



GOOD NEWS

UIL News Writing

Alyssa Boehringer, UIL Journalism Director

NEWS WRITING

Gives the reader information – starting with the most recent information/events. It flows from most important to least important.

**“WHAT IS NEWS?
IT IS INFORMATION ONLY.”**
-WALTER CRONKITE



NEWS STORIES ARE...

OBJECTIVE

THIRD PERSON

ACTIVE VOICE

SHORT PARAGRAPHS

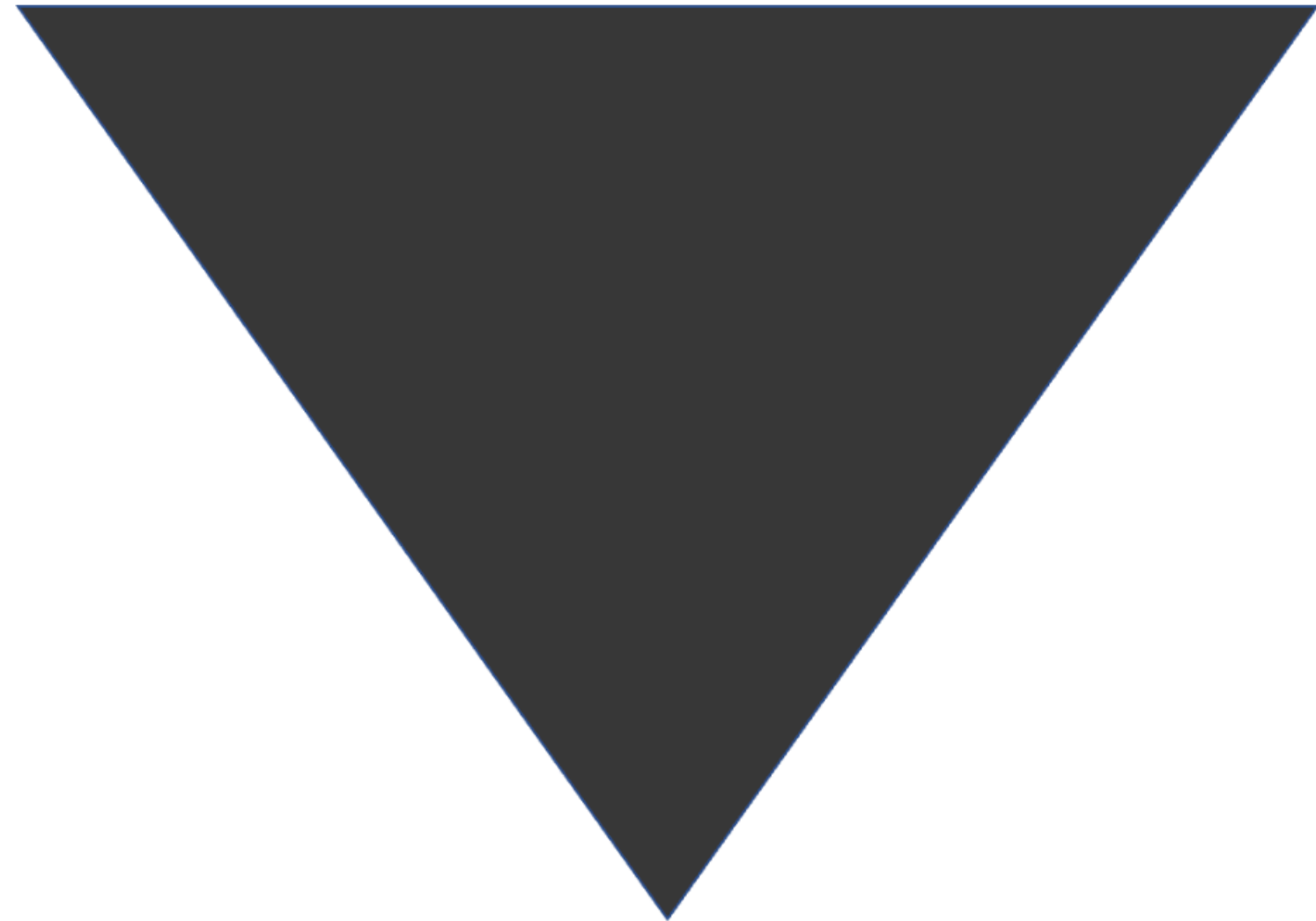
ACCURATE

TIMELY

CONCISE

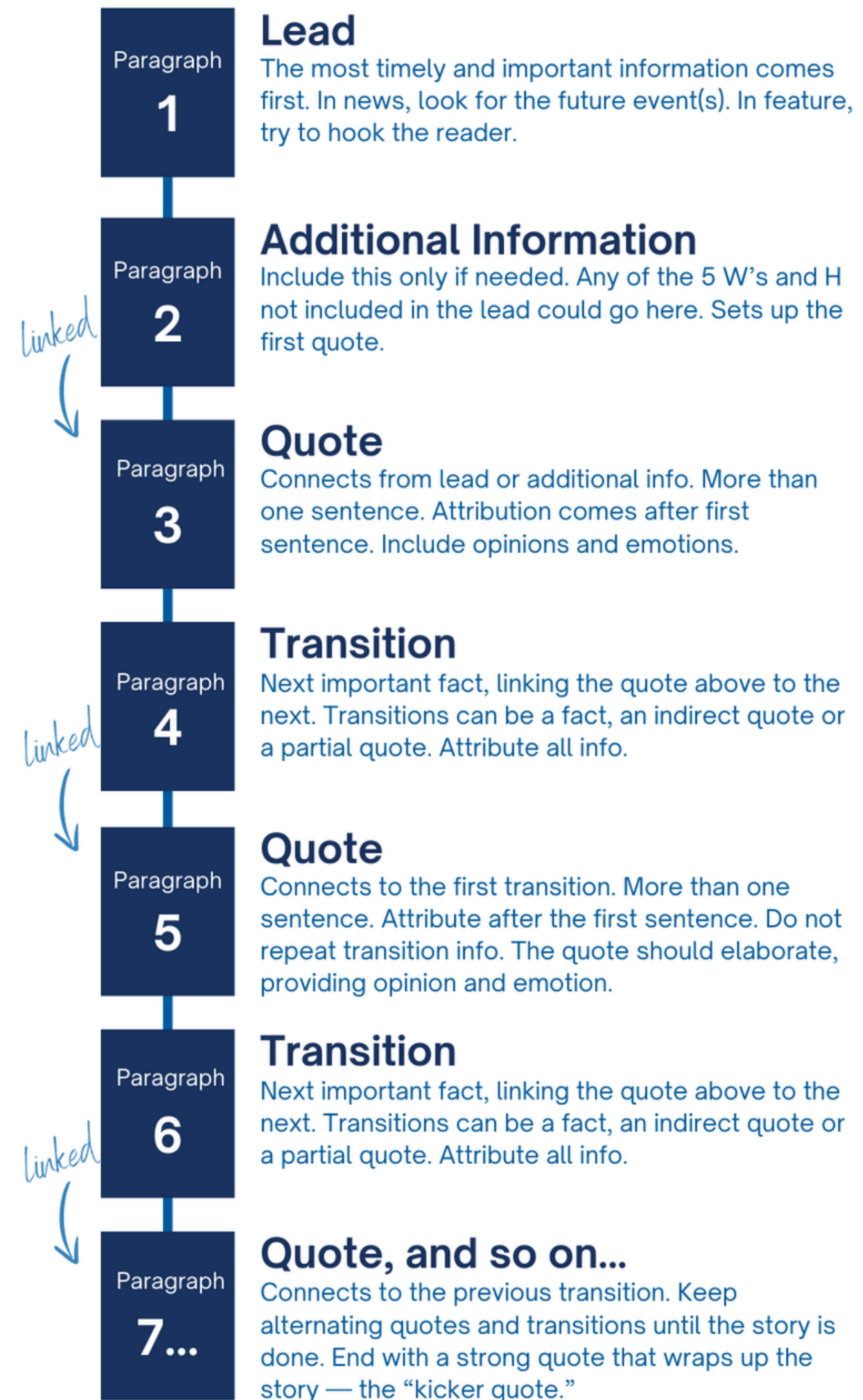
THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION GOES AT THE TOP

INVERTED PYRAMID



LQTQ FORMULA

LQTQ FORMULA



LQTQ

SHORT, CONCISE PARAGRAPHS

Each quote is its own paragraph. Each transition is its own paragraph.

