

# Editorial Writing

Invitational A Meet • 2021



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

Leaguetown High School has 2,200 students enrolled in grades 9-12. In an effort to save students money, the junior class is proposing to move prom from the downtown Hilton hotel to the school gymnasium. If prom were to take place at the hotel, tickets would cost \$75 per person with no discount for couples, and the only food served would be cookies and punch. Last year, tickets were \$25 per person or \$40 for couples. The dramatic rise in ticket price is due the lack of fundraisers in the fall because of COVID-19. If prom uses the gym as its venue, tickets would be free, and the juniors would offer a dessert bar with a large variety of sweets.

When the junior officers suggested the change to Principal Toni Fauchi, she supported the idea and even promised \$500 for decorations for the gym. The Parent-Teacher Association also said it would donate \$500 for decorations.

When a group of seniors heard about the proposal, they complained and said they didn't want prom to take place in the gym. Fauchi decided that rather than make an executive decision, she would allow seniors to vote on the proposed move.

Next week, seniors will vote on which option they want for prom: 1) free at the school gym or 2) \$75 tickets at the hotel. Prom is set Saturday, April 24. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed this Wednesday.

## **THOSE SUPPORTING THE MOVE**

Seniors should support moving prom to the school gym. That will save every senior \$75, and they would get a huge dessert bar instead of just cookies and punch. Plus, with the \$1,000 donated for decorations, the juniors would be able to transform the gym into a beautiful dance hall.

## **THOSE OPPOSING THE MOVE**

Senior year has already been messed up enough — one month of virtual learning, no homecoming dance, limited socialization because of the virus and more. Seniors need a normal prom, and normal proms are held at hotels, not school gyms. Seniors don't need an elaborate dessert bar at prom, but they deserve a nice venue.

### **■ TONI FAUCHI, principal**

"I love how the junior class officers thought outside the box and looked for solutions to the high cost of prom. I believe the gym is an ideal compromise, and with \$1,000 for decorations, we can make it look really special.

"I understand that the seniors want a 'normal' prom, but we can have that in the gym. Regardless, though, it's their choice. Seniors get the chance to vote, and whatever the majority decides will be the choice."

■ **DEB BRIX, English teacher and junior class sponsor**

“The hotel cost increased almost 25% this year, and without fundraising, we don’t have much of a choice but to increase the price of tickets if we want prom at the hotel. I love the idea of having prom in the gym. The pandemic hit everyone’s pocketbook. I am sure most parents would support the move to the gym but, ultimately, it’s the seniors’ decision.”

■ **RILEY CORONA, senior**

“I know how I am voting and what I am encouraging my friends to do — prom in a hotel. We need something to be normal and go right this year. We completely missed prom last year. We deserve to have prom at the fancy hotel. I understand the tickets will be \$75 each. I am willing to pay that and so are my friends. We didn’t get to have a homecoming dance so no one spent a penny on that dance.

“It’s great that the principal and PTA said they would donate money to decorate the gym, but it doesn’t matter how many decorations you bring in. It’s still just a gym.”

■ **WENDY COVIDE, senior**

“I am not excited about having prom in the gym, but \$75 per ticket is too expensive. My dad lost his job during the virus, and he’s not the only parent in this town who is unemployed. With the donated money, the juniors will be able to transform the gym. The location doesn’t define prom. The people do. And as long as we can have a prom, I will be happy.”

■ **FRANNIE COUFFER, PTA president**

“I don’t think any teen would choose their school gym for a prom, but seniors need to think about more than themselves. We have a lot of families struggling right now in our town. A free prom would be such a relief for many parents. The PTA is committed to transforming the gym for the prom if the seniors choose that location.”

■ **HOPE VACINE, parent of a senior**

“2020 was tough. As a community, we need to make sure 2021 is better for our kids. Having prom in the gym is not making life better for our kids. They need the hotel. Heck, they deserve it. We should do everything we can to make sure prom is at the hotel. Then, instead of donating money for decorations, the school and PTA can donate money to offset the cost of the tickets.”

■ **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

About one third (32%) of the students at the high school are on free- or reduced-lunch.

