

Editorial Writing

District Meet • 2024



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 4,720 students enrolled in grades 9-12. Last week, Superintendent Jodi Benning met with representatives from Tesla who proposed installing 10 charging stations, which they call Superchargers, in the school parking lot. With the proposal, Tesla will pay for installation of the chargers and any changes to the current parking lot as a result of the installation. The district accepted the proposal and plans to have the chargers installed by the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

In its announcement about the new chargers on campus, the district also announced that it would offer students who drive electric vehicles a parking pass at a discounted rate. Students who drive cars with a standard combustion engine will pay \$125 for a student parking pass, with assigned senior parking spots available for \$175. Students who drive electric vehicles will pay \$50 for a standard parking pass, and seniors can pay \$75 for an assigned spot. There is no discount for hybrid vehicles. Parking fees are used for parking lot maintenance.

After the announcement, junior Valerie Kuo circulated a petition asking that parking passes for next year be the same price for all students, regardless of what kind of car a student drives. She will present her petition to the school board at its meeting April 11.

You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Tuesday, April 9.

THOSE SUPPORTING THE PETITION

Parking passes should cost the same for all students no matter what car a student drives. All cars cause the same wear and tear to the parking lot. They all take up the same amount of space every day. Electric cars cost significantly more than conventional cars. Students who drive them likely have more disposable income than those who don't. Penalizing students who don't drive an electric vehicle with such a significant amount of money is unfair and penalizes those students who can't afford a car with the latest technology.

THOSE OPPOSING THE PETITION

Encouraging all people to drive electric cars will benefit the environment overall. Electric cars produce zero tailpipe emissions, cutting down on smog pollution and greenhouse gases, even considering the electricity needed to create and charge the vehicle. Cleaner air means healthier people. Those who are willing to pay extra for an electric vehicle to support the environment should be entitled to a discounted parking pass for making that sacrifice for the good of the planet.

■ VALERIE KUO, junior

“My mom and dad are both teachers. I have been working at Sonic since I turned 16 so I could save money for my own car. I was finally able to buy a used 2012 Toyota Camry with a little help from my parents. I pay for my own car insurance, and I pay for my school parking passes myself. I can’t afford a new electric vehicle in any universe. Now the school is wanting to penalize me for that.

“I wasn’t surprised that other people felt the same way I feel about the parking passes, but I was surprised at how quickly the petition was spread and shared. It has more than 2,000 signatures.

“So many parts of this situation make no sense to me. I don’t know one student who drives a fully electric vehicle. I know a few who drive hybrids, but there’s not a parking discount for hybrids. That makes no sense. Hybrids benefit the environment, too, and they’re much more affordable than electric vehicles.

“The school should be more focused on educating the students physically here on campus than trying to save the whole world with this ridiculous policy.”

■ JODI BENNING, superintendent

“When the electric vehicle company approached us about charging stations in our parking lots, I had a lot of questions about safety and maintenance. Ultimately, Tesla answered all those questions, and we agreed to allow the charging stations to be installed this summer. The district is not receiving any type of kickback or benefit. We simply want our district community to have the convenience of being able to charge their vehicles while on campus.

“I realize we don’t have a huge number of electric vehicle drivers attending school, but we have more than a few teachers. I’m sure that number will only continue to grow. I am personally committed to making this district environmentally friendly, which is why we had the idea of offering parking pass discounts to students who drive electric vehicles. It is not meant to penalize those who drive traditional cars. Our hope is that small, incremental changes like this will become the spark that turns around the effect that climate change has had on our environment. In this way, Leaguetown ISD is going to do its part.”

■ PARKE DIAL, sophomore

“I think it’s smart to have some type of charging station on campus, but I can’t believe we’ll have to pay more for a regular parking pass than an EV parking pass. Hopefully the district can come to some sort of compromise on that point because students who don’t drive an EV are at a significant disadvantage. That’s a \$75 difference for a regular pass. I could do a lot more good with that money.

