

# Editorial Writing

Invitational B Meet • 2018



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 1,100 students enrolled in grades 9-12. Every spring, the National Honor Society holds a teacher vs. student Wacky Olympics fundraiser. Usually about 500 to 600 students and community members attend the event. Admission is \$1, and the NHS sells concessions, too.

Last year, junior Quinton Pursara broke his leg during the three-legged race, and several faculty members and students suffered minor injuries like sprains and bruises. Because of those injuries, Superintendent Demetri Ham suggested in January that the NHS find another fundraiser instead of the olympics. The PTA supports Ham's request and offered to help the NHS with a different fundraiser.

The NHS surveyed its members, and more than 90 percent still want to hold the olympics. Pursara, a member of NHS, also voted to continue the event. Last year, the organization made \$1,200 from the event and used the money to buy flowers and shrubbery to beautify the school. This year, the organization hopes to buy benches and picnic tables for the courtyard area where juniors and seniors eat lunch.

Last week, the NHS officers met with Ham, shared the results from the survey and asked if they could continue the olympics. Ham again suggested a different fundraiser. He suggested a bake sale, a car wash and a few other things. The officers stood firm and said the organization wanted to continue with the olympics. Ham would not give approval at the meeting. He said he wanted to think about the request and possibly talk to Pursara and other parties involved. Ham said he would make a decision by Friday, March 9.

The NHS hopes to hold the olympics on Saturday, April 28. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Monday, March 5.

## **THOSE SUPPORTING THE OLYMPICS**

This fundraiser is fun, and it puts the money back into the school. One unfortunate incident should not cancel it. A student could break his or her leg walking down the stairs in the 200 hallway. If that happens, the school isn't going to ban students from the second floor.

## **THOSE OPPOSING THE OLYMPICS**

Superintendent Ham wants to keep the students and faculty safe. It's true only Pursara broke his leg, but several other students and teachers suffered scrapes and bruises from the games. The NHS needs to pick a fundraiser where students and teachers are not at risk.

■ **DEMITRI HAM, superintendent**

“The students think I am overreacting, but I was the one who rode in the ambulance with Quinton. I was the one who heard his cries and saw the broken leg. Everyone needs to remember — it wasn’t just a little break. He broke both his tibia and fibula and had to have surgery to set the bones. The poor kid was in a wheelchair for three weeks and then crutches for another eight weeks.

“I haven’t said no yet, but I am leaning that way. Our students can have fun doing another fundraiser, and everyone would be safe. Heck, I sprained my ankle at the olympics when I slipped on the eggs from the egg toss, and I wasn’t even competing. Several of our teachers suffered similar injuries from competing.”

■ **JILL KIDDER, senior and NHS president**

“If Quinton is cool with us doing the fundraiser, then I don’t see what the problem is. We don’t force anyone to compete. It’s all volunteer, and we always have way more volunteers than spots. Dr. Ham needs to remember how much fun it is for everyone — not just for the ones who compete, either. I don’t think we could raise even close to \$1,000 with a bake sale. Plus, that sounds really boring.”

■ **QUINTON PURSARA, senior**

“The break was crazy painful last year, and I was bummed that I couldn’t finish the baseball season. But I don’t think it was a big enough deal to cancel the whole event. I could break my leg anywhere. I was unlucky that day. My mom even agreed to let me compete in the olympics this year, but she wanted me to do the hula hoop contest or water balloon relay.”

■ **MICKEY GUERRO, senior**

“I’ve been talking mess with Coach (Bill) Strand all year about the olympics. Last year he beat me in the watermelon seed spitting contest by two inches. I practiced all summer, much to the chagrin of my mom. I am ready to take him down. Superintendent Ham needs to keep this tradition alive.”

■ **TALIA KVACHKOFF, science teacher**

“I sprained both my wrist and ankle last year in the potato sack race. I couldn’t keep my balance. I know our students have fun doing this event, but too many people are getting hurt. Two years ago, one of our sophomores had an allergic reaction to the latex in the balloons. He was fine after using his epipen, but it sure was scary. I don’t know why the NHS can’t find a calmer, safer fundraiser.”

