



UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

Editorial Writing

Study Packet 2020

This Editorial Writing packet contains tests and keys from **only** 2020 Invitational A, B, District and Region. State is not available.

This item is intended for High School grade levels.

Editorial Writing

Invitational A Meet • 2020



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 1,200 students enrolled in grades 9-12. Starting in February, which is four months ahead of schedule, the school will begin a major construction project, adding a new science wing, new auditorium and new air conditioning system. The front office also will be redesigned to improve school safety. This week, administrators announced because of the construction, more than half of the student parking lot will be closed from Feb. 15 until the end of school. After Feb. 15, only seniors will be allowed to park in the student parking lot.

Principal Ginger Lipan said juniors and sophomores who drive will be able to park at the old, grass football field behind the school. Space will be limited, and it will be first-come, first-served. Lipan is encouraging students to car pool or ride the bus.

Next week, seniors will receive a special parking pass to put in their cars so they can park in the student parking lot. Lipan said the school will tow any car that does not display the pass.

Since the announcement, students who drive and aren't seniors have complained about the change. A group of parents also met with Lipan to discuss alternatives to parking at the old football field, but none were acceptable to the principal. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Tuesday, Feb. 11.

THOSE SUPPORTING THE PARKING CHANGE

Students should be happy that next year, the school will be vastly improved from this construction, and the new AC unit should be in place by August so students won't sweat through the first few months of school. A little inconvenience right now is worth it. Every student will benefit from the construction project, and the sooner these changes can happen, the better.

THOSE OPPOSING THE PARKING CHANGE

Parking at the old football field is not a good option for students who are not seniors. When it rains, it will be a muddy disaster. And even when it's not raining, it will be a 10-minute walk to the front of the school for those students. Plus, parking spots are not marked. It will be chaotic. The construction should be delayed until school is out for the summer.

■ GINGER LIPAN, principal

"While this construction means changes in parking for many of our students, they should be willing to make the sacrifice because the improvements are critical — especially the air conditioning unit. Last fall, several rooms went with little to no AC for months. That is not a good environment for learning.

"Initially, when I met with the superintendent about the earlier construc-

■ GINGER LIPAN (cont.)

tion date, he said all student parking would be eliminated. I didn't think that was acceptable, so we worked with the construction team to keep at least half of the student parking lot still accessible. I knew we could fit most of the other student cars at the old football field.

"Students are frustrated, and parents are frustrated. Both groups have shared their frustrations with me, but there is no better solution. Students and parents also need to remember that we don't charge for parking, and we have bus transportation for every student who lives more than a mile from the school. We are one of the few schools in our area that does that. Our community should be celebrating that our school construction is starting earlier instead of complaining about a minor inconvenience."

■ CASSIE GILLIGAN, junior

"I am definitely not happy that the construction is starting early. It should be done in the summer when we are not at school. The football field is so far from the school. What is going to happen when it rains? It's going to be so gross. I drive a tiny Nissan Leaf. I am totally going to get stuck in the mud if it rains. And it rains a lot in the spring.

"I agree that we need new air conditioning before school starts in August. Can't they just do that and wait on the construction until the summer?"

■ STEPHEN THURSTON, junior

"It's going to be a madhouse at the football field. The parking spots are not marked. People are going to park everywhere and anywhere. My mom doesn't even want me to attempt to drive after the construction begins, but I stay after school a lot for club meetings and tutoring. I would not be able to ride the bus home, and I live about three miles from school. I don't have any choice but to drive. My parents can't pick me up from school. They don't get home until after 7 p.m."

■ MARIANNE FRIAS, theater teacher

"We are thrilled that the construction is starting early. This means we should have a new auditorium at the beginning of next school year. Right now, we perform on the stage in the cafeteria. It's pretty sad for a high school program. I did not expect all of the student whining and complaining. These renovations are going to be so great for our students. They need to see the whole picture, instead of looking at the tiny part that affects them right now."

