



Editorial Writing Evaluation Sheet

contestant #

In order to make this a complete learning experience, judges are asked to complete the evaluation sheet for students.

	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
The situation or problem is explained in the first two or three paragraphs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The writer takes an obvious stance in the first few paragraphs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The writer supports the stance through specific examples.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The writer presents a logical solution or conclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What were the strong points of the editorial?

What were the weak points of the editorial?

What suggestions do you have for improvement?

Judge's Signature _____



Editorial Writing

A+ Invitational • 2016-2017

You are a reporter for the Leaguetown Press, the student newspaper of Leaguetown Middle School. From the given information, write an **editorial** as you would for the middle 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 entry. **Put your number in the upper right corner of each page of your entry.**

STATEMENT OF SITUATION

Leaguetown Middle School, located in Texas, has 600 students enrolled in grades 6-8. This past summer, school district cafeteria managers attended the Health of Texas Kids (HTK) conference in Dallas. After returning from the conference, Leaguetown ISD Child Nutrition Director Fred Allison proposed that a nutrition class be a core requirement for all middle school students. No nutrition class has been offered or required in the past. The new class would be based on HTK lesson plans and material.

The HTK conference held that even if students are eating healthy lunches at school, healthy habits are still not being taught and established. In a recent study, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that the percentage of adolescents aged 12-19 years who were obese increased from 5 percent to nearly 20 percent over the past 30 years. Another study found that 50% of children age 11-15 feel they are not educated on healthy eating habits.

“Students must be taught the value of being healthy and what it takes to maintain it,” HTK President Elizabeth Waters said. “We have put nutrition on a back burner in America. Children need to be taught healthy habits early so a firm base will be established to educate them through their lives. That is why our main focus is getting a nutrition core requirement in Texas schools.”

Two middle schools in Texas piloted the HTK nutrition class this past year with positive results. All students who took the class gave favorable reviews, saying they are now aware what foods are better for the body, and which to eat in moderation.

However, if the nutrition class is implemented it would take the place of the homework elective class, which is a class where students are given time to complete assignments and work on projects. Some teachers have expressed concern that the homework class is too valuable to be replaced.

“My students utilize and need this period,” Science teacher Will Keegan said. “Many of our students are involved in multiple extracurricular activities and don’t have much time when they get home to complete assignments. Taking out this homework class would be detrimental.”

Teachers and parents are both split on the proposal. The school board will vote on whether to implement the proposal for the 2017-2018 school year at its regular meeting next Monday. You are writing for the issue of the *Press* to be published on the Friday prior to the meeting.

STANCES

Supporting the proposal

It is no secret that obesity is a rising problem in the U.S. Teaching students healthy habits from a young age will only lead to positive results. Half of students aren’t even educated on healthy habits. Students cannot be expected to maintain a healthy lifestyle if they never learn the basics of good nutrition. Health is too important to be ignored.

Opposing

Students can learn nutrition at home. That is not the school’s job. There is no guarantee this nutrition class will even have an effect on students. Besides, the homework class is too beneficial for many students for it to be cut. The homework class gives students the ability to ask their teachers questions they may not be able to figure out at home.

UIL Editorial Writing Contest • A+ Invitational • 2016-2017

(Distribute this sheet to judges prior to judging.)

JUDGING INSTRUCTIONS

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Remember that for purposes of the contest these students go to Leaguetown Middle School. Contestants should not have to specify Leaguetown Middle School, because everyone reading the school paper knows where they go to school. Also, when they refer to the school board they do not have to say "Leaguetown School Board." Again, they know in what city they live.

Judging criteria has been developed to help you score the papers. The criteria are intended to help you evaluate the writing, not as a control over your background in editorial writing or the writing process.

SAMPLE EDITORIAL

After attending the HTK conference, cafeteria management has announced a proposal that would require all students to take a core nutrition class. The nutrition class would take the place of the homework elective class. Child Nutrition Director Fred Allison introduced the proposal citing rising obesity rates, and data that holds teaching students healthy habits at a young age will benefit them throughout their lives. The board will decide whether to enact the proposal at their meeting on Monday.

The board should accept and implement the proposal.

Health is just as important a subject as any other. There is no class currently that educates students on how to eat healthy. In fact, a recent study cited by the HTK found that 50 percent of children age 11-15 feel they are not educated on healthy eating habits. If there is no knowledge on healthy habits, there is no way for students to practice these habits.

