2026 Student Digital Media Competition
Standards and Guidelines

Sponsor This competition is sponsored by the **Digital Media Arts Consortium (DMAC) and Robert Morris University**. The purpose of this competition is to recognize and showcase outstanding student work in digital media and to encourage students to work toward excellence.	**2026 Festival Date** The DMAC student video festival (DMAC Live) is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 15, 2026**. It will be held at the UPMC Events Center at Robert Morris University, and will be recorded. Schools/students do not need to be present at the festival to participate.

Terms
All digital media entered in the 2026 competition must have been produced entirely by students in an organized school program **after March 20, 2025.**
 	
Student submissions start **December 20, 2025** and the submission window closes at **8 pm on Monday, February 16, 2026**. No late entries will be accepted!
 	
Note that the **Music Video category** has a later entry deadline. See pages 31-32 for full details.
 	
Who May Enter
Students who enter the 2026 competition must be sponsored by a teacher who is a member of DMAC. Teachers can register for membership at the time of submission.
	Entry Fees
	Schools can enter one (1) entry per category, per school.
	$10 Entry Fee for each category submission.
	Festival registration and entry fees should be sent **no later than March 1, 2026** to the following address:
	    Robert Morris University
	    DMAC c/o Toni Brendlinger
	    Patrick Henry Center - Room 104
	    6001 University Blvd.
	    Moon Township, PA 15108
	A registration cost worksheet is available online for teacher-sponsors to complete: **2026 DMAC Spring Festival Cost Worksheet**
	
	Registration fees can be paid using a credit card: **https://tinyurl.com/zp36k3be**
	If you pay online, please send the registration cost worksheet form to Toni Brendlinger to inform us of your payment and purpose.

Judging Process	**Video Release**
Each school entering the competition must provide at least one judge who will be assigned a category to evaluate during the judging window: February 27, 2026 to March 7, 2026. Judging categories will be assigned by the DMAC Board.	All videos submitted to the DMAC Student Festival are the property of the DMAC organization. Links to the videos will be released to the membership after the festival.
Each category will be judged by at least two judges.	By submitting any entry, participating schools give permission for that entry to be shared, should it win any award.
All scores are calculated out of 100 total points.	

DMAC Categories

Cat. #	Achievement Categories	

1	**Founders' Award**
	The festival committee is pleased to honor the contributions and dedication of the original members of the former Television and Video Teachers Consortium (TVT) whose efforts and collaboration enabled our organization (DMAC) to exist today.
	
	DMAC will accept student applications from seniors interested in being considered for the Founders' Award. Students should demonstrate dedication to their schools' media programs.
	
	Both the student application AND teacher recommendation are due no later than 8 PM on Monday, February 16, 2026.
		Specific Application Information
		● Application: The questions on the application are meant to allow the student to demonstrate:
		  ● The student's dedication to their school's media program & productions
		  ● leadership positions on school productions
		  ● commitment to the school's offered program in media arts
		  ● his or her reflections about the works they have created
		  ● the student's involvement in DMAC
		
		● Link for the student application is: **https://forms.gle/XTzhacLM3HcFaGYy6**
		
		Recommendation by teacher-sponsor: Teachers are asked to submit a short recommendation for the student they elect to receive the award. As part of this recommendation, the teacher will be asked to compose a 3-5 sentence biography about the winning student that will be read at the festival. The link to the teacher recommendation: **https://forms.gle/vFJ2fK35pS9k1LsP7**

2	**Rookie School of the Year Award**	At its discretion, the DMAC Board will award a special "Rookie School of the Year Award" to a school that is competing in the spring competition for the first time OR the first time in over 5 years. Any school interested in joining DMAC new this year can join the organization by completing the registration cost worksheet and making payment no later than 2/16/26. **2026 DMAC Spring Festival Cost Worksheet** Questions about joining DMAC? Please reach out to our RMU liaison, Jen Stratakis, at stratakis@rmu.edu.

Cat. #	Video Categories: Creative Media	
	Special Instructions for ALL Creative Media Categories: ● Any student submission will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons. ● A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' material such as the use of a template or uncleared music OR use of AI. Videos that lack proof of complete copyright clearances are also subject to disqualification. Additionally, failure to fully complete the copyright section of the submission form will result in disqualification. ● All videos must include a non-animated slate containing the name of school, category of video and name of production. ● **NO footage of any submission can be repeated in any form across multiple categories.** ● Submissions in the category must provide a **sharable link (with EDIT capabilities) in Google DRIVE.**	
3	**Animation/Stop Motion** **Category Specific Standards** ● This category includes all animation types: claymation, stop motion, and drawn or electronically-generated frame-by-frame animations, etc. ● To be included in this category, each frame must have been created by the entrant. ● Animation/Stop Motion is for productions where the artist has generated each frame of the video. This could be through taking a series of individual stills or by drawing each frame. Computers or computer applications may be used, provided it is the artist who creates each frame of the video. ● Videos in this category will <u>not</u> have utilized a computer template or a computer application to generate intermediate frames between 'key frames' in order to create the illusion of motion. If 'inbetweening' or 'tweening' was handled by a computer, the video belongs in the Special Effects category. ● **Length:** no more than 90 seconds. If you are submitting some amount less than the entire piece, it is strongly recommended that you provide context for the excerpt within the video's entry description. ● Slate is not included in the time limit.	**Entry Scoring Criteria** ❏ **Slate** (5 points) that includes category, school, and title of submission appearing at the beginning of the video. (<u>Not included in time limit</u>) ❏ **Length:** (10 points) Video does not exceed **90 seconds**. ❏ **Animation Technique:** (15 points) The illusion of movement is produced by combining a series of still images at a rate of five images or more per second. ❏ **Storytelling:** (10 points) A clear storyline, concept, or idea is evident. This includes creation of a setting for the story. ❏ **Video:** (15 points) Good shot composition, varied shots, steady shots. ❏ **Editing:** (15 points) Free of glitches, jump cuts. Smooth and fluid movement throughout. ❏ **Audio:** (15 points) Sound is clear. Levels are consistent throughout. Sound elements add to overall production and don't distract. If sound is absent because of choice, rationale for not including sound should be stated in the description. ❏ **Originality:** (10 points) student created something new and personally creative. Project has its own look and feel and stands out in comparison to others. ❏ **Overall Production:** (5 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product. **100 points TOTAL**

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4	**Special Effects** Graphics, digital compositing, or special effects are created to communicate information visually. These may include files created using After Effects or Motion or similar software packages. **Category Specific Standards** ● Effects that utilize a provided template in a software package are not appropriate entries. Rather, the strongest entries will be those that demonstrate the entrant's skills and originality. ● The key criterion that separates this category from Animation is that some (or many) of the intermediate frames between user-created 'key frames' are generated by the software through an in-betweening ("tweening") or mixing process. ● **Length:** no more than 60 seconds. If you are sending some amount less than the entire piece, it is strongly recommended that you provide context for the excerpt in the video entry description. ● Slate is not included in the time limit.	**Entry Scoring Criteria** ❑ **Slate** (5 points) that includes category, school, and title of submission appearing at the beginning of the video. (Not included in time limit) ❑ **Length:** (10 points) Video does not exceed **60 seconds**. If submitting less than the entire piece, it is strongly recommended that you provide context for the excerpt. ❑ **Purpose:** (10 points) A clear concept or idea is evident for the project. ❑ **Video Editing:** (15 points) Free of glitches, jump cuts. Smooth and fluid transitions throughout. ❑ **Post Production Digital Technique:** (15 points) Project incorporates multiple special effect techniques that add to the sophistication of the video. ❑ **Videography:** (15 points) Good shot composition, varied shots. Lack of unnecessary camera movement (steady). ❑ **Audio:** (15 points) Sound is clear. Levels are consistent throughout. Sound elements add to overall production and don't distract. If sound is absent because of choice, rationale for not including sound should be stated in the description. ❑ **Originality:** (10 points) student created something new and personally creative. Project has its own look and feel and stands out in comparison to others. ❑ **Overall Production:** (5 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product. **100 points TOTAL**