■ JACKSON LOVIE, superintendent

"Of course we jumped on the opportunity for our construction to start early. The bottom line is students are going to be inconvenienced either at the end of this school year or the beginning of next. The construction cannot be completed over the summer. Our school needs this, and the students need to accept it. We could stop all student parking on campus."

■ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The construction will take five months to complete. For the first week of parking at the old football field, the assistant principals will direct traffic and direct students where to park.

DO NOT PASS OUT TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST**EDITORIAL WRITING/INVITATIONAL A • 2020
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.

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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 superintendent 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

Student parking, for everyone but seniors, just became a mess.

On Feb. 15, more than half of the student parking lot will be gone when construction on a new science wing and auditorium begins — four months before the expected start date. Because of this, sophomores and juniors will have to park at the old football field, which is a 10-minute walk to the front doors.

This is an unacceptable solution. The district needs to stick with the original summer start date for the construction or find more appropriate parking for students.

While seniors will have access to the remaining parking spots on campus, the rest of the students who drive will have to fight for spots in an inadequate grass parking lot with unmarked spots. When it rains, it will be a mud pit for students and their cars, and it rains a lot in the spring. The affected students are the new drivers at the school. They shouldn't have to navigate through this chaos each day.

Riding the bus or carpooling isn't a reliable option for every student. Buses don't run late for those students who stay for tutoring or for those with extracurriculars such as club meetings or sports practices.

Only allowing seniors access to the parking lot isn't fair. Some sophomores and juniors are more involved and need to be at the school late. A possible solution would be to prioritize those in extracurriculars to get parking passes first.

Those who support the parking changes argue that the changes made to the school are worth the inconvenience, but there doesn't need to be this level of inconvenience. The construction will take five months to complete. If the district waits to start the construction over the summer, it allows for time to find a better parking solution — one that benefits all students, not just seniors.

SAMPLE EDITORIAL/SUPPORTING

Students should be celebrating the four-month early start on construction for the school. Instead they are whining that part of the student parking lot will be closed starting Feb. 15.

Students parking a little farther away is a small price to pay for a major face-lift to the school.

Starting construction early is in the best interest of everyone. Next year, the school will have a brand-new science wing, auditorium, air conditioning system and safety improvements to the front office. Currently, the theater department performs on the stage in the cafeteria. That is unacceptable for a high school program.

Because the construction will take five months to complete, it still would affect parking regardless of when it happens. Summer break is not five months long. Principal Ginger Lipan already advocated for students so that at least seniors can use half of the student parking lot. Initially, construction was set to eliminate all student parking.

And Lipan even came up with an alternative parking lot, the old football field, for the rest of student drivers — something she didn't have to do. Every student who lives more than a mile away has access to a school bus. So if student drivers are too worried about the parking conditions at the football field, they can carpool or take the bus, both of which are environmentally friendly options and will decrease traffic.

Those opposed to parking changes say the alternative lot is not acceptable because it's grass and the parking spaces are not marked. But again, Lipan is going out of her way to accommodate students. During the first week of parking, assistant principals will direct traffic and help organize the parking on the field.

The school's responsibility is to educate students, not store their cars. Parents and students who are complaining need to see the bigger picture. They need to be grateful for the early start date for the construction, and they need to be grateful Lipan is in their corner finding solutions for everyone.

Editorial Writing

Invitational B Meet • 2020



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Leaguetown High School has 800 students enrolled in grades 9-12. In the fall, the school board and district administration announced that a new district focus would be on health and changed the district mission statement to reflect that. The new mission statement is “LISD promotes healthy lifestyles to create healthy, educated and engaging citizens.” As a result of this new focus, the district began free after-school fitness classes for faculty and staff and brought in a dietician to work individually with staff members to create healthier diet plans. In the spring, the goal was to shift the focus to students. In February, the district launched a healthy food line in the cafeteria. All lunches from this line are less than 500 calories. In addition to an emphasis on healthy eating, the district also started an after-school walking program for students. Coach Randy Steager organizes the two-mile walks each day.