FLOW FROM MOST IMPORTANT TO LEAST

Keep it timely.

LEADS

LEADS...

Provide the most important information to your audience.

Provide the most current information.

Avoid things the reader already knows.

Focus on future consequences.

TYPES OF LEADS

WHO?

Probably not.

WHAT?

Yes.

WHEN?

Probably not.

WHERE?

Probably not.

WHY?

Yes.

HOW?

Yes.

“WHO” LEADS

PROBABLY WON'T WORK

Avoid leading with the name of a boring school employee. If you start with the who, they better be someone special.

Principal Joe Blow announced Tuesday that students will no longer be allowed to leave campus for lunch.

“WHO” LEADS

**COULD WORK IN REALLY
REALLY REALLY SPECIAL
CIRCUMSTANCES.**

Taylor Swift announced the final stop of the Eras Tour will be at Leaguettown Memorial Football Stadium Dec. 8.

“WHEN” LEADS

PROBABLY WON'T WORK

Don't start with the time element.

NO:

On Tuesday, Principal Joe Blow announced students will no longer be able to leave campus for lunch.

“WHEN” LEADS

PROBABLY WON'T WORK

Don't start with the time element.

Still NO:

Starting Thursday, students will no longer be able to leave campus for lunch.

“WHERE” LEADS

PROBABLY WON'T WORK

No one cares about the school board meeting itself.

NO:

At the school board meeting, Principal Joe Blow announced that the school will no longer off-campus lunch.

**THE WHAT
THE WHY
THE HOW**

THESE LEADS ARE YOUR FRIENDS.

LEADS THAT WORK

If a group of parents can't change Principal John Roberts' mind about his ban on the 2019 class shirts, seniors say they might wear the shirts to school Friday, an act that could get them suspended.

LEADS THAT WORK

After driving a sick student to an urgent care clinic in his personal car, varsity football coach Ned Winter faces possible termination for violating district policy.

LEADS THAT WORK

After four car accidents last month, Principal Stan Lebowski announced Friday that seniors will not be able to leave campus during lunch.

LEAD TIPS



Think about your audience and what they will want to know first.

Lead with the possible **RESULT** of the decision, not the fact that there is a meeting or a decision coming.

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The school board approved the proposal, and Akins applied for a grant from the Leaguetown Youth Outreach Center. It awarded \$2,000 to provide furniture, lighting, decorations and materials for the room, which will replace one of the conference rooms in the counseling office.

The calm room will be known as the Leopard Den and will include a sofa, bean bag chairs and soft lighting as well as art materials, stuffed animals and other stress relieving activities.

To gain access to the room, students will have to visit the counseling assistant to check in. Students will be allowed to spend up to 20 minutes in the room at a time drawing, coloring, using various fidgets and stress balls or meditating. Phones, computers and other devices as well as school work are not permitted in the room. At least one counselor will be available to meet with students after they spend time in the Leopard Den.

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■ JEFF AKINS, crisis counselor

“The Leopard Den will give students an opportunity to calm down and de-stress for a few minutes during the school day. Hopefully, showing students how to reset and take a short break will help them gain the skills to regulate stress on their own by the time they leave school.

“A study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2021 showed a huge increase in sadness and depression among young people, driven largely by the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though the pandemic has slowed, the number of teens experiencing depression and anxiety continues to rise. The CDC recommends that schools take an active role in caring and supporting students through their mental health struggles. The Leopard Den is one way for us to support those students and put them in a better position to be successful at school.

“As a licensed therapist, I have seen the positive effects that a calm room can have on someone who is struggling with stress and anxiety. They have rooms like this in hospitals and schools all over the world. Sometimes, people need a break. These rooms can help. My hope is that the Leopard Den will have that positive effect on our students. Even if we help one student have a better day at school, it will have been worth it.”

■ TORI STAPP, junior

“I have an anxiety disorder that causes me to have panic attacks if I get a little overstimulated. Sometimes if I’m behind in a class and have a ton of makeup work or even if I read a rude comment on social media, it’s enough to trigger an attack.

