

News Writing

Invitational B Meet • 2023



You are a reporter for the **Leaguetown Press**, the student newspaper of Leaguetown High School.

From the given information, write a **news story** as you would for the high school newspaper. You may use statements attributed to individuals as **direct or indirect quotes**. You may not change the meaning of a statement. 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 1,820 students enrolled in grades 9-12. The district is still facing staffing shortages, exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The high school has had two vacancies on the custodial staff, three vacancies on the cafeteria staff, two vacancies on the maintenance staff and one vacancy in the front office since the 2022 school year concluded.

To alleviate staffing needs, Superintendent Jenna Hogan developed a student worker program, where high school juniors and seniors who are ahead in class credits can spend time during the school day employed by the district doing landscaping, clerical work, cafeteria jobs and other work traditionally done by adults in the community.

To obtain one of the available positions, students will apply online like any other adult applicant and will be interviewed by administrators and hand-selected for one of 12 open positions. Those students will be scheduled to work during one or two of their eight 45-minute class periods every day throughout the week. They will earn \$12.50 per hour worked, the same pay offered to adult applicants with no experience.

Online applications for the student worker program will open Thursday, Feb. 9, at 8 a.m. You are writing for the issue of the Press to be distributed Monday, Feb. 6.

■ JENNA HOGAN, superintendent

“Many of our staff members were unable to return to work after the 2021-2022 school year. During the fall semester, we decided we needed to look for good employees somewhere we have never thought to look – our students. We then began exploring ways to provide opportunities for our students to gain work experience while filling some of the gaps created by these open positions on campus. Some folks have emailed me to suggest that this program is taking away jobs from adults in the community, but if adults wanted those jobs badly enough, they would apply for those positions that have been open since May.

“We will have students filing and making copies for us in the front office. We will have them prepping food and cleaning in our cafeteria kitchens. We will have them raking leaves and trimming bushes outside our campus. For each position, students will have to review the employee handbook, be processed through human resources and complete multiple levels of training, just as any other employee would. Students are getting so much more out of this than just a paycheck.

“Students will earn a fair wage and learn more skills than they would flipping burgers after school. This is something they can put on their resumé forever. It’s a win-win for all of us.”

■ **HAYDEN JACKSON, director of nutrition services**

“We are excited about the opportunity to have students working in our cafeteria at the high school during the school day. We have set aside two stations for students to work. One station is chopping and packaging fruits and vegetables for the next day’s meals, and the other station is cleaning and kitchen maintenance. We have developed training programs for students to go through when they are hired, and if the program is successful this year, I hope to add a student cook position who will help our kitchen staff develop healthy recipes that students will like. It will be so helpful for us to have a few young workers on our team, helping us meet our needs in the kitchen.”

■ **REYED BAKRI, senior**

“I want to eventually go to culinary school and run my own restaurant some day. I don’t want to get a part-time job outside of school because I’m also trying to stay on top of my classes to try and get a scholarship at the end of this year. I’m hoping I can get one of the kitchen jobs just so I can be exposed to working in a real industrial kitchen and get some experience seeing the inside of the business. I know the pay won’t be a huge amount, but it will be good to save a little extra money for school too.”

■ **ABBEY McADAMS, junior**

“I’m going for one of the office jobs. I’m not really interested in athletics or any of the other electives offered at school, so this will also help me complete my schedule. I have to babysit my little brother every day, so I don’t have time to get a job outside of school. Working in the front office would be something I can do every day and get paid a little bit to help me pay for veterinary school. It sounds like a fun and easy way to pass the day. I can’t wait to apply.”

■ **CURTIS CLIFF, AP economics teacher**

“I worry that paying students for these simple jobs at school will become a demotivator for the real school mission, which is for students to learn. Students should be in classes learning during instructional time, not filling a void because the district can’t pay people enough to want to apply for these open jobs. There are better ways for students to gain mentorship, work experience and a meager paycheck than working one of these little jobs when they could be learning something new. Something real.”

