

Editorial Writing

Invitational B 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 750 students enrolled in grades 9-12. For the past 10 years, the school has banned students from wearing hats inside the building. This month the Student Council officers petitioned the principal and the school board to eliminate this ban. The officers met with the principal and school board president to present their petition. The group said the ban is archaic, and it is now acceptable to wear hats inside buildings in the community.

Currently, students are allowed to wear hats only on spirit dress-up days and to extracurricular events. If a student is caught wearing a hat, the first offense is detention and the second offense is a day of in-school suspension, according to the student handbook.

The Parent-Teacher Association and the faculty oppose the Student Council request. Both groups want the ban on hats to continue.

Principal Seth Myer said he will meet with the school board this Friday to discuss the policy and possible changes. Together, he said, they will make a decision. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed this Wednesday.

THOSE SUPPORTING THE BAN ON HATS

The ban on hats should continue. Hats are unnecessary and serve no function in the building. People wear hats to protect their faces and heads from the sun. This isn't necessary inside the school. Plus, it's still common courtesy to take off hats when entering a building.

THOSE OPPOSING THE BAN ON HATS

Hats serve many purposes at school. They express a student's personality or likes. They are a badge of honor for an athlete on the baseball or softball team. They make getting ready in the morning much easier. Plus, the punishment for wearing a hat is too severe.

■ SETH MYER, principal

"I appreciate the thoughtfulness and the work the Student Council officers put into their petition. I do believe they have some sound arguments for allowing hats in school, but the entire school board is not sold on this idea. We are a small community and a rather conservative community. We have high standards for our students, and asking them to remove their hats when they enter the school building is not a huge ask. None of our teachers wear hats to school, and I would be willing to bet that almost no parent wears a hat to work — unless he or she is wearing a safety hat.

"I have two concerns. It is a bit more difficult to identify students who are wearing hats, and many teachers are worried about disruptions because of hats."

■ **TINA FRAY, PTA president**

“I know students think wearing hats inside a building is not a big deal, but it is. It’s disrespectful. We are trying to prepare our students for the real world, and we need to teach them the norms and accepted behavior of the real world. In our community, we remove our hats before entering a professional business or place, and the school is a professional place.”

■ **CHRISTINE ROCK, science teacher**

“Frankly, our students are not mature enough to wear hats to school. On spirit days when students are allowed to wear hats, I always have issues with my students. Sometimes students steal hats from each other and toss them around the room. I also have had students get into arguments over a professional sports team promoted on a particular hat. Last year, two boys actually threw punches at each other about a Houston Astros cap. Of all the possible things to change at this school, I don’t understand why the Student Council is fighting for hats. They should be trying to better the school and the student body.”

■ **STEPHANIE MARTIN, junior and Student Council president**

“We are the only high school in our county that doesn’t allow students to wear hats to school. Some of the school board members believe this is a source of pride, which kind of blows my mind. We should be proud of high academics and successful sports teams. We shouldn’t be proud that our school is living in the past. A student can be courteous and have manners while wearing a hat. The thought that a person must take off a hat indoors is archaic and a relic of the past.

“Hats would save me so much time in the morning. Sometimes, I stay up past 2 a.m. working on homework. It would be awesome if I could sleep 30 minutes later on those days and just grab a hat to cover my hair. Plus, I have several outfits that look better with a hat.”

■ **JOHNNY BELUSI, sophomore**

“It’s ridiculous that I can’t wear my baseball cap to school. I am proud that I am on the varsity team, and I want to show that pride by wearing my cap. Anyone who has walked around our town knows that it’s acceptable to wear hats into buildings. Heck, last night my entire family wore baseball hats to the restaurant we ate at, and not a single soul said anything to us. Last year I wore a baseball cap to school and had to serve a 30-minute detention. That was ridiculous. I was new and didn’t know the rule. I took the cap off immediately when asked, but I still had to serve the detention.”

■ **HARSHITA AVIRNENI, junior and Student Council treasurer**

“Some teachers have told me that hats cause disruptions in the classroom, and I guess I have seen some of that. But if Mr. Meyer allowed us the privilege of wearing hats all of the time, then students would be grateful and act appropriately.”

■ **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The mission of the district is to provide a quality education that encourages every student to realize his/her fullest potential and be prepared to enter the complex and professional world.

Last month, 17 students were disciplined for wearing hats. Seven students served a day of in-school suspension for the infraction.

DO NOT PASS OUT TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST**EDITORIAL WRITING/INVITATIONAL B • 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 the school board should eliminate the hat ban.
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 school board should...", write instead, "The school board 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 school board and principal meet.
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 "hats are cool" 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

In an effort to bring the school into the 21st century, the Student Council proposed eliminating the ban on student hats in the building. Principal Seth Myer said he would meet with the school board this Friday to discuss a possible change.

Myer and the board should side with the Student Council and allow students to wear hats in the building.

Leaguetown is the only district in the county that still bans hats in schools. That alone illustrates how the district is living in the past. Society has changed, and it's now acceptable to wear hats inside buildings. If the board needs proof of that, the board members should take a look around town. The community is wearing hats inside throughout the town.

Hats allow students to show their individuality and their school pride. Varsity baseball and softball players demonstrate school spirit when they wear their caps. The school could even make money off this change by selling school hats. Not only would it increase spirit in the school, but it also could be a lucrative fundraiser for the school.

And then there's the simple fact that hats make the mornings easier for students. Grabbing a hat is much quicker than blow drying and then flat ironing hair every morning. Anything that can save a little time in the morning is worth the change. Students need all the sleep they can get, and if a hat allows that, it makes sense to make the change.

Teachers have shared concerns about hats causing disruptions in class. That happens because hats are a novelty. Students can wear them only on dress-up days. If hats were an everyday occurrence, students would not mess with other students' hats. If students couldn't control themselves, then the district could easily take away the privilege.

The Student Council is not asking for a lot. The board needs to listen and allow students to wear hats to school.

SAMPLE EDITORIAL/SUPPORTING

The Student Council proposed eliminating the ban on student hats in the building, and Principal Seth Myer said he would meet with the school board this Friday to discuss a possible change.

No changes should be made on Friday or at any other time.

First and foremost, students have shown that they are not responsible or mature enough to wear hats to school. When students wear hats for dress-up days, disruptions and arguments over the hats take place in the classroom. Teachers have enough to worry about. They don't need to be referees for disruptions about hats.

Secondly, the mission of the district is to prepare students to enter the "professional world." If that's the case, then the ban on hats should remain. It is still common courtesy to remove a hat when entering a place of business, and every workplace has expectations for dress. It is important that the school district model those expectations. The school isn't asking students to wear a suit to school every day, but it does expect some attire modification to present a more professional look.

Also, hats serve no purpose in school. Hats are designed to protect faces from the sun. There is no sun in the school. The only purpose a hat serves in a school is to obscure a student's identity, which is never a good thing.

Those who support wearing hats in school say the district's ban is archiac. This is the trite overused argument that teens use on adults for almost everything. A 10 p.m. curfew is archiac. Waiting until 16 to start dating is archiac, and the arguments go on. Taking a hat off when entering a building is not archiac. It's simple courtesy, and the world needs a little more of that nowadays.

The Student Council needs to shift its focus to matters that will actually make a difference in the school. When Myers takes this request to the board on Friday, board members need to agree that the hat ban has merit and purpose and should continue to stand.