

Julie Green Topping is an experienced editor who spent most of her 38-year career supervising and working with reporters, editors and production staff. Julie thought she had retired in October 2015, but a year later, joined the staff of Chalkbeat, a growing journalism organization that covers education in five sites across the country. The three-person staff makes this the smallest job Julie has had in a long time, but she has always been passionate about public schools and this job offered a chance to give back.

Currently, Julie is Chalkbeat editor for Detroit and Indiana. Chalkbeat is a growing journalism organization that covers education in five sites across the country, with more sites to come in the next few years.

Before Chalkbeat, Julie was retired for a full year from the Detroit Free Press -- or at least she thought she was. She started there in 1983 as a copy editor, writing headlines and editing reporters' stories before they were published. By the time Julie retired in Oct. 2015, she was in charge of daily operations for features, entertainment, sports, investigations and education, supervising four department heads and their staffs. Over her career, Julie also supervised other newsroom departments and areas, including the copy desk, library, news desk, national and international news desk, page designers, and the high school journalism program. She supervised the staff of the children's newspaper, the Yak, for several years. For two years (before emails!) she served as the newspaper's ombudsman, fielding feedback from Free Press readers and helping the staff become more customer focused -- as well as helping readers understand what news gatherers do. Julie was part of the newsroom's strategic planning team and brainstormed with other editors how to become a multi-platform publication.

In the late 1990s, Julie left Detroit to work in Charlotte, N.C. for three years before deciding to return home to Detroit. While in Charlotte she led a task force on increasing the number of women readers and was awarded for her work in improving the work and morale of the copy desk.

After a year of retirement from the Free Press, Julie decided to join Chalkbeat, where she supervises two reporters in Indianapolis and one in Detroit. It is the smallest job she has held in a long time. But she has always been passionate about the state of public schools, and this position offered her a chance to give back to Detroit by educating people about education in this very storied city.