

Editorial Writing

Region Meet • 2022



You are a reporter for the Leaguetown **Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown High School. From the given information, write an **editorial** as you would for the high school newspaper. Remember that as an editorial writer, you should support or oppose **policy or action**; you should not sermonize.

You have
45 minutes.

Do not write your name or the name of your school on this sheet or your entry. **Put your number on your paper.**

Leaguetown High School has 1,700 students enrolled in grades 9-12. For six years, the school has had a boys' lacrosse team. Because lacrosse is not a University Interscholastic League sanctioned athletic event, the team participates in the Texas High School Lacrosse League North District. Last year, the team won the state championship in the Division I conference, and when the team won, the district posted it on its social media sites and issued a media release. The high school also organized a hallway parade for the players. So far, the team is undefeated this season.

Unlike most other sports, the players must purchase their own uniforms and pay for their own travel. No school buses are provided for travel, and if the team has to stay overnight for a game or tournament, the school also does not pay for those expenses. The lacrosse booster club raised \$15,000 this year to help lacrosse athletes with the expenses. Athletes had to pay approximately \$1,200 each this year, and that doesn't include equipment costs.

Three years ago, the school started paying the coach and offering lacrosse as a class. Before then, the coach volunteered, and the team practiced after school.

Last month, the lacrosse booster club asked the school board to fund the sport the same as it funds UIL-sanctioned sports. The parents would like the school to cover all travel expenses and provide equipment and uniforms.

The parents estimate the cost to be approximately \$35,000 per year. Superintendent Nate Chen said the district budget has been stretched to its limit, and the district already supports the program more than most schools. He said the district doesn't have extra funds to pay for the request without cutting something from the budget.

The school board will address the request at its next meeting on Wednesday, April 27. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Monday, April 25.

THOSE OPPOSING THE BOOSTER REQUEST

No other district within 100 miles of Leaguetown that has a lacrosse program supports the sport more than the Leaguetown district. Lacrosse is also the only non-UIL sport that receives district funds. The bowling team and the bass fishing team get no financial support from the district.

THOSE SUPPORTING THE BOOSTER REQUEST

The lacrosse team won the state championship last year. It is the only sport in the district to win that title in the past 24 years. It deserves to be celebrated and supported by the district. The request of \$35,000 is less than 2% of the total school budget. The board should be able to find the funds.

■ NATE CHEN, superintendent

“It’s not that the district doesn’t support the lacrosse team. We do. In fact, we support it financially quite a bit. And we also are proud of the team and the coach. I was there, along with many other staff-ers, students and community members, when the team clinched the state title last year, and I will be there again this year when it wins. The simple fact is, the district doesn’t have the funds. We are stretched to our limit. We barely have enough funds to pay for our UIL-sanctioned sports. In fact, we cut several tournaments where our teams would have to spend the night in hotels. Everyone is feeling the budget constraints.”

■ LINDSAY JACOBS, booster parent

“The lacrosse program is grateful for the financial support the district has given. It’s one of the reasons our team is so successful. Allowing the team to have a class period and paying the coach were a huge boost to the program. Because we are the most successful athletic team at the school, the team deserves the district’s full financial support. Last year, we almost lost two of our star players because the parents could not afford the cost. Luckily, we found sponsors in the community to help those families. I know we are missing out on a few athletes who won’t join our program because they don’t feel like they can afford it. It’s not fair to them or the program.

“Two of our seniors have full-ride scholarships to college because of this program, and several universities are courting four of our juniors. The lacrosse team is doing so much for our community, and it deserves to be supported. We are working with the state organization to convince UIL to sponsor lacrosse. So far, we haven’t been successful. We will continue those efforts.”

■ COLBY STEVENS, junior and captain of the team

“I had to get a job this year to help pay for my lacrosse fees. No other athlete in this school has to do that. It’s hard to balance work, school and playing, but I am willing to do it because I love lacrosse so much. It’s funny how the district is happy to put up signs and brag that we won the state title, but they are not willing to put up the funds to cover our costs. The football team hasn’t even won a district title in more than 20 years, and that team has seven coaches. It’s not right.”

■ RYAN COCHRUN, coach

“Believe me, I am grateful that I am no longer coaching without pay. Most of the lacrosse coaches I know receive neither salary nor a stipend. I am also grateful for the class period. Our program has shown what it can do with partial support from the district. Imagine what we could do with full support. We could grow the program to field a junior varsity, too. I know the budget is tight, but our team is worth the district looking in every nook and cranny to do the right thing.”

■ KALLY HUMPHRIES, junior and captain of the bowling team

“If the lacrosse team gets more funding, then our team deserves funding. This year, we had two students advance to regional competition, and our athletes have to pay for everything ourselves. Our coach does not receive a salary from the district nor do we have a class period.”

■ JESS DIGGINS, athletic director

“We are extremely proud of the lacrosse team, but it would be unfair for the district to fund the program any more. The bowling team and bass fishing team receive no district funds, and the teams are asking for help. The district can’t justify giving more money to a non UIL-sanctioned sport. The lacrosse team doesn’t face the same level of competition as our UIL sports. There are not as many teams. To win state in basketball, a team must win five playoff games. The lacrosse team played two games in its playoff drive.

“If the booster club reached out to more sponsors, the community would step up and cover more costs. Our community supports the lacrosse team and would love to have another state title.”