Last week, the junior class sponsor turned in her paperwork for the junior class bake sale. It is the junior’s biggest fundraiser for prom. For the April bake sale, juniors ask community members to bake desserts and donate them. Then, the juniors sell the desserts during lunch and after school. Last year, the class made \$2,400. Yesterday, Principal Anna Polk turned down the request. She said the bake sale primarily sells sugary items, and that is in opposition to the new district focus. Polk suggested the class sell a different item to raise money.

Upset by her decision, the junior class officers set a meeting with Superintendent Shannon Galindo for Friday, March 13, to try to override Polk’s decision. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Thursday, March 12.

THOSE SUPPORTING POLK’S DECISION

A bake sale of cupcakes, cookies and other dessert items runs contrary to the district’s new mission. If the district wants students to be healthy, it cannot allow the juniors to sell hundreds of sweet items for an entire week.

THOSE OPPOSING POLK’S DECISION

It is too late in the year for the junior class to find another fundraiser. If the principal was going to ban bake sales, she should have made that announcement at the beginning of the year. The juniors already have more than 50 community members committed to baking items for the sale.

■ ANNA POLK, principal

“I am not sure why the juniors were surprised with my decision. All year long, we have focused on creating healthy students and staff from the inside out. I can’t allow a bake sale. I would be a hypocrite.

“The juniors are welcome to sell other food items, like fruit or barbecue or hamburgers. Students will buy all kinds of food. We just want the food to be

■ **ANNA POLK, cont.**

healthier than a sugar cookie or chocolate cupcake. Those are empty calories and only add to our students' sugar addictions.”

■ **CECELIA EIKENBUSH, math teacher and junior class sponsor**

“I wish Ms. Polk would have said something to me about the bake sale before now. The junior class has done a bake sale for the past 10 years. It's our biggest fundraiser for prom. Last year, the bake sale raised enough money to pay for the deejay. Our juniors have spent months getting commitments from community members on baking donations. Plus, this fundraiser is a great community builder. We don't have time to come up with a different fundraiser. We have less than a month before the April 6 bake sale. That's not enough time. I worry about what we will be able to do for prom now.”

■ **DEBRA LINUS, junior and class president**

“Not approving our bake sale is ridiculous. I get that the school wants students to be healthier, but the bake sale is one week. One week. It's not going to kill anyone to have a few sweets for one week. And if Ms. Polk didn't want us to have the bake sale, why wouldn't she tell us earlier in the year? This is a junior class tradition. The women's group at my church has been planning what cookies it was going to donate for the last month. The group loves baking for the students. I don't know what we are going to do if we can't change the superintendent's mind. Creating a good fundraiser takes time, and we don't have that.”

■ **TAMMI FONG, sophomore**

“My sister told me about the bake sale being cancelled. It's a bummer, but I am not totally upset. I like that the school wants us to be healthier. I started walking with Coach Steager's group and eating from the healthy lunch line. I've already lost seven pounds. I know I could easily gain that back in a week if the juniors had the bake sale. Those desserts are too good to resist.”

■ **MARGARET HUNT, community member and retired librarian**

“I've baked my snickerdoodle cookies for the junior bake sale for the past 10 years, and they sell out every year. I love donating the cookies. For a few years after I retired, I was able to volunteer at the school, but as I've aged, it's become much tougher. Baking the cookies makes me feel like I am still a part of the school. I would hate to have to stop. Maybe I could figure out a way to make the cookies healthier.”

■ **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Superintendent Shannon Galindo declined to comment until after she meets with the junior class officers.

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SAMPLE EDITORIAL/OPPOSING

Because of a districtwide campaign to get everyone healthier, Principal Anna Polk announced the junior class will not be able to hold its annual bake sale fundraiser. Upset over the last-minute decision, the junior class officers will meet with Superintendent Shannon Galindo tomorrow to ask her to reverse Polk's decision.

