



# Harrisonburg City Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent

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“A dynamic and diverse community where learning has no limits and together we work for the success of all.”

February 10, 2023

To Whom it May Concern:

With great enthusiasm, I recommend Kasey Thompson for JEA Journalist of the Year. Over the last several years, I've gotten to know Kasey pretty well. Kasey and two other students asked me to join them on a panel at the JEA/NSPA conference in Los Angeles in April of 2022 on the topic of “Cultivating Relationships with your Administration.” The year prior, Kasey and other students had asked me to support legislation in the Virginia General Assembly that, if passed into law, would afford high school students free speech rights more in line with those of college students. That engendered a conversation on the rights and responsibilities of student journalists, and in particular high school journalists, and that conversation led to our conference panel. And so, I know Kasey well as a professional, creative, determined, and inspiring young journalist, who is fully deserving of the JEA Journalist of the Year award.

Some of Kasey's other notable accomplishments (and this is only a partial list) are that she currently serves the Harrisonburg High School Media program (HHS Media) as Editor in Chief after serving as managing editor her junior year and as a page editor her sophomore and freshman years. She has mentored younger student journalists, covered major news stories, and has penned some top-quality feature articles – two recent ones being “Russian, Ukrainian students speak out about war,” and one about the post-Pandemic emerging culture of youth violence (still in press).

Kasey is determined to pursue journalism in college and as a career, and I believe this is another trait that should be considered in this competition. She would make a first-rate journalist, and this award would recognize her for her passion, talent, and hard work and encourage her to follow this dream. Please consider this enthusiastic recommendation of Kasey Thompson as you make your choice for JEA Journalist of the Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael G. Richards'.

Michael G. Richards, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Harrisonburg City Public School