

# News 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 a **news story** as you would for the high school newspaper. You may use statements attributed to individuals as **direct or indirect quotes**. You may not change the meaning of a statement. 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 500 students enrolled in grades 9-12. Last month, the district Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC), which is comprised of the middle school principal, two high school teachers, two parents and one community member, recommended a change to the sex education curriculum for the 2019-2020 school year from abstinence-only to one that includes information about contraceptives. The committee wants to keep the core of the curriculum called “Worth the Wait,” in place but would like to add one new component — contraceptives.

In the district, sex education begins in middle school. In eighth grade, students learn about how sexually transmitted diseases spread. In ninth grade, they discuss why it’s sometimes hard to say “no” and abstinence as the only sure way to avoid diseases and pregnancy. The committee proposed that the new unit be added to the high school curriculum.

After the proposal was released, parents began calling school board members and the superintendent to share their opposition to the proposal. The district received more than 50 calls from parents who oppose the new curriculum. They say abstinence-only is the only sex education curriculum the school district should offer.

Before making a decision, the school board decided to hold a community forum to hear from parents, students and community members. The forum will begin at 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 13, in the high school cafeteria. Anyone who wants to speak can sign up on the district’s website. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Monday, Dec. 10.

### ■ JESSICA MARTINEZ, superintendent

“Sex education curriculum is always divisive. When we started teaching ‘Worth the Wait’ 10 years ago, we upset some parents. I don’t think we will find curriculum that will satisfy every parent. The one thing I want parents to remember is, you can opt your child out of the curriculum. We only spend four days total on this curriculum in high school. If you don’t like the curriculum, I advise parents to keep your child out of the classes.

“I believe it’s time for a change in our curriculum. I like our current lessons, but they are not enough. I don’t want radical change, but I believe we need to educate our students about contraceptives. I don’t want any of our students sexually active, but that isn’t the reality that is happening here. If students choose to have sex, we should at least educate them on how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. I have seen the proposed component, and it does not encourage students to have sex. It simply informs them about different types of contraceptives and how they work.

■ **JESSICA MARTINEZ (cont.)**

“I look forward to hearing from everyone at the forum. Anyone who signs up to speak will get three minutes. The board and I will stay until all speakers have finished — even if that means we are there until midnight. Everyone will get a chance to be heard.”

■ **NICOLE LOPEZ, parent on the committee**

“With problems such as teenage pregnancies and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases on the rise, it is only appropriate that we teach our children how to be responsible and safe if they choose to have sex. In no way does this curriculum advocate for students to have sex. That is preposterous. We are trying to transform our children into responsible adults, and we can’t do that if we give them only half of the information. I was shocked at the backlash after we released our recommendation. Come on, parents, this is the 21st Century. Let’s be honest with our children.”

■ **RHONDA LESTER, parent**

“I was one of the first to call and complain. This new curriculum does not in any way align with our beliefs. It is anti-Christian. It is immoral, and it condones sex and childbirth outside of marriage. You can bet that I will be at that forum and so will most of the members from our church.”

■ **KARL KUBICHEK, pastor at Hilltop Church**

“This new curriculum undermines the abstinence message and the parental values of our congregation. Teaching students about condoms and the like is basically telling them it’s OK to go have sex. The school district should not be condoning sex. I hear that parents can opt their students out of this curriculum. If that’s true, there may not be any students in the school on those days. I will be at the forum, and I will give the school board a piece of my mind.”

■ **JEANIE SHANKS, sophomore**

“I can’t believe the uproar over this proposal. Do parents really think we don’t know about this stuff? I actually think it’s a good idea for students to learn about contraceptives — the real facts, but it should happen in eighth grade, not ninth. A friend of mine got pregnant in ninth grade and, maybe, if she had learned about contraceptives, she would have used them.”

■ **CHARLIE JOSEPH, freshman**

“‘Worth the Wait’ is a pretty useless curriculum. It teaches us about sexually transmitted diseases, but it doesn’t teach us how to not get them other than abstinence. That’s like telling kids the only way to avoid a car accident is to not get in a car. That’s pretty stupid logic. Students are going to have sex — whether they tell us about contraceptives or not. We should at least be as educated as possible.”