Galindo should side with the juniors and reinstate the bake sale.

The fundraiser is one week out of the year. Five days is not going to negate the effect the new healthy programs that the school implemented this year, like the walking club and 500-calorie lunch line. Those programs will take place regardless of the bake sale. A one-week bake sale will not be a huge step backward. Plus, no one is forcing any student to buy any of the sweets.

The junior class has done this fundraiser for the past 10 years. It shouldn't come as a surprise that the class would want to hold it again this year. If Polk planned to cancel it, she should have done so at the beginning of the school year. This is the biggest fundraiser for prom — last year the sale raised \$2,400. The juniors have worked hard on this event already. Fifty community members have committed to donate items. Polk said the juniors could sell something else, but that takes time, something the juniors don't have.

Not only does the bake sale raise money for prom, which saves both the school and students money, but it also is a great way to bring community members together and get them involved with the school. Other fundraisers such as car washes or T-shirt sales don't have the same communitywide aspect to them.

Polk argues that holding a bake sale would run against everything the district has been working for this year. Sure, it's important to eat healthy, but teaching students they can't ever have food outside of that diet sends a harmful message. Mental health is just as important as physical health. Diets should be balanced, and a little sugar for a week isn't going to ruin a year of eating healthy.

Galindo needs to give students a break and reinstate the bake sale. Let them eat cake — at least for a week.

SAMPLE EDITORIAL/SUPPORTING

Cake. Cookies. Brownies. And the bake sale list goes on.

None of the items support the districtwide initiative to promote healthy eating. So it makes sense that Principal Anna Polk denied the junior class's request to hold the annual bake sale.

What doesn't make sense is Superintendent Shannon Galindo overturning Polk's decision. But that is what the junior class officers plan to ask for when they meet with her tomorrow.

Galindo should stand by the district initiative and Polk, and say no to the bake sale.

It shouldn't come as a surprise to the student body that a week-long fundraiser selling nothing other than cakes, cookies and sugary items would be shot down. The district has made a lot of progress in its healthy campaign with a free after-school fitness program for teachers and staff, a new healthy food line in the cafeteria for students and an after-school walking club for students. This bake sale goes against everything the district has been working toward.

The district didn't start this initiative to punish students. Healthy eating habits and lifestyle changes are hard to establish later in life. If high school students can make the shift now, they will be better off in college and beyond. While the bake sale is only one week long, that's enough time to send someone down a spiraling path of unhealthy eating.

Polk didn't tell the junior class they couldn't sell anything. She just banned sugary items. It would be easy for the juniors to ask community members to donate other food items like barbecue or hamburgers or even sandwiches.

Those who oppose Polk's decision say she should have made the announcement earlier, but the junior class just asked for permission this month. She couldn't deny something that wasn't asked.

The district made a decision to focus on healthy eating, and it was the right move for students. It shouldn't back pedal now.

Editorial Writing

District Meet • 2020



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Leaguetown High School has 2,200 students enrolled in grades 9-12. Last week, a district budget committee recommended the district eliminate the cosmetology program in the fall. The committee based its recommendation on three findings: 1) potential earnings for the profession are too low; 2) the cost of the program is three times that of most other electives; and 3) about 70% of the students who go through the program do not move on to college. The budget committee is comprised of four district personnel, two parents and two community members.

In response to the recommendation, the 110 students who are involved in the cosmetology program signed a petition requesting continuation of the program. Currently, the school offers three cosmetology courses: Introduction to Cosmetology, Cosmetology I and Cosmetology II. For each student in the program, the school pays \$500 for kit supplies, which include all tools needed to complete assignments and work on clients in the classroom. The tools can be used on the job once the student has completed the program and passed the state board exam.

Students take the required state exam to become licensed cosmetologists at the end of Cosmetology II. With a passing score of 70% or more, students will be licensed to perform all cosmetology services in Texas. Last year, 44 students took the state exam, and all passed.