■ **WESTIN MUNCH, junior**

“I might be in the minority, but I think the Wacky Olympic event is stupid. Only the athletes and popular students participate. The rest of us stay home. I am in the NHS, and I think we should do a fundraiser that supports our mission — scholarship, service, leadership and character. I don’t think Wacky Olympics represents any of those. We could do a day of service or a read-a-thon with the elementary students. Both of those could raise a lot of money.”

**DO NOT PASS OUT TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST****EDITORIAL WRITING/INVITATIONAL B • 2018****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 to continue the Wacky Olympics NHS fundraiser. Do you support this or not?
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 principal should...", write instead, "The principal 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 principal makes his decision.
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 "the principal is mean" 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**

It's true a student broke his leg at the Wacky Olympics last year, and a few others suffered minor scrapes and bruises. But if the school is going to cancel an event every time someone gets hurt, then get ready to say goodbye to football, soccer, basketball, cheerleading, science experiments and the list goes on and on.

Superintendent Demitri Ham will decide next week whether to cancel the National Honor Society's Wacky Olympics or allow the popular, fun, money-raising event to continue.

It should not be a tough decision. The Wacky Olympics should stay.

At the olympics, usually 500 to 600 students and community members attend, which not only generates more than \$1,000 but also creates a positive, spirited environment for the school and community. All of the funds raised from this event go directly back into the school. Last year, NHS used the money from the olympics to buy flowers and shrubbery to beautify the school. This year, the NHS hoped to purchase benches and tables for the courtyard area.

Let's remember, no student or staff member is required to participate in the olympics. It is completely voluntary. Students and teachers know the risks, which are minimal, when they enter the olympics. If people are afraid they will get hurt, the answer is simple — don't sign up. But that doesn't seem to be the case since the NHS always has more people sign up for the events than can compete.

The NHS voted when Ham asked them to find another fundraiser, and 90 percent of the NHS want to continue the games. Ham should take student opinion into account and not base an entire decision on one incident. In fact, the student who broke his leg is in NHS and wants to continue the games. He even planned to participate again this year, with his mother's approval.

Ham says the olympics are not safe, and the NHS could easily find another fundraiser like a bake sale or car wash. Those events are not necessarily safer. Someone could get food poisoning or slip in the water and, more importantly, those events would not raise as much money nor would they raise the school and community spirit.

Ham needs to relax and realize nothing is 100 percent safe. Risks are everywhere, and taking risks is an important part of growing up. The olympics is not overtly dangerous. It's a fun event that should be continued — without question.

**SAMPLE EDITORIAL/OPPOSING**

If the Wacky Olympics were just wacky, then everything would be fine. But they are not. They are painful and dangerous to students and staff. A broken leg. Sprained ankles. Multiple bruises. And more.

Because of these incidents, Superintendent Demetri Ham strongly suggested that the National Honor Society choose another fundraiser. Unfortunately, the organization did not budge and now Ham will decide by Friday, March 9, whether to allow the annual teacher vs. student Wacky Olympics to continue.

Ham should hold his ground and ban the olympics.

Last year at the olympics, Quinton Pursara, who was a junior, broke his tibia and fibula. The break was so severe he had to have surgery to reset the bones, and he was in a wheelchair for three weeks and crutches for eight weeks. This injury alone should be enough to cancel the event.

But Pursara wasn't the only one who suffered injuries. Many teachers and students suffered scrapes and bruises. A couple of years ago, a student had an allergic reaction to the latex in the balloons. The event doesn't justify the pain.

The NHS' pillars are scholarship, service, leadership and character — this event does not embody any of those. NHS could host another fundraising event that would raise just as much money while also helping the community. The organization could do a day of service or a read-a-thon, which are both events that could raise money and give back to the community — an NHS pillar.

Sure, 90 percent of NHS voted to continue the fundraiser, but the vote doesn't take into account the student body not in NHS. Of course NHS wants to continue the fundraiser — it's a fun way to raise money. But it is not clear whether the entire student body supports the olympics.

The NHS has drawn the line in the sand by not compromising or selecting a different fundraiser. Ham's reasoning for cancelling the event is logical and in the best interest of students and faculty. He should stand firm and demand a different, safer event.