

Editorial Writing

Invitational B Meet • 2019



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 800 students enrolled in grades 9-12. After spring break, Principal Edwin Shuster announced teachers would no longer be able to wear jeans to school.

Since the school opened in 1964, it has been a tradition for teachers to wear spirit shirts or college shirts with jeans on Fridays. Most teachers participated in this tradition. Teachers could wear jeans on other days of the week, but most reserved their jeans for Fridays only.

Shuster, who was hired as principal in August, said teachers do not look professional when they wear jeans, and he's heard several comments from parents when teachers wear jeans that are tight or have holes. Spirit T-shirts and college T-shirts still will be allowed on Fridays.

Several teachers said they are frustrated about the change and the fact that the district has no district-wide faculty dress code. The teachers sent a letter to the superintendent and school board asking them to set the standards for faculty dress for the district. The letter also asked for jean privileges — at least on Fridays. Currently, elementary and middle school teachers can wear jeans any day of the week.

The superintendent agreed to discuss the issue with the school board at its next meeting, Tuesday, March 26. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Tuesday, March 19.

THOSE SUPPORTING THE BAN

Teachers should look professional at school — especially young teachers. For them, how they dress can determine if the students take them seriously. Plus, teachers took advantage of the lack of a dress code by wearing skin-tight jeans or jeans with rips and holes. In no way is that professional.

THOSE OPPOSING THE BAN

Teachers should be comfortable when they teach, and jeans allow that. Teachers don't sit at desks and work on computers all day. They aren't in business meetings or meeting with CEOs. They are teaching — moving around the room and interacting with students. Jeans allow them to do this in comfort.

■ EDWIN SHUSTER, principal

“Our teachers are role models for our students. We need to ensure our students understand there's a certain way you dress when you go to a ball game versus going to your job. Too many of our teachers look like they are ready for a baseball game every day of the week. More than once since I've arrived, I've heard teachers complain about not being treated as professionals. If they want to be treated like a professional, they should dress like a professional.

“Currently on staff, we have seven teachers under 30 years old. When they

■ **EDWIN SHUSTER (cont.)**

wear jeans, they look like students. Dressing professionally will encourage respect, and every teacher needs that. I stand by my decision to ban jeans.”

■ **HARRY HISHIMO, science teacher**

“Twice a week we do labs in my class, and that usually means a mess. I don’t want to ruin an expensive pair of pants and nice shirt because a student accidentally spills a chemical on me. I can tell you right now that every pair of my jeans has some sort of stain on it from a lab. I work with my students closely on labs, and my students are messy. And that’s OK. The ban has got to go.”

■ **BELLA ANAIS, English teacher**

“I completely disagree with Mr. Shuster. My students and I have a better relationship, one filled with respect, because I look like them. Dress clothes say I am their boss, but casual wear, like jeans, says I’m with you. In my classroom, I am a facilitator, a coach and a mentor. Jeans allow me to fill those roles more easily. Plus, has anyone seen how much we are paid? After paying my bills, I don’t have much money left. Where am I supposed to find the cash to buy new, professional outfits?”

■ **CHASE MADRIGAL, parent**

“I am one of those parents who talked with Mr. Shuster. The jeans thing is out of control. The other day, I saw a female teacher with rips in her jeans all the way up her thighs. It was completely inappropriate for a teacher. The Parent-Teacher Association is supporting Mr. Shuster, and we want the district to take it a step further and ban jeans at all our schools.”

■ **SERENITY BAKER, junior**

“It’s kind of weird how everyone is talking about this. I don’t think any students care what their teachers wear. I have a few teachers who dress up all of the time, and I really like them. I also have a teacher who wears jeans every day. He’s cool, too. Clothes don’t matter. If teachers want to wear jeans, then I don’t see what the problem is.”

■ **TRIXIE BELL, junior**

“I got sent home for having rips in my jeans, and my math teacher wears jeans with rips all the time. It’s totally unfair. I don’t think teachers should get to wear things students can’t.”

■ **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The student dress code prohibits students from wearing jeans with holes or rips that expose any skin above the knee.