The board will vote on the recommendation at its next board meeting Thursday, April 2. You are writing for the issue of the *Press* to be distributed Tuesday, March 31.

THOSE SUPPORTING THE ELIMINATION OF COSMETOLOGY

The district mission includes the words “to prepare students for post-secondary education opportunities.” One of the district’s goals is 80 percent or more of graduating seniors moving on to post-secondary education. The cosmetology program is in opposition to this goal. Plus, the program is expensive.

THOSE OPPOSING THE ELIMINATION OF COSMETOLOGY

The cosmetology program provides a pathway to a profession for more than 100 students at the school, and it’s a successful program. Every student passed the licensing exam last year. Not every student wants or needs to go to college. This program gives students the opportunity to start a profession right out of high school.

■ **LEAH WALKER, cosmetology instructor**

“We had no idea cosmetology was even being considered for the chopping block. It makes no sense. What other program has our success rate? In the last four years, 99% of the students who took the state licensing exam passed it. That means 99% percent of our students are ready to work immediately after graduation. And the district needs to remember the students we serve. More than 80% of our students live in poverty, and many of them said they would have dropped out of high school without cosmetology.

“It’s true that many of our students don’t go on to college, and that’s OK. It’s OK for students to choose another profession. Colleges don’t have space for every graduating senior, so I don’t know why we are acting like every student must go to college. Plus, I want to know what happens when we don’t have cosmetologists. Who is going to cut your hair? Please tell me that.

“As far as the money, it’s misleading on two counts. First, our program is expensive because we don’t ask the students to pay for the kits. I would rather ask students to pay for the kits or at least part of the kits than cut the program entirely. I would be happy to have fundraisers to help students who couldn’t afford the kits. As for the salary, the budget committee reported the average annual salary for a cosmetologist is between \$21,500 and \$30,000. That may be true, but the committee didn’t look at how many cosmetologists work part-time, nor did it take into account tips or freelance work. When I started working as a teacher my starting salary was only \$32,000. Is the school going to tell students they shouldn’t be teachers because they will not get rich in that profession either?

“I hope the board listens to our students and looks at the facts before making a decision that could destroy the future of so many of our students.”

■ **HANS SOLAR, district finance director and budget committee member**

“We are doing our students an injustice if we tell them they can survive making less than \$30,000 a year. And remember, \$30,000 is the top of the average salary. Most cosmetologists make much less. That is not a living wage for anyone anymore.

“The real problem, though, is that the program is too costly. We could offer more elective classes to students if we eliminated cosmetology. We have two full-time teachers in that program for 110 students. Our choir teacher has 210 students in her classes, and the journalism teacher teaches 160 students.

“We reached out to the community college and are working on a partnership. Our students could earn dual credit and take classes there. It may take a year to work out the specifics, but it is a better option for our district.”

■ **PADMA AMIDILA, senior**

“I am in my third year of cosmetology, and I love the program. In fact, it’s the reason I come to school. I hated school my freshman year and wanted to drop out. My mom suggested I get into cosmetology. I am so glad I did. When I graduate in May, I have a job already lined up at Clara’s Salon in town. It’s true I probably won’t go to college, but I will have a high school diploma. I don’t know if that would have happened without cosmetology, and I am not the only one who feels that way.”

■ **KYLE REN, superintendent**

“Our cosmetology program is successful, but it is also expensive. I can’t justify the costs of the program. Plus, the committee found a great alternative at the community college. A one-year gap in the program won’t affect many students while it would benefit many others.”

■ **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

An administrator from the community college said students in its two-year cosmetology program pay \$1,100 in class fees in addition to tuition.

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SAMPLE EDITORIAL/OPPOSING

Forty-four students took the cosmetology licensing exam last year after finishing the district course work. Forty-four passed. Forty-four are now licensed cosmetologists.

That's a great success rate, so it's hard to understand why the district budget committee recommended the school board cut the courses from the elective offerings next year.

