

News Writing

Invitational B Meet • 2020



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 your entry. **Put your number on your paper.**

Leaguetown High School has 1,200 students enrolled in grades 9-12. During the month of March, the school counselors offer parent/student conferences for all ninth grade students. Each student gets a 30-minute time slot to meet with his or her counselor about graduation plans, course options and college and career planning. Since the counselors started holding freshman conferences, they always have offered conferences before school and after school to accommodate parents who work. This year, Principal Brayden Johnson decided that all conferences would take place during the school day.

Currently, the school has 335 freshman students. Only 90 freshmen have had their conferences, and another 40 are scheduled for later this month. More than half the freshman parents have not scheduled a conference. Last year, the five school counselors had conferences with 95% of the freshmen and their parents.

After hearing about the low turnout, the Parent Teacher Association asked Johnson to allow counselors to add conferences during non-school hours. Johnson agreed. The counselors will offer conferences before school and after school for the last week of March — March 23-27.

Freshmen and their parents will be able to sign up for the new spots on the counselors' website starting Friday, March 13. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Thursday, March 12.

■ BRAYDEN JOHNSON, principal

"I instructed the counselors to hold freshman conferences only during school hours because I thought it was unfair to ask them to work before school and after school for an entire month without extra pay. They have done that without complaining for years, but I don't think it's right. We don't have the funds to pay overtime. I wish we did.

"I understand it's hard for parents to take off from work, but if we don't limit the number of before-school and after-school appointments, our counselors will work 14-hour days for almost an entire month. That's too much to ask. After meeting with the PTA, I agreed to allow morning conferences and after-school conferences for one week. But those conferences will be limited to 15 minutes each. I encourage as many parents as possible to meet with the counselors during the school day."

■ **SUE CHE, counselor**

“All of the counselors appreciate what Mr. Johnson is trying to do, but I don’t think it’s feasible with our population. Too many of our parents work and can’t take off from work. I would rather give up a few mornings and evenings so our students can have the best plans for graduation and life after.

“Those early morning and after-school conference appointments will go quickly. Parents need to log into our website as soon as possible on Friday to pick their appointment. I don’t think Mr. Johnson is going to open up more spots.

“I want parents to understand how important these meetings are. We work with the student and parent to plan the graduation path and the student’s path after high school. For instance, if a student wants to attend a four-year university, then it’s imperative that the student take three years of a language. We look at what the student wants after high school and devise a four-year plan to help him or her get there.”

■ **MARIANA MARISOL, PTA president**

“We are grateful that Mr. Johnson was responsive to parents’ needs. I agree that it’s not ideal for counselors to work 14-hour days, but some parents can’t make a meeting during school hours. The PTA is encouraging every parent to schedule a conference, and we are encouraging those parents who are able to meet during the day to leave the before-school and after-school spots for other parents. I had a freshman conference for each of my children, and they proved invaluable. I learned so much from those conferences.

“To make life a little easier for our counselors, the PTA is going to provide them with breakfast and dinner during that week of early morning and evening conferences.”

■ **CHRISSEY TIEGER, freshman parent**

“I am one of those parents who can’t take off from work. I am happy Mr. Johnson agreed to open before-school and after-school spots. We definitely will sign up this Friday. I know the conferences are important. Both my son and I have several questions for the counselor.”

■ **HAYDEN LUCAS, freshman**

“My mom is a single mom, and she can’t take time off from work. She used all of her sick and vacation time to care for my grandmother after she had a stroke. Before the new schedule was announced, I asked the counselor if I could do the conference by myself, but parents are required. My mom will be able to make an early morning conference. We are scheduling it as soon as we can on Friday.”

■ **FRANNIE SMITH, sophomore**

“I learned so much from my conference last year. My counselor helped us map out a plan to increase my chances to get into an Ivy League college. I joined several new clubs and took on leadership positions, and I learned that I should never take an off period. It doesn’t look good on your transcript.”