

Proposal of a Solution

Attention-grabbing introduction

Statement of problem

Background information

Thesis statement

Disadvantages of existing solutions

A Place of Our Own: A Commons Area for De Zavala High

"I can't even hear myself think, much less hear my friends talk," I thought, as we stood in the noisy hallway. It was a free period for at least forty of us, and there we were, packed like sardines against lockers and the doors of classes in session—all because we had no place else to go.

As the student population at De Zavala High has grown, so has the problem of overcrowding in public spaces. No longer are there small, isolated groups of students with free periods. On cold or rainy days, dozens of students congregate near classrooms, distracting teachers and other students in class. Trends show that enrollment at De Zavala will continue to grow over at least the next five years. In light of this trend, it is crucial for the well-being of the students and the smooth operation of the school that the old theater building be converted into a commons area as soon as possible.

In past years students, faculty, and administrators have explored several solutions to the overcrowding problem. However, the most commonly suggested solutions—encouraging students to use the cafeteria as a commons area during free periods and allowing students to leave campus during the day—have serious drawbacks. The cafeteria is large and comfortable, but it cannot be used during much of the day when the cafeteria staff is busy setting up for lunch. Allowing students to leave campus during free periods, on the other hand, would create safety and security problems; it would become harder for faculty and staff

Proposal of a Solution *continued*

Advantages of one existing solution

Advantages/
disadvantages of existing solutions

Proposal and advantages of recommended solution

to keep track of who should and should not be on campus, making the task of providing adequate campus security even more difficult than it already is. Also, increased vehicle and pedestrian traffic around the school grounds as students come and go throughout the school day would increase the risk of accidents both for students and for other members of the community.

De Zavala High's closed-campus policy has long been a cause of dissatisfaction among some students. For several years, student council members have attempted to persuade the school board to rethink the policy, citing case studies showing that students have more positive attitudes about school in general when their campuses are open.

A student activities director quoted in a U.S. Department of Education study expounded on this idea: "Those kids that are most creative and are most likely to thrive in a situation that does not have as many rules, regulations, policies, and provisions as this one does, they are the ones that look forward to getting out of school with the most passion."

While students' attitudes toward De Zavala certainly are an important consideration, opening the campus would require a broad base of community support that is unlikely to be forthcoming. Also, students without cars would find little benefit in an open-campus policy, as it would be difficult for them to get to and from such places as the public library on foot in the fifty-minute free periods.

Converting the old theater building into a multipurpose

Proposal of a Solution *continued*

commons area would benefit all the students of De Zavala High School. At just over 6,000 square feet, the building is large enough to accommodate quiet study areas for students who want to brush up before their next test, as well as social space for students who want to relax with their classmates. The adjacent courtyard area would provide an informal site for recreational games or fresh-air socializing during the warmer months. With the addition of a commons area, students with free periods would no longer be inclined to congregate in the halls and near classrooms. As a result, hall congestion and classroom disruptions and distractions would be reduced. Furthermore, a commons area would give students the opportunity to practice using their free time responsibly—a necessary skill for college and adult life.

Support for proposal
(expert opinion)

Damon Purefoy, former superintendent of the Alessio County Public Schools, touched on the advantages of commons areas in a letter to the current school board:

We owe these dedicated young people [students at De Zavala High School] every opportunity to develop their abilities in *all* their areas of endeavor. We must plan not only for updated computer and lab facilities to help us meet higher academic standards and enhanced sports facilities to increase the physical well-being of students but also for social spaces and schoolwide programs that build a sense of community and connection among students, faculty, and members of the community as a whole. We must devote ourselves to the education of the whole student.

Proposal of a Solution *continued*

First objection to proposed solution countered

Second objection to proposed solution countered

Steps to implement proposed solution

Summary of thesis/ Call to action

Some critics of the commons area proposal have suggested that the renovation of a structure as large and as long-unused as the old theater building would be too difficult and costly an undertaking. However, several members of the school board and local businesspeople have already volunteered to donate time, materials, and expertise to the project. Two contractors already have agreed to waive their regular fees, and the city's Department of Public Works has offered to conduct free inspections of the facility's water, electrical, and heating and cooling systems. Other critics, proponents of an open-campus policy, claim that a commons area would be underutilized by De Zavala High School students. However, in a survey of almost two thirds of students in each grade, 80 percent said they would use a commons area at least once a week.

The school board and administrators, working closely with the student council and concerned members of our community, can devise a viable plan for the renovation of the theater building. Once this plan is developed, contractors and other businesspeople can be brought in to fine-tune the plan and begin the necessary work. Students may volunteer to further the effort, and in the process may gain not only work skills but also the sense of pride that comes from improving one's own corner of the world.

De Zavala High School has much to offer. One of the few things it lacks is adequate space for students when they are not in class. Support the proposal for a commons area at De Zavala. Drive by the campus

Proposal of a Solution *continued*

today and take a look at a beautiful building that once served its purpose but is now empty and unused. Then, take a few minutes to let our school board—and the students in your life—know that you support the renovation of the building and its courtyard as a social and study space for students.

Proposal of a Solution

Definition

A **proposal of a solution** is a type of persuasive writing that convinces readers that one particular solution to a problem is better than other possible solutions.

Many proposals of solutions use the structure illustrated in the framework below. Print this framework and use it as a guide when you write your own proposal of a solution.

Framework

Directions and Explanations

Introduction

- Get your readers interested in the problem right away.
- State the problem and provide background information.
- Include a clear thesis.

Get your readers' attention Make readers want to read on by starting your proposal with a quotation, bold statement, or interesting fact or statistic.

Establish the problem Provide a brief explanation of the problem, its causes, and its effects.

Write a clear thesis statement Be definite. Let your readers know that you support your chosen solution.



Body

- Briefly discuss potential solutions you have rejected.
- Persuade your readers to adopt your recommended solution.

Examine other possible solutions Describe both the advantages and the disadvantages of solutions you have rejected. Exploring other options lets readers know that your opinion is a well-reasoned one.

Focus on the best solution Clearly state your proposed solution and provide support for the solution by using facts, examples, and expert testimony. Include brief counterarguments to possible objections against your solution, and describe the steps to implement your solution.



Conclusion

- Restate your thesis, and possibly end with a call to action.

Summarize your proposal Restate your proposal and motivate readers to take action in support of that proposal. Remember that, in a proposal of a solution, it is important not only to make readers think but also to persuade them to act.