When the board meets Thursday, it needs to bring common sense back to the table and reject this proposal.

The committee based its recommendation on three findings: low potential earnings, high program costs and low college interest after the program. Each is flawed.

First, the committee stated that the average salary for a cosmetologist is between \$21,500 and \$30,000 a year. This is misleading. It doesn't account for tips, nor does it take into consideration that many cosmetologists work part-time. That's a good salary for a part-time job.

Second, the program does cost more than other electives, but there is a simple solution. Instead of axing it, the district could charge course fees for students. Even the cosmetology teacher agrees with this solution. She said she would lead fundraisers for students who couldn't afford the charge.

Third, not all students are the same. In a school of 2,200 students, not everyone is college-bound, and that's OK. Colleges do not have room to accept every graduating senior. For roughly 110 students, the cosmetology program provides a direct pathway to a profession straight from high school.

The budget committee did offer an alternative: a dual-credit cosmetology program with the community college. But it would be much more expensive — \$1,100 in class fees on top of tuition — and, more importantly, it would not be in place next year. Students currently in cosmetology would have nowhere to go next year. Maybe this could be a solution in a few years, but it's not the appropriate solution now.

To simply ax the program now is unfair to those who have already put in two years of work. It would be, to put it mildly, the unkindest cut of all.

SAMPLE EDITORIAL/SUPPORTING

The district's mission includes "to prepare students for post secondary education opportunities." If this truly is the mission, then on Thursday, the school board should accept the district budget committee's recommendation to cut cosmetology as an elective.

Almost three-fourths of the students who enroll in the cosmetology courses do not go on to college. The district's mission is clear: have 80% of graduating seniors move on to post-secondary education opportunities. The cosmetology program is in opposition to that goal.

Furthermore, the cosmetology program is not cost-effective. It costs three times that of other electives. The program has two full-time teachers who teach the 110 students. By comparison, the journalism teacher teaches 160 students, and the choir director has 210 students. If the district were to eliminate cosmetology, it could invest in other areas and bring in new elective offerings such as another foreign language teacher or engineering electives to serve far more students.

The budget committee also is looking out for students. The district would be doing students an injustice by encouraging them to pursue a career where, on average, the most they will earn is \$30,000 a year. That's hardly enough to make a living and raise a family.

And while the committee recommends the district cut the program, it also suggests an alternative — a partnership with the community college where students could earn dual credit and take the courses at the college. This alleviates the financial burden on the district and links students to a college where they may choose to stay.

The cosmetology students and instructors are opposed to the committee's recommendation. They say the program is successful and allows students to start a profession right out of high school, but at what cost? That's the question the board needs to ask, and the answer is clear.

It's time for the district to cut its losses and the cosmetology program.

Editorial Writing

Region Meet • 2020



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 1,400 students enrolled in grades 9-12. Last week, the senior class, which has 302 students, took the traditional panoramic class photo in front of the school. The 55-year tradition started when the school opened. Each senior gets a free print of the photo, and the school frames and hangs the photo in the main hallway with all of the other senior class panoramic photos.

Unbeknownst to the administration, a group of 10 senior males flashed the “OK” hand sign in the photo. After the photo was printed and delivered to the school, Principal Donna Calicchio noticed the seniors and the hand gestures. At that point, she decided the photo would be destroyed and not distributed to the seniors. Calicchio sent an email to all parents apologizing for the incident and wrote: “The hand gesture has several meanings. However, the gesture has more recently become associated with white nationalism. Regardless of intent, the potential negative impact of this gesture has led us to decide that we cannot distribute the panoramic photo. Due to scheduling and timing issues, we will not be able to reschedule the photo. We apologize for this incident.”

The 10 seniors who displayed the controversial sign were assigned In-School Suspension for two days, but Calicchio would not comment further on the consequences.