Leaguetown ISD teacher pay rate is \$4,000 below the average for the state.

DO NOT PASS OUT TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST**EDITORIAL WRITING/INVITATIONAL B • 2019**
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 whether the school board should overrule the principal and allow teachers to wear jeans. Do you support this or not?
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 school board should..." write instead, "The school board should."
3. Don't waddle into the editorial. Get right to the point and, as a general rule, don't ask a lot of questions. An editorial should answer questions, not ask them. Above all, remember 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, sometimes a writer could use a feature opening to grab the reader's attention and get them into the story.
4. Look for the future angle. Your paper comes out before the board meeting.
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 specific solution.
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, stay focused.
9. Don't clutter up the editorial with cliches or trite phrases such as "the principal is mean" 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

Following Principal Edwin Shuster's ban on jeans for faculty members, a group of teachers wrote to the school board to express frustration about the change and the lack of a district-wide faculty dress code. The school board will discuss this issue at its next meeting Tuesday, March 26.

The board needs to reverse the ban.

Shuster said he wants teachers to dress more professionally, but a professional wardrobe is expensive. Members of corporate America can afford to dress this way. They make competitive salaries. Teachers in this district are paid \$4,000 below the state average. Teachers are barely able to cover the essentials, let alone professional outfits for every day of the week.

Teachers don't work in the same environment as corporate America. They aren't sitting in an office all day or going to meetings in fancy buildings. Teachers are on the move. They are on their feet teaching, walking around the classroom and interacting with their students. Teaching can be messy — science labs, art projects, lunch duty. Teachers shouldn't be afraid to get into the mix and get their hands (and clothes) a little dirty.

Plus, the ban is sexist. Every complaint regarding jeans being too tight or having holes in them were specifically about women's jeans. Women's styles are more form-fitting by nature. Women shouldn't be penalized for having curves and wearing what's in style.

Those in favor of the ban argue that how teachers dress determines if the students take them seriously. This is simply not true. Teachers with good classroom management skills and good relationships with the students gain respect regardless of whether they are wearing jeans or not. The clothes don't make the teacher. Their abilities to build relationships do.

It's time for the board to step in and step up. It needs to create a dress code for all district employees — one that will allow teachers to do their job comfortably and affordably. That means jeans should be allowed.

The ban, not the teachers, needs to be redressed.

SAMPLE EDITORIAL/SUPPORTING

Principal Edwin Shuster's recent ban on teachers wearing jeans was a smart move if he wants to create a professional environment in the school. And although teachers are complaining and asking for a change, the school board shouldn't do anything at its next meeting except show some support for Shuster.

Shuster's ban is necessary and long overdue.

The image of the school is directly reflected in its employees. If teachers are walking around in skinny jeans with holes up the legs, which some of them do, it doesn't send a good message to students or anyone visiting the school. Teachers are professionals, and many have told Shuster they wanted to be treated as professionals. If so, they should dress the part.

Teachers also need to set themselves apart from students. Several young teachers work here, and they can easily be confused for students if they are dressing the same. Professional clothes show students that teachers are the leaders in the classrooms.

Dressing professionally helps teachers earn the respect of the students. When teachers violate the student dress code by wearing ripped jeans, they show a lack of respect for students. The lack of a district-wide dress code contributes to this problem. Teachers should take the initiative and dress professionally every day.

In their letter asking the school and superintendent to allow jeans at the high school, the teachers said professional clothing is uncomfortable and they need to be comfortable while teaching. Professional clothing doesn't have to be uncomfortable. Simply replacing jeans with khaki pants and a polo would satisfy the new policy. Shuster isn't requiring teachers to wear a suit and tie or 5-inch heels. He just wants them to stop wearing jeans.

In the near future, the school board needs to address the issue of a missing teacher dress code, but next week it simply needs to support Shuster and his drive to make the high school a more professional place for teachers and students.



Yippee!! You're the director of the journalism contests. To make your life a little easier...

WE HAVE ENCLOSED:

- The contests
- Judging criteria
- A statement to the judges
- A statement to the contestants
- Contest Tips. (Provides examples of how stories/heads should have been written and a sample

story. Clip a copy to each entry to provide immediate feedback.)