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5	**Video as Art** A video designed to express artistic vision. This category includes, but is not limited to: experimental works, highlight reels, hype videos, etc. These productions do not necessarily tell a story. **Category Specific Standards** ● In the Video as Art category, you may choose to re-edit a longer piece to "highlight" the three minutes you want judges to view. ● **Length:** no more than 3 minutes. If you are sending some amount less than the entire piece, it is strongly recommended that you provide context for the excerpt in the video entry description. ● Slate is not included in the time limit. **Entry Scoring Criteria** ❑ **Slate** (5 points) that includes category, school, and title of submission appearing at the beginning of the video. (Not included in time limit) ❑ **Length:** Video does not exceed **3 minutes**. If submitting less than the entire piece, it is strongly recommended that you provide context for the excerpt. (10 points) ❑ **Purpose:** (10 points) A clear concept or idea is evident for the project. ❑ **Video Editing:** (15 points) Smooth and fluid transitions throughout, with particular attention to synchronization of audio and video elements. ❑ **Post Production Digital Technique:** (15 points) Project incorporates multiple advanced editing techniques that add to the sophistication of the video. ❑ **Videography:** (15 points) Good shot composition, varied shots. Lack of unnecessary camera movement (steady). ❑ **Audio:** (15 points) Sound is clear. Levels are consistent throughout. Sound elements add to overall production and don't distract. If sound is absent because of choice, rationale for not including sound should be stated in the description. ❑ **Originality:** (10 points) student created something new and personally creative. Project has its own look and feel and stands out in comparison to others. ❑ **Overall Production:** (5 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product. **100 points TOTAL**

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6	**Digital Cinema** A maximum of three minutes of a digital film. Films may be any genre, but are fictional in content. All entries will demonstrate a strong story told through visual elements. **Category Specific Standards** ● Because of their fictionalized take on reality, mockumentaries (pretend/improvised documentaries) would be included in this category. ● **Length:** You may send up to three minutes of video. If you wish the judges to view a specific three minute segment, send only those three minutes. In the Digital Cinema category, you may choose to re-edit a longer piece to "highlight" the three minutes you want judges to view. ● If you are sending some amount less than the entire piece, it is recommended that you help the judges score your work fairly by providing a context for the excerpt in the description of your video. ● Slate is not included in the time limit.	**Entry Scoring Criteria** ❏ **Slate** (5 points) that includes category, school, and title of submission appearing at the beginning of the video. (Not included in time limit) ❏ **Length:** (10 points) Video does not exceed **3 minutes**. ❏ **Storytelling:** (10 points) A clear storyline, concept, or idea is evident. This includes creation of characters and setting for the story. ❏ **Video Editing:** (15 points) Free of glitches, jump cuts. Smooth and fluid transitions throughout. ❏ **Post Production Digital Technique:** (15 points) Project incorporates multiple advanced editing techniques that add to the sophistication of the video. ❏ **Videography:** (15 points) Good shot composition, varied shots. Lack of unnecessary camera movement (steady). ❏ **Audio:** (15 points) Sound is clear. Levels are consistent throughout. Sound elements add to overall production and don't distract. If sound is absent because of choice, rationale for not including sound should be stated in the description. ❏ **Originality:** (10 points) student created something new and personally creative. The project has its own look and feel and stands out in comparison to others. ❏ **Overall Production:** (5 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product. **100 points TOTAL**

Video Categories: Creative Media

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	Special Instructions for ALL Creative Media Categories: ● Any student submission will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons. ● A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' material such as the use of a template or uncleared music OR use of AI. Videos that lack proof of complete copyright clearances are also subject to disqualification. Additionally, failure to fully complete the copyright section of the submission form will result in disqualification. ● All videos must include a non-animated slate containing the name of school, category of video and name of production. ● Submissions in the category must provide a **sharable link (with EDIT capabilities) in Google DRIVE to download.**
7	**Documentary** A non-fictional film intended to observe some aspect of life. Films made as documentaries are generally intended to inform, instruct or enlighten. Some examples might be: biopic, profile, or the documentation of events. **Category Specific Standards** ● Because of their fictionalized take on reality, mockumentaries (pretend, fictional, or improvised documentaries) DO NOT belong in this category. ● **Length:** You may send up to three minutes of video. If you wish the judges to view a specific three minute segment, send only those three minutes. In the Documentary category, you may choose to re-edit a longer piece to "highlight" the three minutes you want judges to view. ● If you are sending some amount less than the entire piece, it is recommended that you help the judges score your work fairly by providing a context for the excerpt in the description of your video. ● Slate is not included in the time limit. **Entry Scoring Criteria** ❑ **Slate** (5 points) that includes category, school, and title of submission appearing at the beginning of the video. (Not included in time limit) ❑ **Length:** (10 points) Video does not exceed **3 minutes**. ❑ **Storytelling:** (10 points) A clear storyline, concept, or idea is evident. This includes creation of characters and setting for the story. ❑ **Video Editing:** (15 points) Free of glitches, jump cuts. Smooth and fluid transitions throughout. ❑ **Videography:** (15 points) Good shot composition, varied shots. Lack of unnecessary camera movement (steady). ❑ **Audio:** (15 points) Sound is clear. Levels are consistent throughout. Sound elements add to overall production and don't distract. If sound is absent because of choice, rationale for not including sound should be stated in the description. ❑ **Graphics/Lower Thirds:** (10 points) Graphics add to the understanding of the production and do not distract. Are free of spelling errors. ❑ **Purpose:** (10 points) A clear concept or idea is evident for the project, generally intended to inform, instruct or enlighten. ❑ **Overall Production:** (10 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product. **100 points TOTAL**

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8 Commercial

These entries sell a product or service to a particular audience. Commercials are highly targeted toward a specific demographic, using techniques to address that demographic's needs and wants. Sample ideas might include: promoting the school play, joining a school club, or selling a made-up product.

Category Specific Standards

- Commercials entered in the DMAC competition can be for imaginary or real products, as long as the video producer does not violate copyright law and/or infringe on trademarked properties. Note: Creating an original commercial for an existing product is not recommended unless the video producer has permission of the trademark holder.
- **Length:** Commercials must run exactly 30 or exactly 60 seconds. Judges will penalize commercials that are not exactly 30 or exactly 60 seconds.
- Slate is not included in the time limit.

