This Week’s Focus:
Planning Future Coverage

I’m a big proponent of working smarter, not harder. To that end, I have my students submit enterprise stories and projects each semester. The enterprise is something that won’t be published until the following semester, so the projects give students a chance to create an archive of material from which editors can select throughout the year. These projects range from in-depth, angle-based stories to detailed, full-spread graphics to multimedia offerings.

THE LESSON: CREATE A PROJECT PROPOSAL
The challenge for enterprise projects is to find story ideas that will be timely weeks or even months from now. Students should start by looking at a calendar to see what events may be happening in the next semester. Prom? Spring break? Graduation? Research can also play a role (see gathering data lesson at right). For example, what new data has emerged regarding gas prices or college admission rates? From there, students need to develop a journalistic question relating to their topic of choice, something for readers to think about.

For example, while many students usually go somewhere exotic for spring break, higher gas prices can make that trip more expensive. How are students and their families adjusting their plans to accommodate for those higher prices? In Issue #9, I provided a blank story proposal form. Here’s now a completed proposal form to show you what I look for. I encourage you to have your students make their own proposals.