



## Wando High School

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Superintendent of Schools

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Executive Director of the Secondary  
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Principal

Dear SCSPA Journalist of the Year Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I am writing this letter in support of Sophie Winnick's nomination for SCSPA Journalist of the Year. Sophie's love of life, kindness, learning, photography, journalism, and the Carolina Panthers is palpable. Based on my experience with Sophie, I can say with confidence that she is one of the most naturally talented, committed, and hard-working students with whom I have had the opportunity to teach. In a word, she is exceptional.

Last year, Sophie was a student in my AP Language and Composition class, a class that is rigorous and challenging for most students, especially those involved in extra-curricular activities/sports. Sophie, however, was able to balance her yearbook responsibilities, her grueling AP course load, volunteering, and two jobs without sacrificing excellence. And when setbacks occur, Sophie does not make excuses. She does not push blame. She does not let them keep her down. The best example of this would be the Friday she was supposed to photograph a Wando football game and teach other photographers how to shoot the game. That afternoon her car overheated and in trying to fix the radiator on her own, she suffered second-degree burns. As a former yearbook adviser who struggled to get students to give up their Friday nights to cover an event (especially sports), capture the perfect shots, and teach others how to do the same, I know most students would have used this opportunity an excuse – albeit a legitimate one – to skip the event. Not Sophie. Nope. Sophie argued with her mother *and* the doctor assuring them her burns would not interfere with her ability to shoot those pictures. And, if you've looked at the 2016 *Legend*, you know that she was right. Not only did she fulfill her obligation to the yearbook and its staff, but she also completed her English assignments over the weekend and showed up prepared for class that Monday.

Perhaps one of the reasons Sophie is unlike her peers at school and the other nominees for this prestigious award is her spunk. She possesses an uncanny amount of wisdom, confidence, and humility. Before taking AP Language, she had read a number of the required reading books *just for fun*, books that many students do not read even when they are required. Yet, she reread them and reflected on how her perspective on the book shifted over time. She also listened with an open-mind when others shared their differing perspectives on the novels – and any “hot topic” up for class discussion.

When Sophie walks into a room, her determination is apparent; she knows she can – and will – accomplish her goals. Her goals, like her ideas, are big and unconventional, but her courage and her spirit and her commitment make them possible. Her vivaciousness is contagious and is evident by the growth in staff during her time as a part of the *Legend* staff. Because of her talent, journalistic integrity, and leadership she has been able to make sizable contributions to the staff, the school, scholastic journalists outside of Wando, and the community.

In short, Sophie's enthusiasm, talent, and leadership make her an exceptional – make her *the* – candidate for SCSPA Journalist of the Year Award. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Fox  
English Teacher