

# Editorial Writing

## Invitational B Meet • 2025



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 1,210 students enrolled in grades 9-12. One way the state evaluates a school is by looking at College Career or Military Readiness (CCMR). This includes SAT and ACT performance. Since 2022, the school has consistently underperformed on the SAT and ACT, which affects the school's overall rating. In an effort to improve SAT and ACT scores and earn a mark of distinction in postsecondary readiness from the state, Principal Katrina Witt proposed purchasing a new SAT- and ACT-prep curriculum for the 2025-2026 school year from a company called Scholastic All-Stars.

The curriculum would cost the school \$40,000 and would incorporate elements of SAT and ACT preparation in all freshman and sophomore core classes. If adopted, the curriculum would provide teachers with online modules and worksheets to teach alongside their regular curriculum. In addition, the Scholastic All-Stars resources include training for teachers on how to structure their current lessons to help students prepare for the SAT and ACT.

The school board will discuss the proposed curriculum and vote on whether to adopt the new program at its meeting Monday, Feb. 10. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Feb. 7.

### **THOSE SUPPORTING THE PROPOSAL**

Many colleges require standardized test scores as part of their admission requirements. The school is making an attempt to invest in student college readiness by paying for an SAT- and ACT-prep course that many students and parents have had to research and purchase on their own. This investment helps students prepare for the tests and takes a lot of the guesswork and expense off parents. In addition, improving the school's rating will go a long way with attracting new families to move to the community and improve the image of the school.

### **THOSE OPPOSING THE PROPOSAL**

This \$40,000 could be better spent elsewhere. Teachers do not have time in their day to teach an additional canned curriculum that has nothing to do with what they're already trying to teach. Some teachers don't have time in the calendar to get through all the units for a class as it is. Adding stress and more requirements is not what teachers need right now. Some students don't plan to take the SAT or ACT at all or even attend college. This program is wasting their time completely.

■ **KATRINA WITT, principal**

“Improving our test scores has been one of my goals for this campus for the past five years. After the pandemic, we saw a lot of colleges saying they would remove that testing aspect from their admission requirements, but sure enough, the past couple years, we see that requirement sneaking back in on many of those campuses.

“I know that \$40,000 seems like a lot of money, and it is. But this is a solid curriculum that our teachers could use to help get our students ready for college admissions. It includes group study techniques, videos and online modules for students to complete. Other than planning, I don’t see where it will be too much work on our teachers.

“Ultimately, we are here to educate students and prepare them for their futures, whether that’s college or the workforce or military. Success on the SAT and ACT is part of that process, and it’s our job to help students get where they need to be for those tests.”

■ **GABE SAPERSTEIN, Pre-AP Geometry teacher**

“I thought this was a joke. I’m trying to teach students geometry and prepare them for a future in AP math, but instead of focusing on that, I’m going to take a detour and do SAT prep? No. Just, no. If I did SAT prep for five minutes of class for each of the 180 days in the school year, that would be 900 minutes of class. That’s like missing 18 50-minute class periods on our current schedule. We don’t have time for this. Look, I appreciate what our administrators are trying to pull off. Schools are under a lot of pressure to look good in certain areas. But my job is teaching geometry. It’s important that teachers stay focused on their mission, and this program doesn’t fit with that, unfortunately.”

■ **SAHARA HARPER, sophomore**

“My parents were going to sign me up for an SAT-prep class. If this program gets me out of doing that, I’m all for it. Between band, the UIL science team and NHS, not to mention all the homework I have every night, I don’t have a ton of time to do an SAT class. This would really save me some time and hopefully help get my scores higher. I’m not trying to go Ivy or anything. I’m trying to get into Rice, and my GPA isn’t perfect. A high SAT or ACT score would definitely help me get in.”

