

December 2021  
Career Tech Writers Studio

## **Pitching Articles, Not Balls**

By Sara Bagley

In early November, first- and second-year students in the Writers Studio program (formerly known as Front Street Writers) at Career Tech had the opportunity to present their journalism articles to an editor during a mock pitch meeting.

According to Writers Studio instructor Teresa Scollon, students move through several different genres of writing through the year-long class; one of these genres is journalism. “It’s helpful for students to work as reporters for Career Tech News as a warmup. Students are given teams and beats, and go out to get the news in the school,” Scollon explains.

As a part of this project, students were challenged with pitching their article ideas to Ryan Jarvi, Northwest Education communications director, who served as editor of Career Tech News. Grand Traverse Academy junior Makaila Scott, a first-year student in Writers Studio, revealed that it was “scary to put myself out there, with any of my work, especially since he’s an actual editor.” Surprisingly, (or perhaps unsurprisingly,) this is a common sentiment. “Most students report that it’s a new experience,” Scollon says.

This mock meeting wasn’t a first for every student, though. Though Covid took away the chance to partake in this activity last year, a Traverse City West graduate and a third-year/post-grad in Writers Studio named Alexa Sprenger disclosed that it wasn’t entirely new for her: she’d spent some time on the (article) pitching mound her first year in the program. “It’s always a little different,” Sprenger says.

When asked the purpose for this meeting, Scollon brought up a few key details. “Part of being a professional writer is interacting with an editor and getting feedback without melting down, so this is meant to get them used to the idea in a low stakes and supportive environment.” Scott agreed, and said it would definitely apply to her career, as she’s considering journalism in her future. Sprenger thought so too, even though she’s not yet sure what her next step is. “Meetings are always gonna happen. Even if you work at McDonald’s. ... Knowing what happens in a meeting is great, regardless of what you’re doing,” Sprenger points out.

The benefits don’t stop there. “It’s a good chance for staff to interact with students,” Scollon mentioned, and Jarvi concurred. “I appreciate being invited and able to connect with the students,” Jarvi said. He also stated that he gained more appreciation for instructors from seeing how they find creative ways to connect students to opportunities that will benefit them, and happily shared that “the students had great ideas and questions in general.”