



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

Each judge should use a copy of this form to rank each contestant's entry. Refer to the *Constitution and Contest Rules* or *Evaluation Sheet* for the criteria used to evaluate each contest.

DATE _____

PLACE WINNER*[illegible]

Judge's signature_____



Editorial Writing

A+ INVITATIONAL • 2024-2025

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 1,660 students and is located in West Texas. Last month, Principal Logan Reynolds announced a proposal to ban cell phone use during classroom instruction. He created the proposal after a poll revealed 76% of staff felt frustration over time spent monitoring phone use rather than teaching.

"In the past few years, we've seen an increase in students using phones during class, whether it's for texting, social media or even gaming," Reynolds said. "We want a focused learning environment, free from distraction. Phones can be helpful, but they are hurting each student's ability to learn."

The ban would require students to leave their phones in lockers during the school day. Phones would only be allowed in case of emergencies or designated breaks. Counselor Alysia Calpur said she supports the ban because of mental health effects of constant phone use.

"Many students face anxiety because of what's happening online, whether it's bullying or social expectations" Calpur said. "Putting their phone down can help get rid of some of the stress."

. Seventh grader Ashley Cano said the proposal is too harsh.

"In this day and age, everything is online—even our assignments," Cano said. "Sometimes I have to scan a QR code for an assignment or Google something for a project. And what if I can't reach my parents? I can't imagine how worried my mom would be if I don't respond to her messages right away. Phones aren't just for fun. They're also for safety."

The school board will vote on the proposal at its Nov. 4 meeting and will take effect next month if approved. You are writing for the issue of *The Press* to be distributed Friday, Nov. 1.

STANCES

Supporting

Banning cell phones during class promotes focus and reduces unnecessary distractions, like social media and texting, that impede learning. The proposal would help student mental health and still allow them to access their phone in a locker if an emergency happens. Without phones, students are encouraged to engage in class instruction.

Opposing

Middle school students should be trusted with phone use during school hours. Banning cell phones overlooks their educational benefits and ease for communication in emergencies. Phones are important for research, accessing assignments and contacting parents. Instead of banning phone use, teachers should have structured times for phone access to benefit from technology without disrupting class.



Editorial Writing

A+ Fall/Winter District • 2024-2025

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 1,830 students enrolled in grades 6, 7 and 8 and is located in East Texas. After receiving complaints from staff on students' excessive use of slang during the school day, Principal Annabeth Jackson announced a policy last week where students will receive consequences if caught using slang during class time.

Under the new policy, students will first receive a warning if caught using slang words. If the behavior continues, a one-day in-school suspension will be issued.

"Slang can be fun, but it has become a significant distraction," Jackson said. "Our priority is to create an environment conducive to learning. We want to ensure our students are practicing clear, formal communication. These words may seem harmless, but they're taking away from valuable learning time."

English teacher Ronald Wood said he supports the new measures and has been frustrated at the constant use of slang during class discussion.

"In the middle of a discussion about our class novel, I'll hear students saying things like 'That's so skibbidi' or 'Bro has rizz,' and it gets everyone off track," Wood said. "It's not just about the words themselves, but the atmosphere it creates. Students don't take the lesson seriously."

Students and parents have created a petition to remove this policy. Eighth-grader Rachel Grace said she thinks the consequences are unnecessary.

"Everyone knows when to be serious and when it's OK to joke around," Grace said. "It's like they want us to act like robots. Sometimes saying something like 'skibbidi' just makes the day more fun. Now I have to worry about getting in trouble for it."

The school board will vote on removing the policy after students and parents present their argument at their Dec. 2 meeting. You are writing for the issue of The Press to be distributed Friday, Nov 29.

STANCES

Supporting the decision to ban slang from the school day

The district should keep the policy because it teaches students clear communication skills while keeping students on-task without disruption during instructional time. Consequences will keep students from using inappropriate slang. Without these consequences, students will continue to act out with words during unsuitable times, causing further distraction and frustration among teachers.

Opposing the decision to ban slang from the school day

Students should be trusted to know the right place and time for using slang. Excessive consequences can create unnecessary tension, and the policy hinders a student's right to self-expression. Instead of presenting harsh consequences, the school should encourage an open discussion about language and being respectful in a professional environment.



Editorial Writing

A+ SPRING DISTRICT • 2024-2025

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 650 students in grades 6, 7 and 8.

After surveying parents and school staff in the district, Superintendent Bradley Winston proposed that the district adjust the school calendar to expand winter break by three weeks. If the proposal is adopted for the fall of 2025, students would start school July 21 and first semester would end Nov. 21, the Friday before Thanksgiving. Students would not return to school until Jan. 5, giving schools six weeks off for winter break. Second semester dates would not change and the last day of school would be May 22, 2026.

In addition, the bell schedule would need to be adjusted to fulfill the required number of instructional minutes required by the state. The school board will vote on whether to approve his proposal at their meeting Monday.

"It is increasingly difficult to maintain student engagement in the month of December," Winston said. "It's often cold. We have more potential for severe weather in December. So I thought, maybe we should just give students those weeks off to recuperate from first semester. Then they can come back in January refreshed and ready to learn."

Eighth grade Math teacher Ana Brown said she is concerned that with the proposed calendar, students could forget too much of the material on an extended break.

"We typically see a bit of learning loss over the summer," Brown said. "We spend the first few weeks of every school year reviewing what students learned the year before. If we have a huge break in the middle of the year, we'll have to throw away two more weeks to review first semester. This plan will waste more time than it will save."

Seventh grader Anika Shah said she would love to have more time off in the month of December.

"The new schedule would be a great opportunity for my family to travel and spend time together," she said. "It would be nice to be able to spend holidays with family and still be able to have a break and relax. I'm not sure who would take care of my first grade brother while my mom is at work all day, though."

Whichever way the board votes, Winston said something needs to change to keep students engaged in school during the end of first semester.

"We see a lot of class parties and more absences," he said. "If we don't change the calendar, we're going to have to take a serious look at changing some other policies."

STANCES

Supporting

Students deserve an extended break after first semester. Classes are stressful. Students are becoming more burned out between homework, school and extracurriculars. Having more time off between first and second semester would improve student engagement in school and improve student mental health. Teachers could also use that additional time to plan and still have a break.

Opposing

Having too much of a break between first and second semester could cause students to forget part of what they learned during first semester. Consistent practice is important to retain new information and skills. In addition, parents would have to spend money on additional childcare during the extended time off. Not all families will be able to afford this. It makes more sense for surrounding schools to be on the same calendar.