Entry Scoring Criteria

- ❏ **Slate** (5 points) that includes category, school, and title of submission appearing at the beginning of the video. (Not included in time limit)
- ❏ **Length:** (10 points) Video should be **exactly 30 or exactly 60 seconds**.
- ❏ **Video Editing:** (15 points) Free of glitches, jump cuts. Smooth and fluid transitions throughout. Project incorporates multiple editing techniques that add to the sophistication of the video.
- ❏ **Videography:** (15 points) Good shot composition, varied shots. Lack of unnecessary camera movement (steady).
- ❏ **Audio:** (15 points) Sound is clear. Levels are consistent throughout. Sound elements add to overall production and don't distract. If sound is absent because of choice, rationale for not including sound should be stated in the description.
- ❏ **Graphics/Text:** (10 points) Graphics add to the understanding of the production and do not distract. Are free of spelling errors.
- ❏ **Purpose:** (10 points) A clear concept or idea is evident for project, generally intended to inform, instruct or enlighten.
- ❏ **Originality:** (10 points) student created something new and personally creative. Project has its own look and feel and stands out in comparison to others.
- ❏ **Overall Production:** (10 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product.

100 points TOTAL

Video Categories: Creative Media

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- All videos must include a non-animated slate containing the name of school, category of video and name of production.
- Submissions in the category must provide a **sharable link (with EDIT capabilities) in Google DRIVE to download.**

9

Public Service Announcement

Intended to benefit the audience by raising awareness or urging specific action, PSAs are directed to a particular audience. The message and content will vary based on the audience. Sample ideas: cessation of smoking, drug use prevention, avoiding distracted driving, encouraging recycling, preventing bullying, etc.

Length: PSAs will run exactly 30 or exactly 60 seconds. Judges will penalize PSAs that are not exactly 30 seconds or exactly 60 seconds.
Slate is not included in the time limit.

Entry Scoring Criteria
- ❏ **Slate** (5 points) that includes category, school, and title of submission appearing at the beginning of the video. (Not included in time limit)
- ❏ **Length:** (10 points) Video should be **exactly 30 or exactly 60 seconds**.
- ❏ **Video Editing:** (15 points) Free of glitches, jump cuts. Smooth and fluid transitions throughout. The project incorporates multiple editing techniques that add to the sophistication of the video.
- ❏ **Videography:** (15 points) Good shot composition, varied shots. Lack of unnecessary camera movement (steady).
- ❏ **Audio:** (15 points) Sound is clear. Levels are consistent throughout. Sound elements add to overall production and don't distract. If sound is absent because of choice, rationale for not including sound should be stated in the description.
- ❏ **Graphics/Text:** (10 points) Graphics add to the understanding of the production and do not distract. Are free of spelling errors.
- ❏ **Purpose:** (10 points) A clear concept or idea is evident for the project, generally intended to inform, instruct or enlighten.
- ❏ **Originality:** (10 points) student created something new and personally creative. Project has its own look and feel and stands out in comparison to others.
- ❏ **Overall Production:** (10 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product.

100 points TOTAL

How to Enter Creative Media Submissions

Entering videos:

Step 1: The entrant must name their video file using the following convention:

"Category_School_Title"
For example:
"Commercial_Brentwood_Spartan t-shirt sale"

Step 2: In order to screen your video at the Student Festival, place one copy of each video into a folder in your Google Drive.
Name the folder using your school name and the year, for example:: "Brentwood HS 2025."
- Into this single folder, place an exported version of each of your school's entries.
- Size for each entry: less than 1GB
- Format: .MOV or .MP4, preferred
- Name the exported file using the following convention: "Category_School_Title." For example: "Commercial_Brentwood_Spartan t-shirt sale"
- Using the blue 'Share' button, share the school's folder with dmacfestival2026@gmail.com
- Be sure that you grant dmacfestival2026@gmail.com the rights to *edit* the documents inside (so that the volunteers from RMU's staff can download the entries for playback at the festival without any further actions from you).

NOTE: Video submissions NO LONGER need to be uploaded to YouTube as of the 2021-2022 competition year!

Step 3: Complete the online Google submission form. The form can be found **here**

Be sure to complete the copyright section of the form (thoroughly answering each question) to avoid disqualification. Please note, if the entry includes any copyright-protected material, you will need to carefully and completely explain why the entrant has the right to use any clips, tracks, images, or effects.
This includes:
- Describing what licenses apply to the works used in the video (sound effects, music, video clips, images, logos, etc.). If you created your own music, etc., please include details about and a release from the author. If you are claiming Fair Use of a copyright-protected work, please explain clearly and fully why the inclusion falls under Fair Use doctrine.
- Provide the URLs for your borrowed work. If the work's creator granted you permission via email, upload the email (including time/date stamp and all prior messages in the email string) as a Google document and provide the URL.

Video Categories: Creative Media

Cat. #	Audio/Video Categories: Broadcast Media
	Special Instructions for ALL Broadcast Media Categories: ● Any student submission will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons. ● A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' material such as the use of a template or uncleared music OR use of AI. Videos that lack proof of complete copyright clearances are also subject to disqualification. Additionally, failure to fully complete the copyright section of the submission form will result in disqualification. ● All videos must include a non-animated slate containing the name of school, category of video and name of production. ● Submissions in the category must provide a **sharable link (with EDIT capabilities) in Google DRIVE to download.**

| 10 | **News Package**
A hard news package covers an important school or community topic. Hard news stories include "need to know" information and are timely at the time of publication.

Generally, a news package will sometimes include: a "standup" where the reporter introduces the story, b-roll, and/or interviews with persons involved in the story (Sound On Tape). News packages may use graphics (charts/graphs/images and/or lower thirds) to clarify storytelling.

Category Specific Standards
● News packages do not contain underscoring music.
● **Length:** Up to 3 consecutive minutes of a self-contained news report. If you are sending some amount less than the entire piece, it is strongly recommended that you provide context for the excerpt in the description of your video entry.
● Slate is not included in the time limit. | **Entry Scoring Criteria**
❏ **Slate** (5 points) that includes category, school, and title of submission appearing at the beginning of the video. (Not included in time limit)
❏ **Length:** (10 points) Video should be no more than **3 minutes**.
❏ **Broadcast writing style:** (10 points) short sentences, present tense, conversational, clear, informal. Necessary and interesting information selected. Storyline effectively developed.
❏ **News Elements:** (10 points) Piece focuses on a newsworthy subject that takes into account prominence, proximity, consequence, and conflict.
❏ **Videography:** (15 points) Good shot composition, varied shots. Lack of unnecessary camera movement (steady).
❏ **Editing:** (15 points) What we hear is what we see. Free of glitches, jump cuts. Natural sound enhances the story. Relevant and interesting sound bites. Effective use of pacing and transitional elements. Logical sequencing. Effective use of soundbites to tell a story.
❏ **Audio:** (15 points) Entry includes a voice track and NAT sound. Soundbite levels are consistent.
❏ **Graphics/Lower Thirds:** (10 points) Graphics used to identify people, reporter, location(s). Other graphics add to understanding of the story. Graphics are free of spelling errors.
❏ **Overall Production:** (10 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product.

100 points TOTAL |

Audio/Video Categories: Broadcast Media

Cat. #	

Special Instructions for ALL Broadcast Media Categories:
- Any student submission will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons.
- A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' material such as the use of a template or uncleared music OR use of AI. Videos that lack proof of complete copyright clearances are also subject to disqualification. Additionally, failure to fully complete the copyright section of the submission form will result in disqualification.
- All videos must include a non-animated slate containing the name of school, category of video and name of production.
- Submissions in the category must provide a **sharable link (with EDIT capabilities) in Google DRIVE to download.**

11

Feature Package

Up to three consecutive minutes of a television feature package. Features are typically "nice" to know information rather than the "need" to know information you would see in a news package.