“I will be driving by the time next school year begins. I hope my parents will help me find an electric vehicle or a hybrid, but there are no guarantees I’ll be able to find one for the right price. Still, it’s good to know the charging stations will be here if I ever need them.”

■ DOUG CASTOR, principal

“I don’t drive a Tesla, but I do drive a Honda Prologue, and it is fully electric. I will use one of the chargers on campus during the day if one is available. I will give students and teachers access first, so they have that opportunity.

“I worked closely with Dr. Benning and other district officials after the Tesla proposal to create a long list of changes the district can make to be more environmentally friendly. I’m proud to say I work in a district committed to that. We also are working on developing some more environment-focused after-school clubs and activities to get students more involved in helping the environment.”

■ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The least expensive model Tesla, the Model 3, is listed on Tesla’s website at \$38,990 MSRP. Car and Driver lists the Chevrolet Bolt as the cheapest electric car available at \$27,495 MSRP.

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 district should offer discounted parking passes for students who drive electric vehicles.
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 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 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 PETITION

Students will present a petition opposing the district's decision to give parking discounts to students who drive electric vehicles at Thursday's school board meeting. By the start of the 2024-2025 school year, 10 charging stations will be installed in the school parking lot for electric vehicles on campus.

The district should not sell discounted parking passes for students who can afford electric vehicles.

Electric vehicle drivers will receive a discount of \$75 for a parking pass. It doesn't make sense that those who can afford the more costly electric vehicles will pay less to park than those who can afford only conventional vehicles.

Teachers and administrators own the most electric vehicles on campus, including principal Doug Castor. With few students driving electric vehicles, it's pointless to offer a discount. Their environmental impact is not a significant contribution to the district's effort to save the planet.

With this discount, the district is rewarding students who have electric vehicles, rather than helping those in need. If anyone deserves a discount, it's students who live in poverty and are struggling to afford a vehicle at all.

If the district is committed to becoming environmentally friendly, it needs to reach out to students more directly. Environmental clubs and activities would be a more effective way to encourage all students to become eco-conscious.

Those who oppose the petition believe the discount will encourage students to drive electric cars. However, in most cases, parents buy the cars, not students. A \$75 discount will not necessarily convince parents to buy an electric vehicle for their child.

With this parking pass discount, the divide between the haves and the have-nots continues to grow. The district should not widen that divide. Tesla will provide additional charges for students, but the district should not. Students should pay the same amount for each parking pass — no matter what kind of car they drive.

SAMPLE EDITORIAL/OPPOSING THE PETITION

The district announced a discounted student parking pass for those who choose to drive electric vehicles to school after Tesla agreed to install 10 charging stations in the school parking lot. Students will present a petition in opposition to the discounted parking at Thursday's board meeting.

The board should uphold the district's decision to implement discounted parking as an incentive for students who prioritize clean energy and environmental consciousness.

Electric cars do not produce tailpipe emissions, ensuring cleaner air and a healthier environment. The discounted parking pass encourages and rewards students who have concern for the health of our world. Campus charging stations also provide an accessible port for students with electric vehicles, so students may avoid driving to charging stations or installing them at their homes.

The district is committed to becoming an environmentally friendly community, and encouraging student efforts is a key aspect to their decision. Its hope is that gradual changes on campus will lead to a large impact on the environment.

Since Tesla's proposal, administrators have begun to compile a list of district-wide changes that will advance their eco-conscious efforts.

Those who support the petition believe that parking passes should cost the same for all students, arguing electric cars' affordability. The bottom line is, students are paying the same price they always have. The cost didn't increase. The district is simply providing a reward for students who help the environment.

If the district is committed to becoming environmentally friendly, it will uphold the incentive for students to drive zero-emission, electric vehicles. The district's intention is not to penalize students but to reward the few who regularly benefit their environment. The district should reject the student petition's request while continuing to look for ways to better the world around them.