Two schools have piloted the program and seen positive results. All students who took the class said they are now more aware and educated on healthy habits. There is no reason why this would not be the effect on Leaguetown. If students are given nutritional material and resources, it will be absorbed. But, the information needs to be provided which is exactly what this class will do.

Some teachers and parents say the homework elective class is too valuable and necessary to take away. However, homework is meant to be done at home. For those students that have extracurricular activities, perhaps they could come early to school to complete their homework, or complete it during lunch.

The benefits for this proposal are too large to ignore. Students have no access to nutrition education now, which needs to be corrected. The board should accept the proposal and enforce the nutrition class at the meeting.



Editorial Writing

A+ Fall/Winter District • 2016-2017

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

You have **45 minutes**.

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STATEMENT OF SITUATION

Leaguetown Middle School, located in Texas, has 721 students enrolled in grades 6-8. The middle school has had the same lockers since 1960, with minor changes over the years to correct faulty locks. Last year, Superintendent Esmeralda Enriquez attended a workshop at a neighboring middle school that had eliminated their lockers and replaced them with benches, bulletin boards and charging stations. After talking to the principal of the neighboring school and doing some research, Enriquez decided to propose the idea to the Leaguetown school board.

“The first thing I noticed was how students were gathered in the hall around the bulletin boards, looking at postings from teachers and talking together,” Enriquez said. “They were also using the charging stations to charge their school laptops. We just received school laptops for our students last year. We quickly found out it is difficult to have outlets for so many students. This is the perfect solution.”

The neighboring school, Brickmond Middle School, has seen additional positive effects from the elimination of the lockers.

“For one, there are so many fewer tardies,” Brickmond Middle School Principal Claire Stevens said. “Students aren’t spending time dawdling at their lockers, or using it as an excuse to why they are late to class. Additionally, there is an increased sense of safety. With so many school tragedies happening today, we want to do our very best to protect our students. Eradicating lockers leaves less room for concealing illegal items, simple as that.”

Additionally, many teachers at Brickmond have expressed how little noise there is without locker doors slamming shut and disrupting class.

Enriquez administered a poll to teachers and students to gauge how they felt about the idea. While teachers favored it, the majority of students did not.

“Although the lockers are old and gross, without them I really don’t know what I would do,” Incoming 8th grader, Will Staker said. “I use my locker after all of my periods to drop off and exchange books. There is no way I could lug around all my books for the whole day in my backpack. I also play football and we have our athletic period in the morning. My sweaty gym clothes stay in my locker. Without a locker I would be carrying them around with me all day. I don’t think anyone wants that.”

If implemented, the project would begin in Summer 2017. The project would take out the lockers and replace them with benches, charging stations and bulletin boards.

The board will vote whether to execute the project at their meeting next Thursday. You are writing for the issue of the *Press* to be published on Tuesday before the meeting.

STANCES

Supporting the proposal

Eliminating lockers is the best safety option. The well-being and protection of students should be the school’s top priority. Plus, there are too many benefits to ignore. There is more student collaboration, less tardiness and less class disruption.

Opposing

If students are first priority, we need to listen to the students. Most oppose the project. Seven periods means seven different books, seven notebooks/binders, supplies--there is no way students can pack all this around all day. This project also leaves more room for theft. Students won’t be able to safely secure all of their belongings.

UIL Editorial Writing Contest • A+ Fall/Winter District • 2016-2017
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JUDGING INSTRUCTIONS

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SAMPLE EDITORIAL

After witnessing the benefits of locker removal at a neighboring middle school, Superintendent Esmeralda Enriquez has proposed the idea to the school board. The project would tear out all lockers and replace them with benches, charging stations and bulletin boards. The board will vote whether to enact the proposal at their meeting on Thursday.

The board should vote no on the proposal.

Students do not favor the proposal and with good reason. There is no way a student can lug around seven periods worth of books, binders, notebooks, and supplies. It is not feasible and it can't be good for a growing body. Some say students will be able to put their belongings in the classroom, but there is no guarantee teachers would have space for students to store these supplies that are now displaced.

It isn't just books students would be carrying in their backpack all day, it would also be sweaty athletic clothes. For some students, gym period is in the morning and usually they put their clothes in their lockers. However, if the lockers are torn out, students will be forced to carry their gym clothes with them throughout the day which is, for obvious reasons, not ideal or hygenic.