Feature packages demonstrate a depth of coverage, presenting multiple points of view and/or explanations or predictions. The topic of a feature package can be nearly anything: sports, news, special interest, exposé, personal profiles, etc.

Category Specific Standards
- Feature packages do not contain underscoring music.
- **Length:** Up to 3 consecutive minutes of a self-contained news report. If you are sending some amount less than the entire piece, it is strongly recommended that you provide context for the excerpt in the description of your video entry.
- Slate not included in the time limit.

Entry Scoring Criteria
- ❏ **Slate** (5 points) that includes category, school, and title of submission appearing at the beginning of the video. (Not included in time limit)
- ❏ **Length:** (10 points) Video should be no more than **3 minutes**.
- ❏ **Broadcast writing style:** (10 points) short sentences, present tense, conversational, clear, informal. Necessary and interesting information selected. Storyline effectively developed.
- ❏ **News Elements:** (10 points) Piece focuses on a newsworthy subject that takes into account prominence, proximity, consequence, and conflict.
- ❏ **Videography:** (15 points) Good shot composition, varied shots. Lack of unnecessary camera movement (steady).
- ❏ **Editing:** (15 points) What we hear is what we see. Free of glitches, jump cuts. Natural sound enhances the story. Relevant and interesting sound bites. Effective use of pacing and transitional elements. Logical sequencing. Effective use of soundbites to tell a story.
- ❏ **Audio:** (15 points) Entry includes a voice track and NAT sound. Soundbite levels are consistent.
- ❏ **Graphics/Lower Thirds:** (10 points) Graphics used to identify people, reporter, location(s). Other graphics add to understanding of the story. Graphics are free of spelling errors.
- ❏ **Overall Production:** (10 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product.

100 points TOTAL

Audio/Video Categories: Broadcast Media

Cat. #	

Special Instructions for ALL Broadcast Media Categories:
- Any student submission will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons.
- A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' material such as the use of a template or uncleared music OR use of AI. Videos that lack proof of complete copyright clearances are also subject to disqualification. Additionally, failure to fully complete the copyright section of the submission form will result in disqualification.
- All videos must include a non-animated slate containing the name of school, category of video and name of production.
- Submissions in the category must provide a **sharable link (with EDIT capabilities) in Google DRIVE to download.**

12

Instructional
A video that teaches a skill, technique, process, or procedure. Created for a specific audience, these videos can be about any subject; however, the primary goal must be to demonstrate a process, technique, or skill. An exceptional instructional video will use a variety of shot types, angles, and other demonstrative techniques to educate the viewer.

Category Specific Standards
- **Length:** Up to 3 consecutive minutes of an instructional video. If you are sending some amount less than the entire piece, it is strongly recommended that you provide context for the excerpt in the description of your video entry.
- Slate not included in the time limit.

Entry Scoring Criteria
- ❑ **Slate** (5 points) that includes category, school, and title of submission appearing at the beginning of the video. (Not included in time limit)
- ❑ **Length:** (10 Points) Video does not exceed **3 minutes**.
- ❑ **Videography:** (15 points) Good shot composition, varied shots. Lack of unnecessary camera movement (steady).
- ❑ **Audio:** (15 points) Sound is clear. Levels are consistent throughout. Sound elements add to overall production and don't distract. If sound is absent because of choice, rationale for not including sound should be stated in the description.
- ❑ **Video Editing:** (15 points) Free of glitches, jump cuts. Smooth and fluid transitions throughout. Project incorporates multiple editing techniques that add to the sophistication of the video.
- ❑ **Graphics/Text:** (10 points) Graphics add to the understanding of the production and do not distract. Are free of spelling errors.
- ❑ **Purpose:** (10 points) A clear concept or idea is evident. Project demonstrates a process, technique, or skill.
- ❑ **Originality:** (10 points) student created something new and personally creative. Project has its own look and feel and completely stands out in comparison to others.
- ❑ **Overall Production:** (10 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product.

100 points TOTAL

Audio/Video Categories: Broadcast Journalism

Cat. #	

Special Instructions for ALL Broadcast Media Categories:
- Any student submission will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons.
- A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' material such as the use of a template or uncleared music OR use of AI. Videos that lack proof of complete copyright clearances are also subject to disqualification. Additionally, failure to fully complete the copyright section of the submission form will result in disqualification.
- All videos must include a non-animated slate containing the name of school, category of video and name of production.
- Submissions in the category must provide a **sharable link (with EDIT capabilities) in Google DRIVE to download.**

13

Live or Streamed Event

Up to three consecutive minutes of continuous coverage of a live event. The entry demonstrates no post-production editing, only live switching from multiple cameras or continuous coverage of an event from a single camera. If you are sending some amount less than the entire piece, it is strongly recommended that you provide context for the excerpt in the comments of your posted video. (Live or live-to-tape school announcements will not be accepted in this category, please enter these in the school announcements category.)

Category Specific Standards
- **Length:** Up to 3 consecutive minutes of a self-contained news report. If you are sending some amount less than the entire piece, it is strongly recommended that you provide context for the excerpt in the description of your video entry.
- Slate is not included in the time limit.

Entry Scoring Criteria
- ❏ **Slate** (5 points) that includes category, school, and title of submission appearing at the beginning of the video. (Not included in time limit)
- ❏ **Length:** (10 points) Video does not exceed **3 minutes**.
- ❏ **Lighting:** (10 points) Additional lighting is used to eliminate shadows and glares. All scenes have sufficient lighting for viewer to easily see action.
- ❏ **Videography:** (15 points) Good shot composition, varied shots. Lack of unnecessary camera movement (steady).
- ❏ **Audio:** (15 points) Sound is clear. Levels are consistent throughout. Sound elements add to overall production and don't distract. Ambient audio is kept in balance.
- ❏ **Transitions and Pacing :** (15 points) Video transitions smoothly from shot to shot. All video clips fit the subject. Pace captures attention and is consistent.
- ❏ **News Elements:** (10 points) Piece focuses on a newsworthy subject that takes into account prominence, proximity, consequence, and conflict.
- ❏ **Graphics/Lower Thirds:** (10 points) Graphics used identify people, reporter, location(s). Other graphics add to understanding of the story. Graphics are free of spelling errors.
- ❏ **Overall Production:** (10 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product.

100 points TOTAL

Cat. #	**Audio/Video Categories: Broadcast Journalism**

Special Instructions for ALL Broadcast Media Categories:
- Any student submission will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons.
- A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' material such as the use of a template or uncleared music OR use of AI. Videos that lack proof of complete copyright clearances are also subject to disqualification. Additionally, failure to fully complete the copyright section of the submission form will result in disqualification.
- All videos must include a non-animated slate containing the name of school, category of video and name of production.
- Submissions in the category must provide a **sharable link (with EDIT capabilities) in Google DRIVE to download.**

14

School Announcements
Up to three consecutive minutes of a single episode of a live (or live-to-tape) daily or monthly announcements show. Productions may include a show open/opening sequence that is repeated each episode. Productions may also include a repeated, edited sequence for the Pledge of Allegiance. The body of the show will be made up of the student talents reporting the announcements.

Category Specific Standards
- **Length:** Up to 3 consecutive minutes of a self-contained news report. If you are sending some amount less than the entire piece, it is strongly recommended that you provide context for the excerpt in the description of your video entry.
- Slate not included in the time limit.

