The Journalism Education Association is pleased to announce Rachel Simspon (San Francisco, Calif.) as its 2018 Administrator of the Year.

When Rachel Simpson began her tenure as Head of Convent of the Sacred Heart High School, adviser Tracy Anne Sena was “a bit nervous about initially asking [her] about whether or not she wanted to review the school’s newspaper before it went to print.” However, Simpson’s response of asking, “What is best practice?” set the stage for how she would support and help strengthen the journalism program.

“Rather than making quick decisions that may bring her as little faculty or parent criticism as possible,” Sena said, “[Simpson] routinely takes time to ponder questions and make decisions based on consideration of Goal 5: ‘Sacred Heart Schools commit themselves to educate to personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom.’”

And Simpson has found herself facing those challenges several times a year.

Just last year, Simpson handled a concern from a parent who claimed his student was misrepresented and demanded the story be removed. However, after the editorial board reviewed the recorded interview and asserted the accuracy of what was said, Simpson stood by the student journalists—without requesting to hear the interview.

Moments like this are the norm under Simpson’s leadership. “Ms. Simpson sees thoughtful student expression as the best representation of our school, whether it is in student publications, the arts, or the political arena,” Sena said. “She makes it a point to tell our students and prospective parents that we are a First Amendment school because student voices matter.”

Simpson will be recognized at the fall convention in Chicago for her ongoing support of the journalism program at Convent of the Sacred Heart High School.

Founded in 1924, JEA supports free and responsible scholastic journalism by providing resources and educational opportunities, by promoting professionalism, by encouraging and rewarding student excellence and teacher achievement, and by fostering an atmosphere which encompasses diversity yet builds unity. It is headquartered at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.