



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 • 2019-2020

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 is located in Central Texas and has an enrollment of 1,500 students in grades 6, 7 and 8.

Last week, Superintendent Jacob Sames proposed that starting next fall, all district middle schools will start at 8:30 a.m. and high schools will start at 9 a.m. Currently, middle schools start the day at 7:45 while high schools begin at 7:15.

Sames said he wants to push both start times back following multiple studies showing that teenagers perform better in school with more sleep.

“These studies show that teenage students who start their day later increase their academic performance, attendance and overall health,” Sames said. “This will allow students to be more alert in class.”

If the district approves Sames’ proposal, middle schools would get out at 3:30 p.m. instead of 2:45 p.m. and high schools would get out at 4 p.m instead of 2:15 p.m. Parents have voiced concerns about pushing the start time back because of conflicts with their work days.

“I have to be in the office at 9 a.m. and my office is across town,” parent Melinda Miller said. “With traffic, the late start time is really pushing it. I also normally have my older son, who is in high school, give my middle school daughter a ride home. Now that won’t be an option. The district needs to rethink this decision.”

The later school day would also result in many extracurricular activities, such as sports practices and games, taking place later into the evening.

“Volleyball practice normally goes until 5 p.m., and now our coach is saying it would go until 6:15 next year,” student Mikayla Williams said. “I’m in three Pre-AP classes on top of that. This late start doesn’t give us more sleep if we are having to stay up later to make up for it.”

However, some are welcoming the proposed late start time.

“I have trouble staying awake in my first period class,” student Kenzie Guidry said. “We aren’t in elementary school any more, most of our parents don’t make us go to sleep early. This late start will give me the extra 45 minutes I need to get my day going.”

Sames’ said he hopes the school board looks at the proven science when voting on the new start time.

“The late start time is what’s best for students’ health — that’s not up for debate.” Sames said. “There’s no reason I should walk around the halls and see middle school students that are clearly sleep deprived.”

The school board will discuss vote on Sames’ proposal at its regular meeting this Wednesday. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed on the Tuesday prior to the meeting.

STANCES

Supporting the proposal

Sleep deprivation is a health issue facing many middle and high school aged students. A late start time has been proven to raise test scores and lower stress for students in other schools who have implemented this. This proposal is in the best interest of the students.

Opposing

Many parents have to work after they drop off their students. A later start time makes this nearly impossible. Those with extracurricular activities already stay at the school late and this only gets worse with a late start time. Students need to learn to work around the current start time, and that starts with going to bed earlier.

UIL Editorial Writing Contest • A+ Invitational • 2019-2020

(Distribute this sheet to judges prior to judging.)

JUDGING INSTRUCTIONS

In each contestant's editorial, please look for clarity of thought, and if the writer came to a clear conclusion. Remember that many of these writers have not been trained in proper editorial writing. Therefore key considerations should be that they have made a statement of the situation and formed a stance. They should back that stance with examples. Those examples do not have to come from the data sheet. The contestant then should come to a specific solution or recommendation.

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

Superintendent Jacob Sames proposed pushing the school start time from 7:45 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. in middle schools and from 7:15 a.m. to 9 a.m. in high schools. The school board will vote on the proposed later start times Thursday.

The school board should side with science. A later start time is what's best for student health.

Studies prove that teenage students who start their day later have seen an increase their academic performance, attendance and overall health. This is what educators should prioritize.

There's no reason 13-year-olds should be falling asleep in their first period classes. The late start time doesn't remove any instructional time, it just pushes that instructional time to when students are alert and able to absorb information at a higher rate. What good does an early start time do students and teachers if they aren't aware enough to learn effectively?

Those opposed to the proposed start time say that this prevents parents from being able to get to work on time. There are plenty of options to get around this, such as bussing or carpooling with other students. With high school now starting later, those with older siblings could get a ride from them.

