



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 • 2023-2024

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 has 1,220 students and is located in East Texas. This month, Principal Jackson Sweetly proposed a ban on all colognes, perfumes, scented deodorants and body sprays on school property. He made the proposal after surveying faculty and staff, 82% of whom said they would support the proposal.

According to Sweetly at least one teacher on staff suffers from chemical sensitivity or severe allergy. The teacher in question was out sick 12 days this semester because of illnesses related to strong fragrances in the school.

“As principal at Leaguetown Middle School, one of my most important jobs is to create a safe working environment for the employees who work here,” Sweetly said. “I understand why many students and staff enjoy wearing these perfumes and body sprays, but we need to look at the cost of allowing these things to continue. When you walk down the hall, sometimes you are bombarded with different sprays and smells. We plan to eliminate these hazards for everyone’s safety.”

According to school nurse Angela Hartman, odors can irritate people with asthma, trigger headaches and cause severe respiratory symptoms. In addition, 38 students at the school are known to suffer from asthma.

“I frequently have students visiting my office with a simple headache,” she said. “After questioning them, I find that either they haven’t drunk enough water or that they have sprayed themselves with some type of perfume or have been sitting next to someone who has. Most students aren’t aware of the potential problems these things can cause.”

Students like 8th-grader Allison Harris said the ban is too extreme.

“Sometimes I just need to spray some essential oils because there are so many other awful smells in class or in the hall,” Harris said. “Some 6th-graders haven’t gotten used to wearing deodorant every day and sometimes it’s just easier to do a little spray at my desk. Don’t get me started on what it smells like when kids don’t shower after an athletic period when kids have gone outside for practice. Mr. Sweetly should just address smells when they become an issue rather than banning them all.”

The school board will vote on the proposal at its Nov. 8 meeting and if approved, the ban will go into effect immediately. The next issue of the Press will be distributed Friday, Nov. 3.

STANCES

Supporting

With at least one teacher and potentially dozens of students having their health negatively affected by fragrances on campus, banning these products is the right thing to do. Teachers should not have to go to school in an environment where they aren’t safe. Students should find other ways to maintain a clean-smelling body odors. By showering daily and wearing deodorant as necessary, students can cut down on those unpleasant smells that some students cover with perfumes and body sprays.

Opposing

Students in middle school are responsible enough to be trusted with spraying perfume and body spray. Instead of banning students and staff from spraying at school, Mr. Sweetly should put out guidelines on how to spray safely. For example, students could do one or two sprays in the restroom, rather than bringing the spray into the classroom. In addition, those with medical conditions should find better ways to prevent themselves from being exposed, rather than depending on others to leave perfume sprays at home.

UIL Editorial Writing Contest • A+ Invitational • 2023-2024

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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

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"As principal at Leaguetown Middle School, one of my most important jobs is to create a safe working environment for the employees who work here," Sweetly said. "I understand why many students and staff enjoy wearing these perfumes and body sprays, but we need to look at the cost of allowing these things to continue. When you walk down the hall, sometimes you are bombarded with different sprays and smells. We plan to eliminate these hazards for everyone's safety."

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Editorial Writing

A+ Fall/Winter District • 2023-2024

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STATEMENT OF SITUATION

Leaguetown Middle School is located in North Texas and has an enrollment of 1,200 students in grades 6, 7 and 8.

For the past 10 years, students in the Principles of AV, Arts, Technology and Communications class have produced a daily, five-minute broadcast featuring announcements, the school lunch menu, birthday shout-outs and occasional video packages produced by the students. Teachers would receive a link in their email every day during third period and would be instructed to click the link and show the broadcast, titled “LTV Now,” to their class.

Last week, Principal Cody Arbabi met with the adviser and teacher of the class, David Blayton and told him that the broadcast could no longer be distributed to teachers to show daily. Instead, Arbabi would read the daily announcements over the PA system and the production class would be welcome to produce their broadcast to be posted on the school website. Arbabi said the reason behind the decision was that third period teachers needed those five additional minutes for instruction during class.

“We are proud of the work students do in Mr. Clayton’s class,” Arbabi said. “However, spending five minutes a day watching their production takes 910 minutes a year from those students learning English, math, science and social studies in their other classes. This solution allows the students to continue to produce their work, while giving that precious time back to students and teachers for their learning.”

Clayton announced Arbabi’s decision to the class on Monday and by Thursday, two student producers of the broadcast and their parents had a meeting scheduled with Arbabi to ask him to appeal his decision.

“LTV Now’ is crucial part of our school’s culture,” student producer and eighth-grader McKensie Lane said. “Having a real, daily audience for our work adds authenticity to the experience of learning how to produce a broadcast TV show.”

English teacher Sally Heal said she enjoys the daily broadcast, but understands Arbabi’s decision.

“We have so much content to get through in each unit,” she said. “My third period class is always a little behind the others because of ‘LTV Now.’ The students and I always enjoy it, but school is for learning and that has to come first.”

Despite the decision sixth-grader Hayden Walleesen said “LTV Now” has helped him learn about different aspects of the school as a first-year middle-schooler.

“My first day of middle school was pretty scary,” he said. “But since we’ve been watching ‘LTV Now’ every day, I’ve been able to learn about how middle school works. I can learn about new classes at the school and see what students are doing. Even though I’m shy, it’s made me feel like a part of the school.”