After hearing about the email from their parents, the senior class officers asked Calicchio if she would reconsider her decision and either offer a second opportunity for a senior panoramic or edit those 10 seniors out of the photo. The principal refused both requests.

Now, the senior class officers will meet with Superintendent Andy Camper on April 23 to ask him to intervene. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Monday, April 20.

THOSE SUPPORTING THE SENIORS

The panoramic photo is a 55-year tradition of the school. The principal should not end the tradition because of a few seniors’ bad decision. Every senior should not be punished because of the acts of a few.

THOSE OPPOSING THE SENIORS

It is too late to reschedule a new photo. Photoshopping the photo is not a good choice either. Everyone would know why those students were blurred out or eliminated from the photo. The photo would be tarnished.

■ **DONNA CALICCHIO, principal**

“I thought about rescheduling the photo and forbidding those 10 seniors in the photo, but that’s not an option. The photographer has no open dates that would work for our seniors. I hate that this happened, but I would rather have a missing photo than a doctored photo hanging on our walls. We don’t need to look at the photo and be reminded of the racist hand gestures. That is exactly what will happen if we blur those boys out of the photo. They will become even more visible. I don’t want any more attention brought to this incident.

“All of the seniors who displayed the sign admitted to knowing that the hand gesture was linked to white nationalism and racism. They knew what they were doing, but they didn’t think it was a big deal. They thought it was funny. Racism is never funny, and it will never be tolerated here as long as I am principal.”

■ **MATT NGUYEN, senior class president**

“I understand why Ms. Calicchio is upset, but she is overreacting. She doesn’t need to destroy all of the photos. She is wasting a lot of money and upsetting a lot of seniors. None of us are proud of how those 10 guys acted but, at the same time, we want our photos. We also want our class photo displayed in the hallway. Every time my parents come back, that’s the first place they go — to the panoramic photo. There are 55 photos on that wall, and we should be No. 56. I hope Dr. Camper will side with us. If he can’t get another photo taken, then he can have the photographer edit the one we have.”

■ **RIVER ASHBURY, alumnus and English teacher**

“Leaguetown graduates look at the panoramic photos every time they visit the school. It brings back great memories. I love that wall. It is frustrating and embarrassing that a group of seniors did what they did. I tend to side with Ms. Calicchio, though. Those students ruined the photo. There is no good way to fix it. It’s tainted. I would be in favor of the seniors taking another photo without those students, but that doesn’t sound like it’s an option.”

■ **WANDA GAMBLE, senior**

“I think I am in the minority, but I don’t want the photo anymore. It represents the ugliness that is going on in the world today. Those 10 guys ruined it for me. Even if the photographer edits those guys out, I don’t want the photo.”

■ **TRENTON SIDDLE, panoramic photographer**

“I’m booked until the middle of June. It is possible to reprint the photo and photoshop those seniors’ hands out or edit the teens out completely. But that is about all I can offer.”

■ **BRUCE DENZEL, senior parent**

“I am beyond frustrated. When did the OK sign suddenly become racist? This is ridiculous. We have become so sensitive as a district that no one can say or do anything without offending someone. I know several of the boys who did the hand gesture, and they are not racist. They thought they were being funny, and I don’t think anyone would have even noticed if the principal had kept quiet. She blew this whole thing out of proportion.”

■ **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

To edit and reprint the photo would cost the school approximately \$2,000.

The demographics of the high school are: 68% white, 12% Hispanic, 8% African-American, 7% Asian and 5% other.