Entry Scoring Criteria
- ❏ **Slate** (5 points) that includes category, school, and title of submission appearing at the beginning of the video. (Not included in time limit)
- ❏ **Length:** (10 points) Video does not exceed **3 minutes**.
- ❏ **Videography:** (15 points) Good shot composition, varied shots. Lack of unnecessary camera movement (steady).
- ❏ **Lighting:** (15 points) Additional lighting is used to eliminate shadows and glares. All scenes have sufficient lighting.
- ❏ **Audio:** (15 points) Sound is clear. Levels are consistent throughout. Sound elements add to overall production and don't distract.
- ❏ **Graphics/Text:** (10 points) Graphics add to the understanding of the production and do not distract. Graphics are free of spelling errors.
- ❏ **Talent:** (10 points) Is dressed in school appropriate attire. Pronounces each word clearly. Makes great eye contact with camera and/or peers.
- ❏ **Purpose:** (10 points) A clear concept or idea is evident. Project conveys school announcements in an effective manner.
- ❏ **Overall Production:** (10 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product.

100 points TOTAL

Cat. #	Audio/Video Categories: Broadcast Media
	Special Instructions for ALL Broadcast Journalism Categories: ● Any student submission will be disqualified if there is any depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons. ● A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' material such as the use of a template or uncleared music OR use of AI. Videos that lack proof of complete copyright clearances are also subject to disqualification. Additionally, failure to fully complete the copyright section of the submission form will result in disqualification. ● Submissions in the category must provide a **sharable link (with EDIT capabilities) in Google DRIVE to download.**

| 15 | **Podcast**
A podcast is a series of spoken word, audio episodes, all focused on a particular topic or theme. It combines voice, music, and even other sound elements to create an engaging experience that can be listened to while doing something else. Typically, podcasters create a brand and position themselves as an expert in a topic, series of topics or in a certain sector. Good podcasts are built around one idea or concept, and it sticks to it. All genres are welcome (interview, conversational/co-hosted, solo, panel discussion).

Podcasts can be ongoing or complete. Episodes can be standalone or part of a series.

Length:
NOTE: No longer than 15 min. Judging will be based on the first 5 minutes only, with the remainder included for context.

** Video podcast submissions will not be accepted at this time. Audio submissions ONLY.**

For this category, please submit your entry as an **MP3**. | **Entry Scoring Criteria**
❑ **Introduction:** (5 points) Introduction identifies the name of the podcast and the hosts/guests.
❑ **Length:** (5 points) Podcast does not exceed **15 minutes. Judging will be based on the first 5 minutes only**, with the remainder included for context.
❑ **Content:** (15 points) Discussion is engaging, insightful, informative, entertaining, stays focused. Listener doesn't want to "fast-forward." Podcast effectively uses conversation, storytelling and/or interviewing to entertain and/or inform listeners. Feels well-planned.
❑ **Flow:** (15 points) Podcast makes productive use of time to maintain listener interest. It includes a beginning, middle and end to produce a complete listening experience within a limited time frame.
❑ **Format:** (15 points) Opening catches listener's attention, presents a clear purpose, engages the listener. Podcaster sticks to the focus and format throughout the podcast.
❑ **Technical Production:** (15 points) Presentation is recorded without distractions or background noise. Attention to volume levels, voice, music and sound effects are considered. Time has been spent editing to remove unnecessary or repetitive information ensuring clarity.
❑ **Personality:** (10 points) Host(s) have strong presentation and speaking skills that come through on audio. Host keeps the conversation flowing and is skilled in presenting the topic and keeping a pace.
❑ **Originality:** (10 points) Podcast is creative. It stands out in comparison.
❑ **Conventions:** (5 points) Podcaster uses appropriate grammar and language appropriate for the audience.
❑ **Overall Production:** (5 points) The final production is cohesive and produces an enjoyable finished product.

100 points TOTAL |

How to Enter Your Broadcast Media Submission

Entering audio/video files:

Step 1: The entrant must name their video file using the following convention:

"Category_School_Title"
For example:
"Commercial_Brentwood_Spartan t-shirt sale"

Step 2: Complete the online Google submission form. The form can be found **here**

Be sure to complete the copyright section of the form (thoroughly answering each question) to avoid disqualification. Please note, if the entry includes any copyright-protected material, you will need to carefully and completely explain why the entrant has the right to use any clips, tracks, images, or effects.
   This includes:
- Describing what licenses apply to the works used in the video (sound effects, music, video clips, images, logos, etc.). If you created your own music, etc., please include details about and a release from the author. If you are claiming Fair Use of a copyright-protected work, please explain clearly and fully why the inclusion falls under Fair Use doctrine.
- Provide the URLs for your borrowed work. If the work's creator granted you permission via email, upload the email (including time/date stamp and all prior messages in the email string) as a Google document and provide the URL for that document.

Step 3: In order to screen your entry at the Student Festival, place one copy of each file into a folder in your Google Drive.
Name the folder using your school name and the year: "Brentwood HS 2026."
- Into this single folder, place an exported version of each of your school's entries.
- Size for each entry: less than 1GB
- Audio Format: MP3
- Video Format: .MOV or .MP4, preferred
- Name the exported file using the following convention: "Category_School_Title." For example: "Commercial_Brentwood_Spartan t-shirt sale"
- Using the blue 'Share' button, share the school's folder with dmacfestival2026@gmail.com
- Be sure that you grant dmacfestival2026@gmail.com the rights to *edit* the documents inside (so that the volunteers from RMU's staff can download the entries for playback at the festival without any further actions from you).

NOTE: Submissions NO LONGER need to be uploaded to YouTube as of the 2021-2022 competition year!

Print Media: Photography Categories

Cat. #	
	Special Instructions for ALL Photography Categories: ● The copyright portion for the online submission form is extremely important so contest officials know the photographer had permission to photograph the subject. ● Photo must have been taken after March 20, 2025. ● Any student submissions will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons. ● A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any "non-original"' material, OR use of AI. ● Entrants will need to submit a link to the photo file (.jpg) in the school's Google Drive folder. **(See page 25 for more detailed submission information.)**

| 16 | **Black and White Photography**
A photograph where colors have been converted to black and white. Subject matter for photographs may be artistic or journalistic in nature.

Entry Specific Standards
● Image may contain minor tonal contrast/cropping adjustments in photography software. | **Entry Scoring Criteria**
❏ **Composition** (20 points) Basic rules of composition, rule of thirds, head room, lead room, framing, etc. are followed effectively.
❏ **Exposure** (20 points) Demonstrates a good understanding of shutter speed, aperture, ISO.
❏ **Contrast** (15 points) Levels of black and white are crisp, full range of values are represented.
❏ **Focus** (15 points) Depth of field/focus is appropriate. Subjects are clear. The focus adds to and does not detract from the overall image.
❏ **Theme** (15 points) The photograph tells a compelling story (personal, emotional, powerful, etc.) by creating interest for the viewer.
❏ **Originality** (15 points) student created something new and personally creative. Photograph has its own look and feel and stands out in comparison to others.

