quote things that are fact-based and can be mentioned in your story without a direct quote
- ☐ Break up longer quotes by putting the attribute in the middle
- ☐ "Said" should come AFTER the name of the source and is the only acceptable word to use
- ☐ In sports stories, identify the player by position and include their jersey number after their name i.e. quarterback John Smith (25) said

WRITING STYLE/ORGANIZATION

- ☐ Strong and effective writing with a clear voice and variety of sentence structures/lengths;
- ☐ Uses langauage, style and tone appropriate to its purpose
- ☐ Tightly written
- ☐ Strong and effective word choice
- ☐ Transitions logically to connect the various parts of the story
- ☐ Avoids editorializing, sticks to the facts

PARAGRAPH FORMATTING

- ☐ Should have "Skinny" paragraphs (1-3 sentences per paragraph)
- ☐ Only one space after a period

AP STYLE

- ☐ Check commonly missed AP Style format for dates, money, percents and time
- ☐ Edited for Oxford commas
- ☐ Edited for sports terms and scores (i.e. our school's score in a game is always listed first.
- ☐ Identifies all people, including coaches and teachers, by their first and last name on first reference and then last name on subsequent references

GRAMMAR/SPELLING

- ☐ Story is well edited and spell checked; NO errors, including the proper spelling of all names
- ☐ Punctuation is accurate
- ☐ Consistent application of capitalization skills
- ☐ Grammar and usage are correct and contribute to clarity and style

ACCURACY/EFFORT

- ☐ Details are thorough and factual; there are no errors in content
- ☐ Evidence of substantial time; student is working at highest potential

PHOTOS

- ☐ Story has a photo or graphic to accompany it
- ☐ Photo or graphic follows copyright guidlines. (it is preferred that the photo be a candid, i.e. non-posed photo, that was taken by a student on staff)
- ☐ Photo has a caption, which follows caption writing guidelines and gives credit to the photographer

WORD COUNT

- ☐ Has a MINIMUM WORD COUNT of 300 words for an online news brief
- ☐ Has a MINIMUM WORD COUNT of 600-800 words for an online news story
- ☐ Has appropriate word count for print based on space allotted for story - i.e. half page stories are 800-900 WORDS