DO NOT PASS OUT TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST**EDITORIAL WRITING REGION • 2020
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 clearly state the staff stance. The central question is whether the superintendent should intervene for seniors to get their class panoramic photo.
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 superintendent should ...," write instead, "The superintendent should ..."
3. Don't waddle into the editorial. Get right to the point and, as a general rule, don't ask rhetorical questions. 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 could use a creative or clever opening to grab the readers' attention and pull them into the story.
4. Look for the future angle. Your paper comes out before the superintendent meets with the seniors.
5. Once you've stated your position/stance, the body of the editorial should support your stance and refute the opposition.
6. After the body of your editorial, complete the editorial with a call to action or possible solution.
7. Do not use direct quotes unless the quote adds substantial validity to the editorial. You can pull information from these quotes, as has been done in the sample editorials, but it's not necessary to attribute that information unless the source has impeccable credibility.
8. Watch for factual errors. Do not assume facts not in evidence and do not generalize.
9. Don't clutter up the editorial with clichés or trite phrases such as "time will tell ..." or any variation. 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

White nationalism is not funny. It's not a joke.

And the school administration is making sure every student understands that after 10 seniors flashed a hand sign known to symbolize white nationalism during the senior panoramic photo. Principal Donna Calicchio decided the school will destroy the panoramic photos instead of distributing them to seniors and hanging one in the school hallway.

Calicchio made the right decision, and the superintendent should uphold her decision when he meets with senior officers on Thursday.

The students said they were being funny when they held up the "OK" hand sign. That hand gesture has been linked to white nationalism and racism, and the students in question have admitted they knew that. They apparently did not care nor did they see the seriousness of the action. This is unacceptable, and Calicchio is correct in taking swift and corrective action.

White nationalism and racism is on the rise today — Charlottesville, the mosque shootings in New York City, the El Paso Wal-Mart shooting and the list goes on. Calicchio is trying to ensure Leaguetown doesn't join the list of those towns. She wants everyone to know the school condemns racism.

Seniors have asked that the photographer delete or blur the gesture in the photo, so that they can have the photo and the photo can be hung with the 55 other panoramic photos in the main hallway. But this isn't a solution. It actually would bring even more attention to the photo. Everyone would look for the 10 seniors and the doctored part of the photo. It certainly would continue to remind all students that racism is alive here.

The seniors then asked for the photo to be reshot. That's not feasible. The photographer is booked until June, and by then school will be over.

The only logical and just decision is the one Calicchio has made, destroying the photos and punishing those students. The superintendent should support her.

SAMPLE EDITORIAL/SUPPORTING

Apparently now, even the “OK” hand gesture isn’t OK anymore. To some, it’s a symbol of white nationalism, or at least that is what Principal Donna Calicchio thinks.

After 10 seniors flashed the OK sign in the senior panoramic photo, Calicchio announced she was going to destroy all of the photos so they could not be distributed to seniors or hung in the school’s main hallway.

This knee-jerk reaction is overkill, and Superintendent Andy Camper needs to intervene and bring some sanity back to the district by overruling Calicchio.

The panoramic photo is a 55-year tradition at the school. The main hallway is decorated with all 55 photos, and it’s one of the favorite spots for alumni to visit when they return to the school. Calicchio is telling the Class of 2020 that it won’t make the wall and be a part of that history.

It seems excessive to punish the entire class for the actions of 10 seniors. The photographer has the ability to edit the OK signs out of the photo and reprint it for the seniors and the main hallway, but Calicchio refuses to allow this. If it’s the \$2,000 price tag for the reprinted photos that is causing Calicchio to balk, then she can charge seniors for the new panoramic photos. Those who really want it will pay for it.

If Calicchio doesn’t want the panoramic edited because she doesn’t want a doctored photo on the wall, then she is being unreasonable. Photos are edited all of the time. In fact, seniors have the option to get rid of blemishes or other issues in their senior portraits, and those photos go in the yearbook. Editing photos is nothing new.

The bottom line is, Calicchio should not end a school tradition for the senior class because of a silly gesture that’s been exaggerated. And that really is all that happened. The seniors admitted to knowing that the OK hand gesture was a symbol of white nationalism, but they thought they were being funny, not mean. It was done in poor taste, and the students should suffer consequences. But it’s not OK to punish the entire senior class when there is an easy and simple solution.

The superintendent needs to request an edited panoramic photo for the school and for the students. It’s not only the right thing to do. It’s entirely OK.