

Editorial Writing

2018 Central Texas Invitational Meet

You are a reporter for the Leaguetown **Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown High School. From the given information, write an editorial as you would for the high school newspaper. You have **45 minutes**. Do not write your name or the name of your school on this sheet or entry. **Put your number on your paper.**

Leaguetown High School is located in Central Texas and has 1,700 students enrolled in grades 9-12. At its last meeting, the Student Council proposed a school ban on plastic water bottles. Senior Mikyela Riemer, the StuCo president, wrote a paper on the problems surrounding plastic water bottles, and that is what spurred her to present the proposal to the Student Council.

Currently, the school sells water bottles from four of its vending machines, in the cafeteria and at athletic concession stands, and students regularly bring plastic water bottles in their lunches and for their athletic and P.E. classes. More than 80 percent of the Student Council approved the proposal. Riemer took the proposal to Principal Sharon Trussell last week.

Most of the faculty support the proposal, but some coaches and P.E. teachers worry about keeping students hydrated. Also, some parents do not want the school to prohibit students from bringing plastic water bottles to school. The school made \$1,100 from water bottles last month though sales from the vending machines, the cafeteria and athletic concession stands.

Trussell said she is worried about the loss of revenue and how to enforce the ban. However, she said she would make her final decision when the school returns from the winter holiday on Jan. 8. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Monday, Dec. 10.

Those supporting the ban

Plastic water bottles are polluting the oceans and the earth, and the school is adding to the problem. Water bottles are not a necessity at school. The school has more than enough water fountains stationed throughout the school. Students can bring their own reusable water bottles and refill at any of the water fountains.

Those opposing the ban

Dehydration has been shown to affect cognitive brain function, as cells need to work much harder to maintain mental performance — this means students need water to perform in school. Banning water bottles will make it harder for some students to stay hydrated. Plus, one school is not going to make a huge impact on the plastic water bottle pollution issue.

■ MIKYELA RIEMER, senior and Student Council president

“Through my research, I learned out that a million plastic bottles are bought around the world every minute, and the number will jump another 20 percent by 2021. Fewer than half of the bottles bought in 2016 were collected for recycling, and just 7 percent of those collected were turned into new

bottles. Instead, most plastic bottles end up in landfills or in the ocean. I want our school to be part of the solution, not the problem.

“I know this will be an inconvenience for some students, but once we get in the habit of bringing a reusable water bottle to school with us, it will be easy to make the change. Principal Trussell is worried about how to enforce the ban. I think most students will abide by it, and for those who don’t, the administrators can take the bottle and give the student a warning on the first violation. After that, the student could do detention or in-school suspension. That will deter students from violating the ban.”

■ **SHARON TRUSSELL, principal**

“I applaud Mikyela and the Student Council for making this proposal, but I am worried about a few things. First, the policy will be hard to enforce, and our administrative team is already stretched to its limit when it comes to discipline. And I am not sure what would be an appropriate consequence for a student who violates the ban. It seems wrong to punish students because they bring water to school. Water is essential for their learning. Plus, the school stands to lose quite a bit of revenue, and we don’t have much leeway in our budget. The money we receive for water bottle sales helps fund our activity accounts — all of clubs. I don’t think our clubs want their budgets cut. Maybe the best thing we can do is encourage students to bring reusable water bottles to school.”

■ **REBECCA HAWTHORNE, parent of a sophomore and PTA president**

“The PTA supports part of the Student Council’s proposal. We like the idea of eliminating water bottles from the vending machines and concession stands, but we are hesitant to support banning students from bringing plastic water bottles to school. We don’t think the school should tell parents what type of water bottle their child can have. Water is so important for teen brains. Our family tries to use reusable water bottles, but I will be the first to admit that sometimes we are in a rush in the morning. On those days, my son just grabs a plastic water bottle from our fridge. I would hate for him to get in trouble because he’s trying to stay hydrated. We certainly can encourage students to use reusable water bottles. We can even give incentives for students who use them, but we shouldn’t punish those who don’t.”

■ **TERRY PROCTOR, athletic director**

“Hydration is a top priority for our athletes. We want them hydrated any way we can. I don’t want us to take water bottles out of the vending machines. Our athletes need access to those to stay hydrated.”

■ **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Currently, the school has recycling bins for plastic bottles and aluminum cans in the cafeteria, gym and multiple hallways. The city picks up the recycling once a week.