NOW, YOU NEED TO:

- Make certain you have read the journalism section of the *UIL Journalism Handbook*. You can download it free from the UIL website at: http://www.uiltexas.org/files/academics/Journalism_Handbook_2018-19.pdf.
- Inventory the contest packet. Hopefully, there won't be any problems. If you find one, please call it to my attention. Call me at work at 512/232-4924, home at 512/740-3463 or e-mail me at jacton@uiltexas.org.
- **READ THE ENCLOSED STATEMENT TO YOUR JUDGES.**
Discuss the judging criteria and clarifications with the judges.
- **Do not give the tips to students.**
- Share the "Tips" with the judges (**BEFORE** they judge) and clip one copy to each contestant's entry **AFTER JUDGING**. Judges should write directly on EVERY student's entry and then attach one copy of the Contest Tips to each entry.
- Thanks and good luck!

Statement to Judges

JOURNALISM CONTEST DIRECTOR

Please copy and distribute the following statement to the judges

1. Divide papers among the judges.
2. Every paper **MUST** be read and edited by at least one judge. *No paper should EVER be returned without written comments.*
3. Every judge does not have to read every paper. Strive for two readings for each paper. A third reading may be necessary for papers that contend for placing in the top six.
4. Avoid sarcasm or unduly harsh criticism. Remember: these are high school students, not professionals.
5. Please review the “Tips” for each contest. This sheet is consistent with the contest manual and what has been taught at conferences.
6. Realize that the UIL style may differ slightly from what you have been taught, what you practice or your newspaper’s style. If you have serious disagreement, please take them up with the UIL office, not the contestants or the meet director. For example, in the news, feature and editorial writing contests, it is not necessary to identify the school, Leaguetown High School. We create this contest as if students attend Leaguetown High School. Therefore, we assume high school students know the name of their school. Also, since AP style constantly changes, watch simply for writers to follow a consistent style. Some students (and newspapers) prefer addressing people with Mr./Mrs./Ms. title on second and subsequent uses.
7. In the Feature Writing contest, students have the freedom to develop scenes as they feel the scenes *may* have existed. The scenes must be a natural extension of the story. Please read “Contest tips” before judging.
8. In the editorial writing contest, students have the freedom to propose solutions or suggest answers they feel might resolve the problem. They do not have to be those proposed on the fact sheet. Also, they are urged to write in third person, but they may use first person plural on occasion.
9. In the headline writing contest: the main deck of a main/secondary headline combination may contain but does not need a verb. For example:

Out of Air

Statement to the Contestants

JOURNALISM CONTEST DIRECTOR

Please read the following statement to contestants

1. Place your number in the upper right hand corner of each page of your entry. Do not put your name or your school's name on any part of the contest entry. If you do, you may be disqualified.
2. Write on one side of the paper only. Write legibly. This is a request, not a requirement.
3. It is suggested that you double space so judges may edit and write comments more extensively on your entry. This is a request, not a requirement.
4. You may use a dictionary and/or a thesaurus (bound or electronic) during News, Editorial, Feature and Headline contest. You may also use an AP stylebook. You may not use a journalism text or other textbook. No resources are allowed during the Copy Editing contest.
5. You may not talk during the contest. If you have a question, raise your hand and the contest monitor will come to you.
6. If you use a computer, you are responsible should it malfunction. You will have the remaining time to complete the contest in longhand, but you will not be given extra time. You must complete the print command before the monitor asks everyone to quit writing. If the computer malfunctions do not make noise trying to fix it. The monitor will ask you to leave if you are causing too much commotion. You may not use a computer in the Headline Writing contest or the Copy Editing contest.
7. Make sure all of your electronic devices (cell phones, ipods, etc.) are turned off. You may be disqualified for disrupting the contest if your devices go off.
8. When you are finished, please turn in your paper and quietly exit.

Good luck.