Another concern parents and students have raised is that it will keep those with after school extracurriculars too late and they will still have to do homework when they get home. One possible solution is to move those meetings and practices to before school if the late start is approved.

A healthy, productive learning environment should be a top priority of a school board. Their vote Wednesday should be reflective of this.



Editorial Writing

A+ Fall/Winter District • 2019-2020

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 is located in North Texas and has an enrollment of 1,300 students in grades 6, 7 and 8.

Following an increase in students using food delivery services such as Favor and UberEATS to have food brought for lunch, Principal Jennifer Vaske has proposed banning all third-party delivery to the school. Principal Vaske cited the school district's increased focus on safety as the main reason for the ban.

"The front office staff is overwhelmed," Vaske said. "We don't know who these people are bringing food into the school. It's become a safety issue. Banning these services altogether will prevent unnecessary risks."

The school cafeteria provides breakfast and lunch service to students each school day.

"The cafeteria has plenty of food options for students — it's healthier food too," Vaske said. "Most of the food I've seen brought in is fast food. We don't owe students access to McDonalds."

Parents are allowed to drop off food and other items for students in the front office, but some working parents say this option is not helpful.

"My wife and I work 9 to 5 jobs," parent Bryce Rowman said. "Why should food deliveries be limited to students with stay at home moms? These delivery services are convenient and the drivers have gone through background checks."

If implemented, the proposal would prohibit any third-party delivery service from bringing items for students during the school day. With long lines for cafeteria food, some students say ordering food has become a more reliable option.

"The lunch period is only 30 minutes, which includes 10 minutes of passing period," 7th grader Chase Lyle said. "Sometimes it can take up to 15 minutes to get through the lunch line, and that leaves me with only five minutes to eat. I started ordering food on days that I don't have time to pack my lunch, and it saves me so much time."

With the increased use of delivery services, teachers have expressed concerns about students leaving class to get deliveries.

"There have been multiple instances in my class where I have students ask to go to the restroom and come back with food," science teacher Stephen Wagner said. "I don't have an issue with students ordering food for lunch, but they have taken advantage of the system. I definitely support Principal Vaske's proposal."

The school board will vote on Vaske's proposal at their regular meeting this Wednesday. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed on the Tuesday prior to the meeting.

STANCES

Supporting the proposal

The proposal is reasonable and the right thing to do to help increase safety. Students can purchase food from the cafeteria or bring their lunch from home if they choose. Allowing students to order food to the school is a distraction, and the front office shouldn't have to collect these deliveries for students.

Opposing

The cafeteria lines are already too long and these delivery services provide a quick alternative. Banning these services is unfair to parents who work. Stay at home parents would still be able to bring food to students. The delivery drivers have gone through background checks to insure safety. This proposal is an overreaction.

UIL Editorial Writing Contest • A+ Fall/Winter District • 2019-2020

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SAMPLE EDITORIAL

Following an increase in students using food delivery services to order food for lunch, principal Jennifer Vaske has proposed a ban on all third-party delivery to the school. The school board will vote on the proposal at their meeting Wednesday.

The decision should be an easy one: vote yes for student safety.

Delivery services such as Favor and UberEATS do not screen drivers well enough to allow them near middle school students. The school shouldn't risk the safety of all students just because some would like to order Whataburger for lunch.

Principal Vaske isn't calling for a ban on all deliveries or takeout food, just those from third-party services. With increased concerns about school safety, it's reasonable to want to limit the amount of strangers who enter the school. Parents can still deliver items to their students after showing proper identification.

The cafeteria offers plenty of options for those who don't pack a lunch, and these options are much healthier and cheaper than takeout options. Students only have to eat one meal a day at school. They can eat wherever they want after school and on the weekends. It's not the school's responsibility to collect deliveries for students in the front office.

Those opposed to the proposed ban say that food delivery services provide students with a timely alternative to long lunch lines in the cafeteria. If the lines are that much of an issue, the school should consider adding another lunch period or adding 10 minutes to the existing periods.