100 points TOTAL |

Cat. #	Print Media: Photography Categories	
	Special Instructions for ALL Photography Categories: ● The copyright portion for the online submission form is extremely important so contest officials know the photographer had permission to photograph the subject. ● Photo must have been taken after March 20, 2025. ● Any student submissions will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons. ● A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any "non-original"' material, OR use of AI. ● Entrants will need to submit a link to the photo file (.jpg) in the school's Google Drive folder. **(See page 25 for more detailed submission information.)**	
17	**News/Feature Photojournalism** A color news, feature, or sports photograph that captures a school or community, person or event. **Entry Specific Standards** ● Image may contain minor color/tone/cropping adjustments in photography software.	**Entry Scoring Criteria** ❏ **Composition** (20 points) Basic rules of composition, rule of thirds, head room, lead room, framing, etc. are followed effectively. ❏ **Exposure** (20 points) Demonstrates a good understanding of shutter speed, aperture, ISO. ❏ **Color/Contrast** (15 points) Excellent range of color tones and contrast. ❏ **Focus** (15 points) Depth of field/focus is appropriate. Subjects are clear. The focus adds to and does not detract from the overall image. ❏ **Newsworthiness** (10 points) Photo captures a newsworthy moment and tells a story. ❏ **Originality** (10 points) The student took the photograph from a unique perspective or captured a unique moment in time. The photograph has its own look and feel and stands out in comparison to others. ❏ **Cutline/Caption** (10 points) Two sentences that describe the who, what, when, where about the photo and any other relevant information needed to understand what is happening or that would accompany the story. ** This should be added into the Google Drive Photo File. Go to: Three-Dot Menu > Details > Description. Type out the cutline in the description box by choosing EDIT DESCRIPTION. Press Enter when the description is complete. **100 points TOTAL**

Cat. #	Print Media: Photography Categories	
	Special Instructions for ALL Photography Categories: ● The copyright portion for the online submission form is extremely important so contest officials know the photographer had permission to photograph the subject. ● Photo must have been taken after March 20, 2025. ● Any student submissions will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons. ● A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any "non-original"' material, OR use of AI. ● Entrants will need to submit a link to the photo file (.jpg) in the school's Google Drive folder. **(See page 25 for more detailed submission information.)**	
18	**Sports Photojournalism** An action sports photograph that captures a school or community sporting event. **Entry Specific Standards** ● Images may contain minor color/tone/cropping adjustments in photography software.	**Entry Scoring Criteria** ❑ **Composition** (20 points) Basic rules of composition, rule of thirds, head room, lead room, framing, etc. are followed effectively. ❑ **Exposure** (20 points) Demonstrates a good understanding of shutter speed, aperture, ISO. ❑ **Color/Contrast** (15 points) Excellent range of color tones and contrast. ❑ **Focus** (15 points) Depth of field/focus is appropriate. Subjects are clear. The focus adds to and does not detract from the overall image. ❑ **Newsworthiness** (10 points) Photo captures a newsworthy moment and tells a story. ❑ **Originality** (10 points) The student took the photograph from a unique perspective or captured a unique moment in time. The photograph has its own look and feel and stands out in comparison to others. ❑ **Cutline/Caption** (10 points) Two sentences that describe the who, what, when, where about the photo and any other relevant information needed to understand what is happening or that would accompany the story. ** This should be added into the Google Drive Photo File. Go to: Three-Dot Menu > Details > Description. Type out the cutline in the description box by choosing EDIT DESCRIPTION. Press Enter when the description is complete. **100 points TOTAL**

Print Media: Photography Categories

Cat. #	

Special Instructions for ALL Photography Categories:
- The copyright portion for the online submission form is extremely important so contest officials know the photographer had permission to photograph the subject.
- Entry must have been created after March 20, 2025.
- Any student submissions will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons.
- A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any "non-original"' material, OR use of AI.
- Entrants will need to submit a link to the photo file (.jpg) in the school's Google Drive folder. **(See page 25 for more detailed submission information.)**

19

Photo Illustration

An image utilizing graphic design software such as Adobe Photoshop. Design includes original photography and original graphic design.

A photo illustration is a photograph that utilizes a variety of graphic design elements layered within and on top of the original image.

Entry Specific Standards
- Design can be completely created in graphic design software such as Adobe Photoshop or include an original image that has been manipulated in design software.
- Illustration MUST not include any copyrighted images, only original designs.
- Use of templates is prohibited.

Entry Scoring Criteria
- ❏ **Complexity of the design** (20 points) Illustration contains multiple layers within the illustration. The illustration shows understanding and use of the elements and principles of design.
- ❏ **Attractiveness** (20 points) Illustration is clear and pleasing to the eye when looking at it.
- ❏ **Color** (15 points) Choice and application of color shows an advanced knowledge of color relationships. Color choice enhances the idea being expressed.
- ❏ **Craftsmanship** (15 points) Illustration shows excellent skill and craftsmanship evident in all project details.
- ❏ **Theme/Purpose** (15 points) A clear concept or idea is evident. Project conveys a theme or purpose in an effective manner.
- ❏ **Originality** (15 points)The student created something new and personally creative. Illustration has its own look and feel and stands out in comparison to others.

100 points TOTAL

Cat. #	**Print Media: Photography Categories**	
	Special Instructions for ALL Photography Categories: ● The copyright portion for the online submission form is extremely important so contest officials know the photographer had permission to photograph the subject. ● Entry must have been created after March 20, 2025. ● Any student submissions will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons. ● A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any "non-original"' material, OR use of AI. ● Entrants will need to create a PDF of the page layout in the school's shared folder in Google drive so they are able to attach the link to the submission form. **(See page 25 for more detailed submission information.)**	
0	**Newspaper/Magazine/Yearbook Page Design** Layout design published in a school's newspaper, news magazine, literary magazine, or yearbook are eligible for this category. They would have used layout software to arrange the text, photographs and graphics in aesthetically pleasing and easy-to-read designs. To qualify in this category, a page design had to be created originally by the entrant. No templates are to be used. **Entry Specific Standards** ● A color PDF of the page design should be included. This could be a one page design or a two-page spread. ● Layout MUST not include any copyrighted images, only original designs. ● Use of templates is prohibited.	**Entry Scoring Criteria** ❑ **Complexity of the design** (15 points) The layout shows understanding and use of the elements and principles of design. ❑ **Visual effectiveness** (15 points) The finished layout communicates the article's theme, audience, organizational structure, and/or events and tell the visual story effectively. There is a balance of elements on the page(s). ❑ **Typography** (15 points) Skills in tracking, kerning and leading are of evident. Student has selected font face based on the effect on the overall piece. Font selection reflects the theme of the piece. Fonts are exceptionally congruent and present a unified and harmonic flow of type. ❑ **Color** (15 points) Choice and application of color shows an advanced knowledge of color relationships. Color choice enhances the idea being expressed. ❑ **Craftsmanship** (15 points) Project contains elements that combine seamlessly to intensify the piece's visual design and elevate the design to a comprehensive and complete whole. ❑ **Story/Purpose** (15 points) A clear concept or idea is evident. Design conveys a theme or purpose in an effective manner. ❑ **Originality** (10 points) The student created something new and creative. Layout has its own look and feel and stands out in comparison to others. **100 points TOTAL**

How to Enter Your Print Media: Photography Submission

Entering Photography:
Step 1: The entrant must name their photography file using the following convention:
"Category_School_Title." For example:
"Commercial_Brentwood_Spartan t-shirt sale"

Step 2: In order to view your photograph at the Student Festival, place one copy of each photograph file into a folder in your Google Drive.
- Name the folder using your school name and the year: "Brentwood HS 2026."
- Into this single folder, place each of your school's entries.
- Size for each entry: less than 1GB
- Using the blue 'Share' button, share the school's FOLDER with dmacfestival2026@gmail.com
- Be sure that you grant dmacfestival2026@gmail.com the rights to *edit* the documents inside (so that the volunteers from RMU's staff can download the entries for playback at the festival without any further actions from you).