“I’m excited about the Leopard Den because when I try to avoid an attack at home, I just go in my room, put on my headphones and close my eyes for 10 minutes. I can’t do that in the middle of class with everyone looking at me, so I used to just go sit in the bathroom for a while. I know it’s not the best place to hang out, but I just need a quiet spot for a few minutes. It sounds like this new place will give me that opportunity.”

■ SCOTT AMOS, AP English teacher

“Times are different than when I was in high school. We still had stress, but nothing like what I see my students facing today. Not only are they faced with high demands at school, but many students help their parents at home. More students have jobs. They have the pressures of social media. It’s so important for adults to stop and think about things like this.

“I have seen students come in this year looking exhausted, with red eyes, having gone to athletics or band practice and then going home to do five hours of homework. As a staff, we also need to take a look at what we can do to reduce the amount of stress on our students. I’m glad our school is doing something to give students a chance to decompress from all the pressure they’re feeling.”

■ MATTHEW McENROE, freshman

“I had no idea high school would be like this. Middle school was hard enough, but we have so much homework and all these other activities. Then in my world geography class, we learn about current events for a few minutes every day. With everything going on in the world, combined with the stress of day-to-day high school life, it gets overwhelming. I even punched the wall of my bedroom last week and made a hole in my wall. I wish I had just done something to calm down before blowing up like that.”

■ DR. JULIUS BIRD, pediatrician

“The idea of a ‘calm down’ room has been around for a while. I admire the staff at Leaguetown High School for taking advantage of such a simple opportunity to improve mental health among students. I have a daughter in middle school, and I know that pressure with school and her basketball team can already be overwhelming. It’s good to know she will be supported when those stressors continue at the high school level.”

■ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Read the prompt...

Find the newest information in the prompt. Circle the future event(s). Beware of older or more controversial news.

Avoid the who, where and when.

Keep it in third person, concise and to-the-point.

No need to mention the word Leaguetown. Students know where they go.

Do not editorialize.

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BY IMMAAN PATEL, PLANO EAST
TOPS IN CENTEX

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The Leopard Den, a new calming room, will open in the counseling center Dec. 11.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In recent years, the amount of stress experienced by high school students has significantly increased. To help resolve this issue, crisis counselor Jeff Akins proposed the idea of creating a therapeutic room on campus for students to relax.

DIRECT QUOTES

WHO MATTERS MOST IN THIS STORY?

Don't forget about students!



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2023 CENTEX MEET NEWS • PAGE 2

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■ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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QUOTES...

Should be more than one sentence.

First one is probably your “main” source.

Should have attribution after the first sentence.

Should have transitions between them.

Should include emotion.

ATTRIBUTION AND QUOTE PUNCTUATION

“Attribution is where the writer tells the reader who is speaking,” UIL journalism director Alyssa Boehringer said. “If you can do attribution properly, you can win a medal this year.”

- Attribution is title - name - said. In that order.
- Always use said
- Look at quote punctuation.



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BY IMMAAN PATEL, PLANO EAST TOPS IN CENTEX

FIRST QUOTE

"The Leopard Den will give students an opportunity to calm down and de-stress for a few minutes during the school day," Akins said. "Hopefully, showing students how to reset and take a short break will help them gain the skills to regulate stress on their own by the time they leave school."

QUOTES...

**SHOULD NOT REPEAT
INFORMATION FROM THE
TRANSITION.**

Akins said the Leopard Den will give students a break during the school day.

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QUOTES...

**SHOULD BE LINKED FROM THE
PARAGRAPH BEFORE THEM. THE
QUOTE SHOULD ELABORATE ON THE
PREVIOUS PARAGRAPH.**

The Leopard Den will include comfortable furniture, calming lighting, stress balls and various activities for students to engage in to allow themselves a break from their school work.

“I have an anxiety disorder that causes me to have panic attacks if I get a little overstimulated,” junior Tori Stapp said. “I’m excited about the Leopard Den because when I try to avoid an attack at home, I just go in my room, put on my headphones, and close my eyes for 10 minutes. It sounds like this new place will give me that opportunity.”

TRANSITIONS

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Include facts about the story.

Hold the story together.

Link quotes together to give the story flow.

Could be a fact or a partial/indirect quote.

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FACT TRANSITION

The Leopard Den will include comfortable furniture, calming lighting, stress balls, and various activities for students to engage in to allow themselves a break from their school work.