JUDGING CRITERIA

SPRING MEET JOURNALISM CONTESTS

In an effort to standardize judging procedures statewide, the League office has compiled a list of journalism contest judging guidelines. This list of guidelines will be included in each district and regional contest packet and will be available to State Meet contest judges. It is the responsibility of each journalism contest director to see that all contest judges are familiar with and adhere to these guidelines.

■ HEADLINE WRITING (30 minutes) NEW TIME FOR 2019!

1. Within count. **Note:** All letters, digits, punctuation marks, spaces, grammatical marks count as one (1).
2. Wording specific, accurate; unnecessary wording omitted.
3. Verb needed in main, secondary or both decks. At times, though, a verb is not necessary in both the main and secondary head.
4. Emphasis on active verbs.
5. Past tense avoided.
6. Split phrases (modifiers, verbs) avoided.
7. Redundancy in wording avoided.
8. Does not sacrifice accuracy for creativity or cuteness.
9. Main headlines not dependent on secondary headlines.
10. Secondary headlines emphasize significant aspect of news.
11. Grammar, spelling, punctuation correct.
 - A. It is permissible to use upstyle (ALL CAPS) or downstyle headlines.
 - B. Students need not complete all six headlines to win. It is possible that five good headlines will win over six mediocre ones, or four excellent heads will win over six poor headlines. The final decision rests with the judges, but no contestants shall be disqualified solely on the basis of not completing all six headlines.

■ EDITORIAL WRITING (45 minutes)

1. Introduction presents problem, provides staff stance.
2. Lead grabs reader's attention.
3. Evidence provided to support stance taken.
4. Direct quotes avoided unless absolutely necessary.
5. Writing tight. Wording active, precise.
6. Other viewpoints presented and evidence is shown to refute those viewpoints.
7. Conclusion recaps staff position and contains call to action and/or solution.
8. Third person emphasized, although first person plural may be used occasionally.
9. Editorial tone fair, mature.
10. Secondary consideration given to:
 - A. Grammar
 - B. Spelling
 - C. Neatness

■ FEATURE WRITING (60 minutes)

1. Lead grabs reader's attention and fits mood of story. It is permissible for students to set a scene for the feature prompt. The scene may include details that are not in the prompt.
2. Writing tight. Wording active, precise.
3. Slang, cliches, jargon avoided.
4. Facts presented in logical sequence.
5. Smooth transitions.
6. Quotes, paraphrasing used effectively.
7. Persons identified fully, accurately.
8. Feature theme fully developed.
9. Utilizes time peg (if necessary)
10. Secondary consideration given to:
 - A. Grammar
 - B. Spelling
 - C. Neatness

■ NEWS WRITING (45 minutes)

1. Sound news judgment in lead selection.
2. Facts presented in descending order of importance.
3. Information flows. Smooth transitions.
4. People identified fully, accurately.
5. Quotes, paraphrasing used effectively.
6. Extraneous information omitted; writing tight.
7. Wording active.
8. All news questions answered. Newspaper style incorporated.
9. Editorialization avoided.
10. Secondary consideration given to:
 - A. Grammar
 - B. Spelling
 - C. Neatness

■ STYLE/TITLES

- ✓ Newspaper style includes the option of using titles of Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. with names of adults. Students should be identified fully at first mention and by last name thereafter (1st use - senior Jeanne Acton; second and subsequent uses - Acton or Ms. Acton). It is permissible to use first names only on the second reference in feature stories. AP style calls for adults to be identified by full name at first mention, and then with appropriate title and last name thereafter. Be aware of deviations from AP style. If a contestant is consistent in the use of their style, it is not recommended you penalize the contestant for not following strict AP style. We ask that you look for consistency and understandability in the use of a contestant's style.

■ SECONDARY CONSIDERATIONS

- ✓ Journalistic proficiency shall be the standard by which entries are judged. In papers of similar journalistic quality, secondary considerations of grammar, spelling and neatness may be used to determine contest results. The contest does not intend, however, to test grammar or spelling skills, and each entry should be judged on its journalistic merit before other considerations come into play.

■ COPY EDITING (15 minutes) NEW CONTEST FOR 2019

- ✓ A key to the Copy Editing Contest will be included with your material. Part III is graded only to break ties.