FEATURE STORY CHECKLIST

HEADLINE

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

LEAD/NUT GRAPH

- [ ] Uses a feature lead (there are 7 types)
- [ ] Exceptional lead - reflects creativity and captivates the reader's interest; first sentence immediately commits the reader
- [ ] Lead fits well with the rest of the story
- [ ] Lead is developed with rich description of place and character and/or an engaging narrative and/or a powerful left hook contrast lead that effectively teases the reader
- [ ] The point of the story is unveiled in a 'nut graf' that flows seamlessly into story

SKILLFULL USE OF QUOTES

- [ ] Interviewees have revealed captivating stories
- [ ] Skillfully uses individuals, anecdotes to illustrate larger issues; localizes the issue
- [ ] Sources provide rich, relevant supporting information
- [ ] Facts have been integrated in a professional and insightful way,
- [ ] Uses quotes from the interviews to support angle
- [ ] Has a human interest and an emotional impact that is profound

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

ATTRIBUTES

- [ ] 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

ACCURACY/EFFORT

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

PARAGRAPH FORMATTING

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

WRITING STYLE/ORGANIZATION

- [ ] Gives reader dynamic impression and profound understanding of the subject
- [ ] Feature aptly uses examples, details, quotes, statistics, and description to make reader feel something strongly; creative transitions have been used
- [ ] Show, Not Tell, similes and metaphors (or other descriptive techniques) may also have been used to enhance writing
- [ ] Story explores deep qualities of the issue/person and weaves essential facts and elements into the feature artfully
- [ ] Strong and effective writing with a clear voice and variety of sentence structures/lengths; effective word choice
- [ ] Has a focused angle
- [ ] Ending brings the story to full circle; provides a strong closing statement
- [ ] Uses language, style and tone appropriate to its purpose
- [ ] Tightly written and strongly organized with clear transitions
- [ ] Story avoids editorializing
- [ ] Written in 3rd person

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

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

WORD COUNT

- [ ] Has a MINIMUM WORD COUNT of 600 words for online feature
- [ ] Has appropriate word count for print - full page is 1,600 words, 1/2 page is around 800, multiple page features can be 3,000 words or more