



## **EDUCATION REPORTER**

### **Job Description**

**POSITION TITLE:** Education Reporter

**REPORTS TO:** Editor

**CLASSIFICATION:** Non-exempt, Full-Time

**Summary:** The Education Reporter covers K-12 schools, districts and educational policies in Santa Clara County for San José Spotlight. This reporter will excel at breaking news, cultivating relationships with education leaders, elected trustees and other sources to pursue exclusive enterprise stories that hold leaders accountable and help readers understand how complex policy decisions impact their lives. The Education Reporter works under the supervision of the editor. The position is one of the most visible reporting positions and, therefore, we expect a high level of professionalism, courtesy and the ability to ask tough questions, hold powerful officials accountable and challenge education leaders in the search for truth. This position also works closely with city and county agencies, government officials, politicians and elected leaders. The ideal candidate will be willing to take on a variety of assignments, juggle daily articles with long-term enterprise stories and demonstrate excellent communication, organizational and time-management skills.

This reporter must build our public education beat by developing and maintaining relationships with sources and demonstrating exceptional communication skills, including social media. They must possess the ability to write compelling copy -- quickly and accurately.

**About the Organization:** San José Spotlight is the city's only nonprofit news organization dedicated to independent political and business reporting. Our mission is to change the face of local journalism by building a community-supported newsroom that ignites civic engagement, educates citizens and strengthens our democracy.

### **Essential Responsibilities:**

#### **Education Reporting**

- Cover assigned educational meetings, events, hearings and news conferences and utilize social media (i.e. Twitter) to build an audience, connect with readers while reporting in the field and keep them informed on policies, discussions and decisions.



- Write a minimum of four (4) stories each week, some of which will be daily assignments and others enterprise or longer, more data-driven stories.
- Write compelling copy – quickly and accurately – with the goal of posting a story within an hour of a legislative vote or event. This requires pre-writing stories ahead of the meeting to ensure we can quickly post a story.
- Regular reporting in the field and interviewing subjects from all walks of life in uncontrolled circumstances.
- Regularly take photos and videos, as needed, to accompany print stories or as stand-alone reporting.
- Must demonstrate a commitment to fairness and accuracy, in fact and in tone, and a strong grounding in journalism ethics.
- Generate, build and maintain relationships with a diverse variety of sources. Meet regularly with new education sources from various school districts, including those in marginalized communities such as East San Jose. Cultivate relationships with top leaders, trustees, teachers, faculty, union leaders and parents.
- Work collaboratively with editors and other San José Spotlight journalists.
- Attend and actively participate in editorial and departmental meetings.

### **Enterprise Reporting**

- Regularly use the California Public Records Act to request records, hold leaders accountable and pursue data-driven, watchdog and investigative stories.
- Regularly pitch and generate stories that address effect of government actions and policies on families and parents.
- Collaborate with San José Spotlight editors and journalists, as needed.
- Assist editor with special projects as assigned, including a podcast, video and other multi-media opportunities.
- Pursue data projects, explainers and Q&A features that explore unique angles or shed a new light on ongoing topics. Participate in election coverage, if applicable.

### **San José Spotlight Marketing**

- Build reader loyalty on social media and in the field.
- Maintain a professional presence on social media and demonstrate an understanding of the importance of helping San José Spotlight build its brand.
- Positively promote the organization and regularly share San José Spotlight stories – both written by the Education Reporter as well as colleagues.
- Represent San José Spotlight at educational panels, forums and events.
- Must be willing to moderate debates and help lead discussions with our readers.
- Help with fundraising efforts, as assigned.

### **Qualifications, Skills, and Abilities**



- Bachelor's Degree required, Master's Degree preferred with at least 2 years progressively responsible related work experience, or an equivalent combination of training and experience, preferably with a digital news organization.
- Background in public policy, the education system and social issues.
- Available to work some weekends and evenings.
- Strong communication, presentation, professional, and interpersonal skills.
- Detail-oriented and highly organized.
- Good problem solver with capability to make quick and sound decisions.
- Ability to simultaneously work on multiple projects and meet deadlines.
- Excellent time management skills.
- Knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Google Docs and WordPress.
- Fluency in Spanish is highly desirable.

**Working Conditions:** Applicants must be able to work independently and insert yourself into sometimes difficult situations. Must be able to effectively deal with hard deadlines and quickly changing environments. Must possess a car and valid driver's license and be willing to work occasional nights and weekends.

**To Apply, Please Provide the Following:**

- Cover letter addressing your interest in the position
- Resume with education, employment history, and contact information for 3 references

**Application materials should be emailed to:** [ramona@sanjosespotlight.com](mailto:ramona@sanjosespotlight.com)

*Please note: San José Spotlight is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, ancestry, religion, sex, gender or gender identity, national origin, disability, age, citizenship status, marital status, Vietnam era or special disabled veteran's status, sexual orientation or other bases protected by law. San José Spotlight makes reasonable accommodations for qualified applicants and employees with disabilities as defined by and in compliance with California law.*