DO NOT PASS OUT TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST**EDITORIAL WRITING REGION • 2022
CONTEST TIPS AND SAMPLE EDITORIALS**

Contest Director: Give one copy to each judge to use during critique/judging. Also, staple one copy of the contest and one copy of the contest tips to each student's returned entry. The purpose of the tips is to provide immediate feedback to students. However, it is not meant to replace written comments from the judge.

1. Lead with a statement of the situation and then take a clear, definite staff stance. The situation is the board will vote on whether to give more funds to the lacrosse team.
2. As a general rule, use third person. If you must use a pronoun, use first person plural (we, meaning "we, the newspaper staff"). Do not use first person singular (I, me, mine) or second person (you). Avoid unnecessary use of pronouns. Rather than "We believe the board should....," write instead, "The board should."
3. Don't waddle into the editorial. Get right to the point, and never ask a rhetorical questions. An editorial should answer questions, not ask them. Above all, remember that your purpose is to make thoughtful, logical arguments in support of your position, not to engage in a tirade. The editorial should not be long — 450 words at the most. Although it's not recommended all the time, a writer may use a feature opening to grab the readers' attention.
4. Look for the future angle. Your paper comes out before the vote.
5. Once you've stated your position/stance, the body of the story should support your stance and refute the opposition.
6. After the body of your editorial, complete the editorial with a call to action or a suggested course of action.
7. Avoid direct quotes unless the quote adds substantially to the editorial. You can pull information from these quotes, as has been done here, but it's not necessary to attribute that information unless the person has a lot of credibility toward the story itself.
8. Watch for factual errors. Pay attention to minor details. Also, keep your editorial tight and focused.
9. Don't clutter up the editorial with cliches or trite phrases such as "the board dropped the ball" or any variation thereof. Also, edit out the name of the school unless it is necessary for clarity. It isn't necessary to say "Leaguetown Independent School District" or "Leaguetown High School." Students know the name of the school. They don't need to be reminded.

SAMPLE EDITORIAL/OPPOSING MORE FUNDS

Without question, the district supports the lacrosse team.

Three years ago, the district began paying the coach and gave players a class period — two things no other district in the area does. And when the team won the state championship last year, the district celebrated with posts on social media sites, a press release and a parade in the high school hallways.

Now, the team wants more.

The Lacrosse Booster Club wants the district to fund the boys' lacrosse team on the same level as all UIL-sanctioned sports. The school board needs to deny this request at its Wednesday meeting.

The money the booster club wants simply doesn't exist. The school's budget is stretched to its limit. Teams have had to cut travel tournaments, and the only way to provide the \$35,000 needed to fund the team is to cut funding for another program.

Lacrosse is the only non UIL-sanctioned sport that gets district funding. Bowling and bass fishing have received no district funds. It's unfair to give more money to the lacrosse team without funding the other two sports.

Perhaps the booster organization needs to be grateful for what it gets now instead of asking for more. Paying for a coach and a class period is not cheap, and it's more than most Texas lacrosse programs get.

Those in favor of the funding say that lacrosse should be funded the way other sports are because it won a state title. A lacrosse state title with two playoff games is not the same as a basketball state title, where a team would have played five playoff games. Lacrosse simply doesn't have the same competition level as UIL sports.

The school board should continue to support the lacrosse program with a coach and a class period and celebrate its successes. But that's it. When lacrosse becomes a UIL-sanctioned sport, the board can address funding again.

SAMPLE EDITORIAL/SUPPORTING MORE FUNDS

When the lacrosse team won the state championship last year, the district didn't hesitate to celebrate and brag on the team. The win was posted on district social media sites, released to the media and celebrated with a parade in the hallways for the team.

But bragging rights come with a cost — a cost the district isn't willing to pay.

The Lacrosse Booster Club has asked the school board to approve more funding for the sport. Currently, athletes are responsible for paying for all travel, uniforms, equipment and other costs. The school pays only for a coach and a class period.

This is not enough. At the Wednesday board meeting, the board should find the money.

This year, the booster club raised \$15,000 for the team. Each team member had to pay approximately \$1,200. Forcing students to pay for their own travel, uniforms and equipment makes it very difficult for some students to join the team. Team captain Colby Stevens had to work part-time to pay his team fees – a difficult task when combined with going to school and playing lacrosse. Other talented students may want to play lacrosse but won't because the cost is too high.

The lacrosse team represents the school, and they do it well. After winning the state championship last year — the only district sport to win a state title in the past 24 years — the team is undefeated this year. If the district wants to celebrate the team, then it should support the team.

The boosters are asking for approximately \$35,000. That's less than 2% of the school budget. A team that brings home victory deserves to be funded.

Plus, two seniors have full ride scholarships for lacrosse, and several universities are courting junior players. This helps the community, the reputation of the school and local families. And the coach believes with more funding he could grow the program even bigger, which could potentially help even more athletes with college funding.

Those opposed to funding the program say the boosters, who are parents with full-time jobs, should look to the community for more funds. If it's so easy to get community support as the athletic director has suggested, then the district should ask for it. Other sports do not have to rely on the community to support them.

The bottom line is, the lacrosse team has proven to be a success. It deserves to be funded the same way as the UIL-sanctioned sports.