FOR CATEGORIES # 16 & #17: Adding Cutlines/Captions to Photojournalism Entries:
Two sentences that describe the who, what, when, where about the photo and any other relevant information needed to understand what is happening or that would accompany the story. Once the photo file is in Google Drive, go to: Three-Dot Menu > Details > Description. Type out the cutline in the description box by choosing EDIT DESCRIPTION. Press Enter when the description is complete.

Step 3: Complete the online Google submission form. The form can be found **here**

- Include the shareable link for each photograph entry.
- Be sure to complete the copyright section of the form (thoroughly answering each question) to avoid disqualification. Please note, if the entry includes any copyright-protected material, you will need to carefully and completely explain why the entrant has the right to use any clips, tracks, images, or effects.
- Provide the URLs for your borrowed work. If the work's creator granted you permission via email, upload the email (including time/date stamp and all prior messages in the email string) as a Google document and provide the URL for that document.

Print Categories: Photography

Cat. #	Print Media: Journalistic Article Categories

Special Instructions for ALL Article Categories:
- Articles must have been written for a school publication either hard copy or electronic after March 20, 2025.
- Article includes a headline and a byline. Only the **writing** of this submission will be judged. Any other graphics or photography on the page will not be included in the judge's scoring.
- Article must follow Associated Press Style
- A submission can be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' material, OR use of AI.
- Entrants will need to create a PDF in the school's shared folder in Google DRIVE so they are able to attach the link to the submission form. **(See page 30 for more detailed submission information.)**

21	**Feature Article**	**Entry Scoring Criteria**

21

Feature Article

A feature article covering a school or community person/event. Feature stories include "nice to know" information and focus on human interest topics. Feature stories demonstrate a depth of coverage, presenting multiple points of view and/or explanations or predictions. The topic of a feature story is broad: sports, news, special interest, exposé, personal profiles, etc.

Category Specific Standards
- Article is written in third person and contains no opinion.
- Should include quotations from interviews as well as reported information and facts.

Entry Scoring Criteria
- ❑ **Headline/Lede** (10 points) Headline creatively captures the interest of the reader. Compelling lede hooks the reader.
- ❑ **Angle/Purpose** (10 points) Clear, interesting, central focus/angle used consistently throughout the story. Written to inform.
- ❑ **Sentence Fluency** (10 points) (Contains sentences that are concise and well-built. Variety of sentence beginnings. Natural rhythm, cadence, and flow where the quotes presented drive the story.
- ❑ **Word Choice** (10 points) Uses precise language and eliminates unnecessary wordiness. Refrains from redundancy. Avoids cliches.
- ❑ **Content** (10 points) Focuses on the topic at hand. Effectively incorporates source material and background information with relevant, colorful quotes. Shows evidence of good research and interviewing.
- ❑ **Ws and H** (10 points): Article adequately addresses the 5 W's (who, what, when, where and how & why).
- ❑ **Sources** (10 points) Evidence of reporter trying to get as many sources as necessary to adequately present all sides in the story; all are identified; info is properly attributed; all info is accurate, thorough; uses best sources
- ❑ **Organization** (10 points) Skillfully transitions between ideas. Uses quotations liberally without stating the obvious/repeating information.
- ❑ **Conventions** (10 points) Demonstrates great spelling, subject/verb agreement, tense. Adheres to AP Style.
- ❑ **Originality:** (10 points) student takes an original approach to the topic.

100 points TOTAL

Cat. #	Print Media: Journalistic Article Categories
	Special Instructions for ALL Article Categories: ● Articles must have been written for a school publication either hard copy or electronic after March 20, 2025. ● Article includes a headline and a byline. Only the **writing** of this submission will be judged. Any other graphics or photography on the page will not be included in the judge's scoring. ● Article must follow Associated Press Style ● A submission can be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' materia, OR use of AI. ● Entrants will need to create a PDF in the school's shared folder in Google DRIVE so they are able to attach the link to the submission form. **(See page 30 for more detailed submission information.)**
22	**Hard News Article** A hard news article covering an important school or community topic. Hard news stories include "need to know" information and are timely at the time of publication. **Category Specific Standards** ● Article is written in third person and contains no opinion. **Entry Scoring Criteria** ❏ **Headline/Lede** (10 points) Headline creatively captures the interest of the reader. Compelling lede hooks the reader. ❏ **Angle/Purpose** (10 points) Clear, interesting, central focus/angle used consistently throughout the story. Written to inform. ❏ **Sentence Fluency** (10 points) (Contains sentences that are concise and well-built. Variety of sentence beginnings. Natural rhythm, cadence, and flow where the quotes presented drive the story. ❏ **Word Choice** (10 points) Uses precise language and eliminates unnecessary wordiness. Refrains from redundancy. Avoids cliches. ❏ **Content** (10 points) Focuses on the topic at hand. Effectively incorporates source material and background information with relevant, colorful quotes. Shows evidence of good research and interviewing. ❏ **Ws and H** (10 points) Article adequately addresses the 5 W's (who, what, when, where and how & why). ❏ **Sources** (10 points) Evidence of reporter trying to get as many sources as necessary to adequately present all sides in the story; all are identified; info is properly attributed; all info is accurate, thorough; uses best sources ❏ **Organization** (10 points) Skillfully transitions between ideas. Uses quotations liberally without stating the obvious/repeating info. ❏ **Conventions** (10 points) Demonstrates great spelling, subject/verb agreement, tense. Adheres to AP Style. ❏ **Originality:** (10 points) student takes an original approach to the topic. **100 points TOTAL**

Cat.#	Print Media: Journalistic Article Categories
	Special Instructions for ALL Article Categories: ● Articles must have been written for a school publication either hard copy or electronic after March 20, 2025. ● Article includes a headline and a byline. Only the **writing** of this submission will be judged. Any other graphics or photography on the page will not be included in the judge's scoring. ● Article must follow Associated Press Style ● A submission can be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' material, OR use of AI. ● Entrants will need to create a PDF in the school's shared folder in Google Drive so they are able to attach the link to the submission form. **(See page 30 for more detailed submission information.)**

| 23 | **Sports Article**
A sports article covering a school or community sporting event. Sports stories can be written as hard news or feature style.

Category Specific Standards
● Article is written in third person and contains no opinion. | **Entry Scoring Criteria**
❏ **Headline/Lede** (10 points) Headline creatively captures the interest of the reader. Compelling lede hooks the reader.
❏ **Angle/Purpose** (10 points) Clear, interesting, central focus/angle used consistently throughout the story. Written to inform.
❏ **Sentence Fluency** (10 points) (Contains sentences that are concise and well-built. Variety of sentence beginnings. Natural rhythm, cadence, and flow where the quotes presented drive the story.
❏ **Word Choice** (10 points) Uses precise language and eliminates unnecessary wordiness. Refrains from redundancy. Avoids cliches.
❏ **Content** (10 points) Focuses on the topic at hand. Effectively incorporates source material and background information with relevant, colorful quotes. Shows evidence of good research and interviewing.
❏ **Ws and H** (10 points) Article adequately addresses the 5 W's (who, what, when, where and how & why).
❏ **Sources** (10 points) Evidence of reporter trying to get as many sources as necessary to adequately present all sides in the story; all are identified; info is properly attributed; all info is accurate, thorough; uses best sources
❏ **Organization** (10 points) Skillfully transitions between ideas. Uses quotations liberally without stating the obvious/repeating information.
❏ **Conventions** (10 points) Demonstrates great spelling, subject/verb agreement, tense. Adheres to AP Style.
❏ **Originality:** (10 points) student takes an original approach to the topic.