**DO NOT PASS OUT TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST****EDITORIAL WRITING/INVITATIONAL A • 2021  
CONTEST TIPS AND SAMPLE EDITORIALS**

*Contest Director: Give one copy to each judge to use during critique/judging. Also, staple one copy of the contest and one copy of the contest tips to each student's returned entry. The purpose of the tips is to provide immediate feedback to students. However, it is not meant to replace written comments from the judge.*

1. Lead with a statement of the situation and then take a clear, definite staff stance. The situation is whether prom should be moved to the school gym.
2. As a general rule, use third person. If you must use a pronoun, use first person plural (we, meaning "we, the newspaper staff"). Do not use first person singular (I, me, mine) or second person (you). Avoid unnecessary use of pronouns. Rather than "We believe the seniors should....," write instead, "The seniors should."
3. Don't waddle into the editorial. Get right to the point and, as a general rule, don't ask a lot of questions. An editorial should answer questions, not ask them. Above all, remember that your purpose is to make thoughtful, logical arguments in support of your position, not to engage in a tirade. The editorial should not be long — 450 words at the most. Although it's not recommended all the time, sometimes a writer could use a feature opening to grab the reader's attention and get them into the story.
4. Look for the future angle. Your paper comes out before the seniors vote.
5. Once you've stated your position/stance, the body of the story should support your stance and refute the opposition.
6. After the body of your editorial, complete the editorial with a specific solution.
7. Avoid direct quotes unless the quote adds substantially to the editorial. You can pull information from these quotes, as has been done here, but it's not necessary to attribute that information unless the person has a lot of credibility toward the story itself.
8. Watch for factual errors. Pay attention to minor details. Also, stay focused.
9. Don't clutter up the editorial with cliches or trite phrases such as "prom is overrated" or any variation thereof. Also, edit out the name of the school unless it is necessary for clarity. It isn't necessary to say "Leaguetown Independent School District" or "Leaguetown High School." Students know the name of the school. They don't need to be reminded.

## **SAMPLE EDITORIAL/OPPOSING**

To save money, the junior class proposed changing the location of prom from the Hilton hotel to the high school gymnasium. Principal Toni Fauchi is handing over the decision about the move to seniors with a vote next week.

Seniors should vote for the move.

Holding prom in the gym means free tickets for everyone and a bigger and better dessert bar. Those two reasons alone should sway all seniors' minds. If the prom is held at the hotel, tickets would be \$75 a piece and only cookie and punch would be served. Because of the pandemic, the juniors were not able to hold sufficient fundraisers to help off-set the costs of prom.

But that is not the only reason seniors should vote yes. Principal Toni Fauchi and the Parent-Teacher Association promised to donate \$1,000 for decorations. That's enough money to completely transform the gym.

Seniors also need to think about the entire senior class. The pandemic hit the pocketbook of many families in this community. Many are still struggling, and \$75 is a lot of money to shell out for a dance, not to mention all of the other expenses that surround prom.

Those who oppose the move say that seniors deserve a real prom since prom and so many other events were cancelled last spring and this fall. But a venue doesn't define prom. The people do. The experience does. It does not matter where prom takes place. It matters that prom is taking place. Together, seniors can celebrate being together.

This pandemic took an economic toll and an emotional toll on the community. Prom is an experience that needs to be available to everyone. It needs to be affordable for all students. Seniors need to think about the entire class and not which venue is prettier and fancier. Prom won't be much of an experience or memory if half the students can't afford to go.

**SAMPLE EDITORIAL/SUPPORTING**

Rather than having prom at the downtown Hilton hotel, the junior class proposed moving prom to the school gymnasium so prom tickets could be free. If prom is held at the hotel, this year's tickets will be \$75 per person instead of the normal \$25 because of a lack of fundraising due to COVID-19. But several seniors protested, so Principal Toni Fauchi is allowing seniors to vote next week on the proposed move.

Seniors should not vote for the move. Prom should remain at the hotel.

With the outbreak of COVID-19 in March, the end of last school year and the beginning of this one have been chaotic and anything but normal for students. The school cancelled the homecoming dance, had one month of virtual learning and limited socialization. The seniors deserve a normal celebration for all the obstacles they have overcome this past year, and having prom in the gym is not normal.

Seniors deserve to be celebrated. Not only have they endured 13 years of school, but they also endured a horrific pandemic. Prom in the grungy gym is not a celebration. The PTA and Fauchi have offered to give \$1,000 for decorations if it's held in the gym. But no matter how many streamers or balloons the juniors put up, it's still just a gym. Nothing special.

The juniors could take that \$1,000 from Fauchi and the PTA and use it for discounted tickets for students who need help. They could give 20 students discounted tickets for \$25, the normal prom ticket price. Then, if more students still needed help with ticket costs, the juniors could look for sponsors in the community to donate money. With a little extra work, prom could be affordable for all students. And don't forget, the homecoming dance was cancelled this year, so no parents shelled out any money for that dance. Prom is all the seniors have. It should be special.

Those who want to move prom to the gym say the juniors will provide a big dessert bar for the prom in the gym as opposed to only cookies for the hotel prom. Seniors don't care about what desserts are at prom. They care about where prom is. In 20 years when they think back about prom, they are not going to remember whether or not they had a chocolate fountain. They are going to remember where prom was held.

The seniors have endured enough this year. They have waited for their prom and worked hard these past two years, despite all of the hardships and abnormalities. They should be celebrated with a "normal" formal prom at the hotel.