A safe learning environment needs to be the top priority of a school district. The school board should vote yes on the proposal Wednesday.



Editorial Writing

A+ Spring District • 2019-2020

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.

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STATEMENT OF SITUATION

Leaguetown Middle School is located in East Texas and has an enrollment of 650 students in grades 6, 7 and 8.

Following district-wide budget cuts, last Monday Principal Alan Young announced there will no longer be year-long art and theatre elective offerings and instead an option to take a semester-long course of each. Last month the district announced each of the three middle schools would be getting their outdoor tracks resurfaced.

“This is the best option that still allows students interested in taking either of the courses to gain experience in both,” Young said. “Decisions on where to allocate funding come from above me.”

Students will meet with their counselors to plan their schedules starting next week. With the decision to cut arts classes, some parents have expressed frustration at the lack of options.

“My child does not have any interest in taking athletics classes,” parent Melba Goodwin said. “He loves to paint and draw, but he is very introverted. He already told me he wouldn’t be comfortable taking a theatre class.”

Theatre teacher Brenda Booth said the shortened class doesn’t give her students enough time to learn, rehearse and put on a play at the end of the year.

“I’m heartbroken the students will have to miss out on this opportunity,” Booth said. “I can teach them as much as I can in a semester, but there’s just not enough time. It’s hard for students to understand theatre without putting their skills toward a production.”

However, some students are excited they will be able to take both classes.

“I love both art and drama and now I don’t have to choose which to take,” student Kacey Miller said. “I know a lot of my friends that want to take the new hybrid course.”

All middle school students are required to take at least one year of physical education. Athletics director Chrissy Chapman said the track has been in desperate need of renovations since last year.

“Almost every day that it is nice outside, we have students working out on that track,” Chapman said. “The district’s funding of the new track will impact more students than another art and theatre class would.”

Students, parents and teachers plan to speak at the next school board meeting this Thursday to ask the district to allocate more funding toward fine arts programs in middle schools. You are writing for the issue of the **Press** to be distributed on the Tuesday prior to the meeting.

STANCES

Supporting district’s funding

The district doesn’t have an unlimited amount of money. Shortening the art and theatre classes is the best option that still allows students to take those courses. Every student has to take PE classes. The new track will benefit more students for a longer period of time.

Opposing

Middle school students should be able to pursue what they are passionate about. Limiting students to only a semester of art and theatre doesn’t give them enough time to complete longer art projects or put on a play at the end of the year. The district can wait to renovate the track if it comes at the cost of students’ learning.

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SAMPLE EDITORIAL

Last month, the district announced it would provide funding for resurfaced tracks at all three middle schools. Last week, Principal Alan Young announced that because of budget cuts to fine arts, the previously year-long art and theatre classes would be offered jointly as semester long classes.

On Thursday, parents, teachers and students plan to speak out against this misallocation of funding. It's clear what the district cares about — and it isn't students' academic experience.

Students will begin meeting with their counselors next week to plan their schedules. Limiting both art and theatre to a semester doesn't provide enough time for students to complete long-term art projects or put on a play at the end of the course. Not only that, but not every student interested in either of the courses is a fit for both. For instance, some students who want to take art are introverted and wouldn't be comfortable in a drama classroom. The school has offered art and theatre as individual courses for years. There has to be a better solution.

Those in favor of the district's funding argue that the new track will benefit far more students for a longer period of time than additional art and theatre classes would. That doesn't account for the needs of current students. Education isn't a business and students aren't an investment.

While the new track is probably needed, it would be reasonable for coaches to utilize other workouts in the weight room and inside the gym until there is enough funding to move forward on the project. Physical education isn't limited to the track, but art and theatre are limited to the classroom.

The school board should listen to the concerns presented at their meeting Thursday. Students are the ones in the classroom everyday and they should act in their favor.