■ **DEMI DAVENPORT, front office receptionist**

“It will be nice to have one of our students helping out in the front office. When things get busy in here in the afternoons, it’s way too chaotic. Our office aides are already overworked running passes and deliveries to classes around the school. We used to have two people working reception, but since Mrs. Marshall left last year, I haven’t even been able to take a lunch break because there are always people in here asking questions. Having a student working here every day to help us get organized would be a lifesaver for me. I hope this program is a success and it continues until we can hire a second receptionist.”

■ **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Students interested in applying for the student worker program should visit www.leaguetownisd.net/ apply.

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS BEFORE OR DURING THE CONTEST!

Invitational B • 2023 News Writing Contest Tips and Sample Story

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. Open with a future lead under the present circumstances. In this instance, the story comes out before applications open for the student worker program.

Online applications for a new student worker program open Feb. 9 at 8 a.m. In response to staff shortages, Superintendent Jenna Hogan proposed paying high school students a fair wage to work in the school during one or two 45-minute class periods a day.

2. Use direct quotes and get those quotes early in the story. After you introduce quotes, use the transition/quote formula. Be sure you attribute after the quote. An attribution should be: subject of attribution followed by the verb of attribution ("Hogan said," not "said Hogan.") Avoid stacking quotes. Avoid putting two or more quotes from different people together without placing a transition between them. Also, make sure transitions provide information to help the action of the story and the quote does not repeat information revealed in the transition.

transition

Students will have to go through the same application process as any adult would and will be interviewed by administrators for the position.

direct quote

"Working in the front office would be something I can do every day and get paid a little bit to help me pay for veterinary school," senior Abbey McAdams said. "It sounds like a fun and easy way to pass the day. I can't wait to apply."

transition

AP economics teacher Curtis Cliff criticized the plan, stating that it takes away from valuable school time and takes jobs away from adults in the community.

direct quote

"I worry that paying students for these simple jobs at school will become a demotivator for the real school mission, which is for students to learn," he said. "Students should be in classes learning during instructional time, not filling a void because the district can't pay people enough to want to apply for these open jobs."

3. Use third person. Don't say "our students" or "our principal" or "Some of our

students.” Also, do not editorialize. For instance, you should not say “This program probably won’t work...” or “The school should ...” without attributing that quote to someone. These statements are personal opinions and cannot be made in a news story.

4. Note how in the earlier example of transition/quote, each quote is its own paragraph. Don’t be afraid to use one- and two-sentence paragraphs. Journalistic writing consists mostly of one- and two-sentence paragraphs.

SAMPLE STORY

Online applications for a new student worker program open Feb. 9 at 8 a.m. In response to staff shortages, Superintendent Jenna Hogan proposed paying high school students a fair wage to work in the school during one or two 45-minute class periods a day.

“Many of our staff members were unable to return to work after the 2021-2022 school year,” Hogan said. “During the fall semester, we decided we needed to look for good employees somewhere we have never thought to look – our students.”

The district has 12 open positions, including custodial, cafeteria and front office jobs. Positions, which pay \$12.50 an hour, are available to high school juniors and seniors who are ahead in class credits.

“We have developed training programs for students to go through when they are hired,” director of nutrition services Hayden Jackson said. “It will be so helpful for us to have a few young workers on our team, helping us meet our needs in the kitchen.”

Students will have to go through the same application process as any adult would and will be interviewed by administrators for the position. Interested students should visit www.leaguetownisd.net/apply.

“Working in the front office would be something I can do every day and get paid a little bit to help me pay for veterinary school,” senior Abbey McAdams said. “It sounds like a fun and easy way to pass the day. I can’t wait to apply.”

AP economics teacher Curtis Cliff criticized the plan, stating that it takes away from valuable school time and takes jobs away from adults in the community.

“I worry that paying students for these simple jobs at school will become a demotivator for the real school mission, which is for students to learn,” he said. “Students should be in classes learning during instructional time, not filling a void because the district can’t pay people enough to want to apply for these open jobs.”

Hogan said students are getting more out of the program than just a paycheck. Once hired, students will have to review the employee handbook, be processed by human resources and complete multiple levels of training.

“Students will earn a fair wage and learn more skills than they would flipping burgers after school,” she said. “This is something that they can put on their resumé forever. It’s a win-win for all of us.”