After meeting with “LTV Now” students and parents, Arbabi said he will consider their appeal and respond by Monday. You are writing for the issue of The Press to be distributed Friday after the Thursday meeting.

STANCES

Supporting

Teachers and students have a limited amount of time during the class period to teach lessons and get work done. By showing “LTV Now” during third period, students are at a disadvantage in terms of how successful they will be in that class. Moving the broadcast to the website will still give the broadcast a home where people can go to watch it. This is the most fair solution for all students and teachers.

Opposing

The entire school community benefits by showing “LTV Now” during class. It can connect students and teachers who have never even met by showing various aspects of the school. In addition, having a large audience benefits students in the class by making the product more authentic and making it feel like a real-world experience. The show is a part of the school’s culture and that should not be changed.

UIL Editorial Writing Contest • A+ Fall/Winter District • 2023-2024

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JUDGING INSTRUCTIONS

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SAMPLE EDITORIAL

One of the best traditions at the school, the broadcast "LTV Now," will have its impact significantly diminished if principal Cody Arbabi goes forward with his idea to move the broadcast out of third period and put it on the school's website every day instead. Two LTV now students and their parents have appealed this decision and Arbabi will respond to their appeal on Monday.

Arbabi should reverse his decision and keep the student-produced broadcast shown every day during third period.

Moving the broadcast online will reduce the size of the audience. One of the best roles the broadcast plays is that it connects members of the school community together by showing them aspects of the school that they might not otherwise see. Losing this connection could damage the fabric of the school's culture.

In a class where students learn video storytelling, interviewing and news judgment, having a real audience every day helps the learning process of students in the video class. Students take production decisions more seriously knowing that the whole school will see the broadcast.

Even with the production available on the school's website, it is unlikely that many students will visit the school's website and click on that link every day. Many students do not have social media, so their only want to get the important information shared during the broadcast is to hear it when it is shown during class.

It is understandable that teachers want additional time to teach during the school day. But removing LTV Now from third period is not worth the cost

Arbabi should keep "LTV Now" as a part of third period every day. The school can't afford to lose its informed students and strong school culture.



Editorial Writing

A+ SPRING DISTRICT • 2023-2024

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STATEMENT OF SITUATION

Leaguetown Middle School is located in Central Texas and has an enrollment of 1,000 students in grades 6, 7 and 8.

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, teaching instruction and assignments have become increasingly digitized, to accommodate the growing needs of students. With recent developments in artificial intelligence (AI), students have now started to utilize tools such as ChatGPT to complete their online work.

After receiving complaints from teachers, and noting a rapidly escalating plagiarism problem, Principal Laura Redington announced a new consequence for students caught using AI programs in school.

If a student is found to have used AI to complete an assignment, they will be sent to the disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) for two days and receive a zero in the gradebook.

“Our teachers began to notice that many assignments were coming back marked for plagiarism,” Redington said. “When they began to press students on the issue, they admitted to using AI programs to complete their work. Not only did the students not learn from the assignment, but they did not understand the new concepts being taught.”

Sixth grade student Reagan Keaton has seen her classmates use AI in class.

“Usually when our teacher is grading at her desk, kids will use an AI program on their computer to write their essay for them or to do their math problems,” she said. “Then for the rest of class they pretend to work while they play computer games or watch a movie. It’s really distracting for the kids actually trying to do their work.”

Despite the issues that AI causes in the classroom, some students feel that Principal Redington’s consequence is too strict.

“I understand that it’s not okay to use AI to complete an entire assignment, but sometimes we need help figuring a problem out when our teacher is busy with other students,” eighth grade student Liam Marshall said. “It’s not our fault that we need more help, students shouldn’t be punished for it.”

Principal Redington said she will conduct a staff vote on the proposed consequences next week. “If a majority of the staff vote in favor of the consequences they will begin in the following month and will not affect any student caught using AI before then.”

STANCES

Supporting

AI programs allow students to complete assignments without using their own skills and knowledge. Students are not practicing what they have learned in class when they use AI, and are more likely to do worse on future tests and assignments. Principal Redington’s proposed consequence will show students that it is a serious offense to use AI. With the chance of receiving a zero if caught and attending DAEP, students will be encouraged to do their own work.

Opposing

As technology improves, teachers should embrace it in their classrooms. AI can be used to help students who may be struggling with a concept and some programs even tutor students in a particular subject. AI is a tool, not a weapon. Students and teachers should work together to learn how it can best be used in a learning environment.

UIL Editorial Writing Contest • A+ Spring District • 2023-2024

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SAMPLE EDITORIAL

This week, Principal Laura Redington announced that students found using artificial intelligence programs in class would be subject to two days in the disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) and a zero in the gradebook.

The teachers and staff, set to vote on the proposal on Monday, should favor the consequence to support honesty in the classroom.

Punishing students who use AI to complete assignments makes it fair for those who don't use AI in class. It's not fair that students who work hard and students who cheat have the same grade. Students won't be encouraged to stop using AI if this continues.

Students who use AI in class are also unprepared for tests and future assignments. If they're using AI programs to complete their work, they aren't learning the concepts being taught.

It hurts their learning environment as a whole.

Those who oppose Principal Redington's consequence think AI should be used by teachers and students in the classroom. However, AI gives students the answers to their questions, it does not just help them find it themselves. Until it can, AI programs should not be used.

The staff should approve the consequence to keep students honest and actively learning. Though it may be difficult to stop using AI for some, it will help them to succeed long-term.