Removing lockers leaves room for theft. Lockers provide students with a safe, secure place to keep their belongings. If the project is enacted, students will not have this secure place. It doesn't take an expert thief to steal from a backpack, and with all of the student's valuables on their person, it doesn't make for a good combination.

Students are utilizing their lockers and there is no reason to take them out if they are benefitting students and not causing any harm. Removing the lockers would only put students at a disadvantage. The board should reject the proposal on Thursday.



Editorial Writing

A+ Spring District • 2016-2017

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STATEMENT OF SITUATION

Leaguetown Middle School, located in Texas, has 1,523 students enrolled in grades 6-8. Last year, more than 100 students visited the counselor's office disclosing they were being bullied at school. This was the most bullying-related counselor visits the school had ever had. Students told of being teased and picked on at school, and the counselor found that most of these issues occurred in the bathrooms.

"This past year was really tough," Counselor Teva Rhodes said. "To see so many students broken down by bullies is heartbreaking. Students that came to me described being physically pushed around and verbally abused during in-class restroom breaks and passing period restroom breaks. Although teachers are usually standing outside their doors, the restrooms are an unsupervised area that bullies take advantage of."

Currently, most teachers allow students to use the restroom during class.

"It's middle school, and at this age students are going through many physical and emotional developments," Science teacher Joseph Barrera said. "Those who behave responsibly should be given the trust to use restroom privileges when they need them. So as a teacher, yes I allow my students to use the restroom in moderation."

In collaboration with Principal Mark Forth, Rhodes has proposed a plan that would ban all bathroom breaks during class. To compensate, passing periods would each be made two minutes longer. Additionally, during passing periods a teacher would be stationed in each restroom.

"The longer passing period will give students time to use the restroom before class so they don't have to go during class," Rhodes said. "It is simply too risky to allow students to be unsupervised considering last year's events. I know it is going to be difficult, but it must be done to protect our students."

Each class would be cut down two minutes to create the longer passing periods. Teachers would be on a rotating schedule to determine who would supervise each restroom during each passing period.

"I think this is an awesome idea," 7th grader Jessica Lowry said. "I have been bullied in the past, and I would definitely feel more comfortable if I knew a teacher would be present during bathroom breaks. Plus, so many students take advantage of teachers that allow in-class restroom breaks. It wastes class time."

Many teachers oppose the plan.

The school board will vote whether to implement the plan for the upcoming school year at their meeting on Wednesday.

STANCES

Supporting the proposal

Bullying cannot be tolerated, bottom line. The school must do whatever it takes to eradicate this issue. In-class restroom breaks take up class time and allow for unsupervised behavior, so eliminating them is the best solution. And, students will be given the time they need to use the restroom during passing periods.

Opposing

There is no way that all students will be able to use the restroom during passing periods. There are too many students, and too few restrooms--it will only cause tardies. Plus, teachers use time between passing periods to prepare for their next class. And, who is going to supervise the students whose teacher is the one in the restroom?

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SAMPLE EDITORIAL

After experiencing a record number of bullying complaints last year, many of them occurring in the restroom, counselor Teva Rhodes has proposed a plan that would ban all in-class restroom breaks and make passing periods longer to compensate and give students time to use the restroom before class begins. The school board will vote on the proposal Wednesday at their meeting.

The board should implement the proposal for the well-being of students.

There should be no question on whether to protect students from bullying. If this is what it takes to do that, then it must be done. The effects of bullying on students are severe and often life-long. These effects range from low self esteem, to depression, to weight loss and gain and many other health problems. The board must put this proposal in place to reduce and prevent these effects.

Restroom breaks during class take up too much valuable learning time. If one student needs to use the restroom, it is usually a chain reaction with many students suddenly needing to use the restroom. When students lose this class time, they are missing that problem they had a question on, or the answer to the problem they missed on the test.

With teacher supervision in the restrooms at all times, bullying at school will be greatly reduced. Teachers will be able to observe, prevent and stop bullying outbreaks. Yes, it may be a little inconvenient for teachers because they use this time to prepare for their next class, however it is a small price to pay to keep students feeling safe.

School is a place where students should feel protected. This plan will diminish bullying in the place where it is occurring most. The board should vote yes to the proposal on Wednesday.