100 points TOTAL |

Print Media: Journalistic Article Categories

Cat. #	
	Special Instructions for ALL Article Categories: ● Articles must have been written for a school publication either hard copy or electronic after March 20, 2025. ● Article includes a headline and a byline. Only the **writing** of this submission will be judged. Any other graphics or photography on the page will not be included in the judge's scoring. ● Article must follow Associated Press Style ● A submission can be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' material, OR use of AI.. ● Entrants will need to create a PDF in the school's shared folder in Google DRIVE so they are able to attach the link to the submission form. **(See page 30 for more detailed submission information.)**
24	**Opinion/Editorial Article** An article that presents the opinion of the newspaper's editors or that of an individual reporter on a particular topic. Opinion articles can be written in first or third person perspective. **Category Specific Standards** ● Article will contain opinion of the writer or the staff as a whole and can also contain facts that are attributed to outside sources. **Entry Scoring Criteria** ❏ **Headline/Lede** (10 points) Headline creatively captures the interest of the reader. Compelling lede hooks the reader. ❏ **Angle/Purpose** (10 points) Clear, interesting, central focus/angle used consistently throughout the story. Written to persuade. ❏ **Sentence Fluency** (10 points) (Contains sentences that are concise and well-built. Variety of sentence beginnings. Natural rhythm, cadence, and flow where the quotes presented drive the story. ❏ **Word Choice** (10 points) Uses precise language and eliminates unnecessary wordiness. Refrains from redundancy. Avoids cliches. ❏ **Content** (10 points) Focuses on the topic at hand. Effectively incorporates source material and opinion. Shows evidence of good research and persuasive points. ❏ **Ws and H** (10 points) Article adequately addresses the 5 W's (who, what, when, where and how & why) of a topic. ❏ **Sources** (10 points) Evidence of reporter trying to get as many sources as necessary to adequately present all sides in the story; all are identified; info is properly attributed ❏ **Organization** (10 points) Skillfully transitions between ideas. ❏ **Conventions** (10 points) Demonstrates great spelling, subject/verb agreement, tense. Adheres to AP Style. ❏ **Originality:** (10 points) student takes an original approach to the topic. **100 points TOTAL**

How to Enter Your Print Media: Journalistic Article Submission

Entering Articles:

Step 1: The entrant must have their name and school in the byline of the article.

Save your article as a PDF and name it in the following way: "Category_School_Title." For example: "Commercial_Brentwood_Spartan t-shirt sale"

Step 2: In order to view your article to be featured at the Student Festival in April, place one PDF copy of each article into a folder in your Google Drive.
- Name the folder using your school name and the year, for example: "Brentwood HS 2026."
- Into this single folder, place a PDF version of each of your school's entries.
- Size for each entry: less than 1GB
- Using the blue 'Share' button, share the school's folder with dmacfestival2026@gmail.com
- Be sure that you grant dmacfestival2026@gmail.com the rights to **edit** the documents inside (so that the volunteers from RMU's staff can download the entries for playback at the festival without any further action from you.

Step 3: Complete the online Google submission form. The form can be found **here**

Print Categories: Journalistic Articles

Cat. #	Live Vote: Music Video
	Special Instructions for ALL Live Vote Submissions: ● Any submission will be disqualified if there is any visual depiction of violence, profanity, drug use, or the use of weapons. ● A submission can also be disqualified if the judges find it to contain any 'non-original' material such as the use of a template or unoriginal music, OR use of AI. Videos that lack proof of complete copyright clearances are also subject to disqualification. Additionally, failure to fully complete the copyright section of the submission form will result in disqualification. ● **For this category, DO NOT INCLUDE A SLATE containing the name of the school.** ● **NO footage of any submission can be repeated in any form across multiple categories.** ● Submissions in the category must provide a **sharable link (with EDIT capabilities) in Google DRIVE to download.**
25	**Music Video** Music videos use a range of styles of filmmaking, including animation, live action filming, documentaries, and non-narrative approaches such as abstract film. Some music videos blend different styles, such as narration and live action. Entrants must select one of the available options and create a video to it. The provided music options will include a variety of musical styles, to be made available after 2/14/26. **No other songs will be allowed in this category.** Lyric sheets will NOT be provided. **For this category only, the extended submission deadline is Tuesday, March 31, 2026 at 3:00 pm.** **Entries should NOT include a slate.** SPECIAL NOTE: **The Music Video category will be judged live at the Spring Festival scheduled for Thursday, 4/15/26. Students from schools attending the event in-person will be able to vote.**	**Please consider the following best practices when submitting for this category:** **Content** Structured & logical presentation Visual components correlate with song theme Narration & technical aspects appropriate **Cinematography** Viewer friendly Flows well Multiple angles/shots Follows Rule of Composition **Camerawork** Focus exposure/camera motion/camera movements White balance/composition/shot stability Treatment of subject **Lighting** Using available lighting to best advantage Lighting is appropriate to mood/theme **Audio** Levels modulated properly Appropriate mic. selection and placement Distinction between subject & background noise **Editing** Smooth movement from shot to shot Video clips fit theme Clips are of proper length to make point Pace maintains audience attention

How to Enter the Live Vote: Music Video category

Entering videos:

Step 1: The entrant must name their video file using the following convention:

"Category_School_Title"
For example:
"Commercial_Brentwood_Spartan t-shirt sale"

Step 2: In order to screen your video at the Student Festival, place one copy of it into a folder in your Google Drive.
Name the folder using your school name and the year: "Brentwood HS 2026."

- Into this single folder, place an exported version of each of your school's entries.
- Size for each entry: less than 1GB
- Format: .MOV or .MP4, preferred
- Name the exported file using the following convention: "Category_School_Title." For example: "Commercial_Brentwood_Spartan t-shirt sale"
- Using the blue 'Share' button, share the school's folder with dmacfestival2026@gmail.com
- Be sure that you grant dmacfestival2026@gmail.com the rights to *edit* the documents inside (so that RMU's staff can download the entries for playback at the festival without any further actions from you).

NOTE: Video submissions NO LONGER need to be uploaded to YouTube as of the 2021-2022 competition year!

Step 3: Complete the Google submission form specific to this category:
https://forms.gle/B4NTNSNr7JCxPAGW8

Be sure to complete the copyright section of the form (thoroughly answering each question) to avoid disqualification. Please note, if the entry includes any copyright-protected material, you will need to carefully and completely explain why the entrant has the right to use any clips, tracks, images, or effects.
   This includes:
- Describing what licenses apply to the works used in the video (sound effects, music, video clips, images, logos, etc.). If you created your own music, etc., please include details about and a release from the author. If you are claiming Fair Use of a copyright-protected work, please explain clearly and fully why the inclusion falls under Fair Use doctrine.
- Provide the URLs for your borrowed work. If the work's creator granted you permission via email, upload the email (including time/date stamp and all prior messages in the email string) as a Google document and provide the URL.