■ **WAYNE PRENTICE, freshman**

“I’ve been watching my mom pay off her student loan bills my whole life. College is not for me. I know it for sure. I joined the school’s Introduction to HVAC class. My plan is to get enough experience by the time I graduate that I’ll be ready to start working and make \$60,000 my first year. I hope to own an HVAC company one day and help my mom pay back her loans finally. All that is to say, I don’t think I need SAT or ACT test prep. That’s going to be a waste of time.”

**DO NOT PASS OUT TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST**

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### Editorial Writing Contest Tips and Sample Stories

**Contest Director:** Give one copy to each judge to use during critiquing/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, definitive staff stance. The situation is whether or not the school should purchase an SAT- and ACT-prep curriculum.
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 district should..." write instead, "The district should..."
3. Don't waddle into the editorial. Get right to the point and, as a general rule, don't ask 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 draw them into the story.
4. Look for the future angle. Your paper comes out before the school board meeting.
5. Once you've stated your position/stance, the body of the editorial 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. 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 substantial credibility.
8. Watch for factual errors. Pay attention to minor details. Also, stay focused.
9. Don't clutter up the editorial with clichés or trite phrases such as "adults don't understand teens" 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/SUPPORTING THE PROPOSAL**

The district could take a huge step toward preparing students for college if the school board approves Principal Katrina Witt's proposal to purchase a new \$40,000 SAT- and ACT-test prep curriculum at its meeting Monday.

The program, called Scholastic All-Stars, would incorporate test-prep lessons in all freshman and sophomore core classes. In addition, the program would train teachers on how to incorporate techniques into their existing lessons.

To improve college readiness among students, the school board should approve Witt's proposal and implement the new program.

Researching test-prep programs is a headache for both students and parents. There are multiple programs out there designed to take students' anxiety about preparing for the test and use it to make a buck. Witt said she has always wanted to see students succeed. She is the most qualified person to choose a test-prep program for students.

In addition to removing the chore of choosing a program, having a test-prep curriculum integrated into existing classes will elevate student SAT and ACT test scores without parents and students having to spend money on a private program.

Lastly, higher SAT and ACT scores are good for the school's image. Texas issues each school an accountability rating that measures its College, Career and Military Readiness (CCMR). High test scores improve the school's CCMR score, which helps the school's accountability rating. When families are looking for a new home, they may be more likely to move to a community with higher rated schools and improve the community overall.

Opponents of the program say \$40,000 isn't the best use of school funds. But this program saves parents and students money and time. A school should accomplish its goals as efficiently as possible, and this program accomplishes a big goal and saves families money. It's a win-win.

The school board should approve the proposed SAT- and ACT- prep program. Any improvement in test performance will be a high score for the district.

**SAMPLE EDITORIAL/OPPOSING THE PROPOSAL**

Students could be forced to sit through a new \$40,000 SAT- and ACT-curriculum if the district approves Principal Katrina Witt's proposal at its meeting Monday.

The program, called Scholastic All-Stars, would incorporate test-prep lessons in all freshman and sophomore core classes. In addition, the program would train teachers on how to incorporate techniques into their existing lessons.

This program would be a burden to teachers and students, and the school board should not approve it.

The \$40,000 that would be used for the program could be better spent elsewhere. If students want to complete an SAT- or ACT-prep class, those families can research programs and invest in the program of their choosing.

In addition, this program would become an immense burden on teachers. Some teachers need every moment in class to get through the material they have as it is. If teachers had to spend five minutes a day on test-prep instead of teaching their classes, they would lose 18 full 50-minute class periods in the year. Teachers have enough stress as it is without the district forcing them to teach a program that would merely distract them from their focus.

The fact is, not every student is bound for college, and not every college requires a standardized test score for admission. There's a significant portion of students for whom this program would be a complete waste of time. Yet, if the school board approved it, they would be forced to endure instruction based on tests they do not need.

Supporters of the proposal say that preparing students for college is part of the school's mission and that the test prep program supports that. They aren't wrong about college readiness being important, but it's not the only thing that matters.

Supporting the school's mission is a true test. The school board should keep in mind the needs of all students in the school and should reject Witt's test-prep proposal.