



Redwood High School

A National Blue Ribbon School
A California Distinguished School

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January 20, 2026
re: Madison Bishop
Journalist of the Year Selection Committee

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with sincere enthusiasm that I recommend Madison Bishop for JEA's Journalist of the Year. In my 12 years as a journalism educator and adviser, Madison stands out as one of the most trusted, ethical, and impactful student journalists I have worked with. She has dedicated three full years to *The Redwood Bark*, our nationally recognized, student-run news program, and currently serves as our head of social media, a role that places her at the cutting edge of our newsroom's content and systems.

Madison's role demands precision, leadership, and sound judgment, particularly under deadline, when accuracy and clarity matter most. Madison has earned the trust of both her peers and teachers as someone who can be relied upon to uphold professional journalistic standards without compromise.

A few examples of Madison's journalistic integrity and service to our community are noted below.

Editorial leadership:

Madison consistently demonstrates dependable leadership throughout every phase of the publication process. As a former head copy editor, she managed the behind-the-scenes editorial work that ensured stories were accurate, polished, and publication-ready. She understands that strong journalism is built not only on compelling storytelling, but on responsibility to readers and respect for the truth. Madison often runs the discussions in class surrounding large features and our editorial ideas. Last year, the end-of-year project was slated to be about our political systems. Madison rallied students who were interested in taking on a second topic: [social media and its impact on our world](#). This piece involved over half of our class reporting on different elements of social media and won a national award at the fall convention. None of this would have happened without Madison's vision and implementation.

Keen editorial judgment and direction:

Madison has a rare editorial instinct. She can identify the strengths in story plans and early drafts and guide writers toward clarity and impact without diluting their voice. Her feedback is precise, constructive, and grounded in respect and she understands how to balance clarity, fairness, and tone, especially when working with sensitive or complex topics. Madison has spent numerous late nights and out-of-class hours supporting *The Redwood Bark's* content and physical paper layout. She truly enjoys the collaboration, and others turn to her for final decisions.

Mentorship & newsroom culture:

Over three years, Madison has evolved from a passionate cub reporter into a polished editor and mentor. She has directly shaped the culture of our newsroom by modeling professionalism, generosity, and humility. This year, Madison pushed forward ethically and fairly when the district mandated a student be placed in her class

and receive a leadership position. Although the district made decisions above the heads of the student leaders, Madison proceeded with respectful interactions and inclusive systems. She communicated directly and avoided gossip to ensure our classroom culture was productive and friendly. She now serves as a teacher's assistant for our first-year journalism course, where younger journalists consistently look to her as a steady presence and a trusted guide; her growth mindset and humble interactions have elevated the work of those around her.

Content & system creation:

Madison's contributions reflect both breadth and depth. She has served as a final editorial gatekeeper for dozens of published pieces covering campus issues, student life, and broader community concerns, ensuring each meets professional standards of sourcing and fairness before reaching a public audience. In her early years in the program, she helped us get CTE certified and wrote the course handbook's death policy after a tragedy in our community. Three years later, she is still improving our systems; her latest contribution to our program was her creation of a social media project for 100 classmates; the objective was to transition our publication's print and web-only content to social media posts, driving audience engagement and updating our curriculum to align with current media trends. She even co-created the rubrics and presentation to add clarity to the assignment's features. I was personally inspired by her drive and creativity in this project, which I will continue to use in the years to come. Because of Madison's work, the Social Media Manager role will continue to be an editor position in the coming years.

What distinguishes Madison most is her **belief in journalism as a service to her community**. She understands the responsibility that comes with publishing and consistently makes decisions that reflect integrity, empathy, and purpose. She believes wholeheartedly in the power of the press, as seen by her current ongoing investigative feature on the pressures student press have experienced locally and across the nation. She even attended the Lowell High School/ Gustafson court case to include this vignette in her report. Madison plans to continue this passion in her university studies and eventually in this industry.

Madison exemplifies what student journalism should be: **thoughtful and deeply committed to community impact**. She is exceptionally deserving of recognition as Journalist of the Year, and I offer my strongest endorsement of her candidacy.

Please feel free to contact me if additional insight into Madison's work or leadership would be helpful. Feel free to visit her portfolio on The Bark's website at https://redwoodbark.org/staff_name/madison-bishop.

Sincerely,
Erin Schneider
Journalism Adviser

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