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BY IMMAAN PATEL, PLANO EAST
TOPS IN CENTEX

PARTIAL/INDIRECT QUOTE TRANSITION

In addition, one staff member said it has become more common for students to start jobs and take up more extracurriculars, adding to their stress.

AVOID INDEFINITE TERMS IN TRANSITIONS

MANY

MOST

SOME

HOW DO WE COME UP WITH TRANSITIONS?

Remember, facts should go in transitions.

Opinions and emotions go in quotes.



News Writing

2023 CENTEX MEET NEWS • PAGE 2

Centex Meet • 2023



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■ TORI STAPP, junior

"I have an anxiety disorder that causes me to have panic attacks if I get a little overstimulated. Sometimes if I'm behind in a class and have a ton of makeup work or even if I read a rude comment on social media, it's enough to trigger an attack."

"I'm excited about the Leopard Den because when I try to avoid an attack at home, I just go in my room, put on my headphones and close my eyes for 10 minutes. I can't do that in the middle of class with everyone looking at me, so I used to just go sit in the bathroom for a while. I know it's not the best place to hang out, but I just need a quiet spot for a few minutes. It sounds like this new place will give me that opportunity."

■ SCOTT AMOS, AP English teacher

"Times are different than when I was in high school. We still had stress, but nothing like what I see my students facing today. Not only are they faced with high demands at school, but many students help their parents at home. More students have jobs. They have the pressures of social media. It's so important for adults to stop and think about things like this."

"I have seen students come in this year looking exhausted, with red eyes, having gone to athletics or band practice and then going home to do five hours of homework. As a staff, we also need to take a look at what we can do to reduce the amount of stress on our students. I'm glad our school is doing something to give students a chance to decompress from all the pressure they're feeling."

■ MATTHEW McENROE, freshman

"I had no idea high school would be like this. Middle school was hard enough, but we have so much homework and all these other activities. Then in my world geography class, we learn about current events for a few minutes every day. With everything going on in the world, combined with the stress of day-to-day high school life, it gets overwhelming. I even punched the wall of my bedroom last week and made a hole in my wall. I wish I had just done something to calm down before blowing up like that."

■ DR. JULIUS BIRD, pediatrician

"The idea of a 'calm down' room has been around for a while. I admire the staff at Leaguetown High School for taking advantage of such a simple opportunity to improve mental health among students. I have a daughter in middle school, and I know that pressure with school and her basketball team can already be overwhelming. It's good to know she will be supported when those stressors continue at the high school level."

■ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The school is now accepting donations of bottled water and crackers to keep in the counseling office for students who visit the Leopard Den.

**DO NOT COPY YOUR LEAD OR
TRANSITIONS WORD-FOR-WORD
FROM THE PROMPT!**

ENDING

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ALWAYS END WITH A STRONG QUOTE

Akins said the new campus addition aims to aid students in their struggles, with hopes of creating a safer environment for them that will ultimately lead them to success.

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LET'S REVIEW

**HOW SHOULD YOU AVOID STARTING
YOUR LEAD?**

WHAT IS ATTRIBUTION?

**WHO SHOULD YOU ALWAYS HAVE A
QUOTE FROM?**

**WHERE SHOULD YOU GET IDEAS
FOR TRANSITIONS?**

**WHAT IS ONE "MUST HAVE" FOR
YOUR LEAD?**

FINAL CHECKLIST

- Are the most important and most recent facts first? Future event!
- Is the story accurate?
- Are the paragraphs short? 1-2 sentences
- Does the story flow?
- Did you use active voice?
- LQTTQ?

MAKE THE JUDGES HAPPY

- Don't use the word "Leaguetown." Students know where they go.
- Don't write a feature lead instead of a news lead.
- Don't make up stuff that's not in the prompt.
- Don't editorialize. Keep your opinion out of the story.
- Keep it in 3rd person. Common mistake: "our school..."
- Avoid messy handwriting, poor grammar and spelling errors
- Don't misspell names. It's right there in the prompt.
- Don't try to use all the information in the prompt.

**IF YOU DO NOTHING ELSE,
LEAD WITH THE FUTURE EVENT**

GOOD NEWS

Alyssa Boehringer

UIL Journalism Director /ILPC Director

aboehringer@uiltexas.org

