

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

FOR THE

2016-2017

“DO THE WRITE THING CHALLENGE” PROGRAM

Thank you for involving your 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in the 2017 “Do the Write Thing Challenge” (“Challenge”). All across America, students like yours are rising to the challenge of doing something to end youth violence. The “Challenge” gives middle school students an opportunity to examine the impact of violence on their lives and to communicate in written form what they think should be done to reduce youth violence. Personal responsibility is emphasized. By encouraging students to make personal commitments to do something about the problem, the program ultimately seeks to give them the opportunity to break the cycles of violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. Your involvement and support are crucial to the success of the “Challenge” in your school.

Please review the following materials concerning program rules, entry deadlines, selection criteria, classroom discussion, and student recognition before presenting the program to your students.

Program Rules

The following guidelines for the preparation of student writings have been distributed to all participating superintendents, principals and teachers:

- ◆ Students may use any form of written expression (e.g. essays, poems, plays or songs) as long as the language is positive and not derogatory. Students may submit only one entry per year. All entries must be the work product of only one student.
- ◆ Student entries, at minimum, should address three questions: *How has violence affected my life? What are the causes of youth violence? What can I do about youth violence?* Writings that do not address these questions will not be advanced in the selection process.
- ◆ Entries should be approximately 500 to 1000 words in length. Written forms of expression such as poetry that by its nature may be shorter, may contain fewer than 500 words.
- ◆ Entries must be typed or written legibly in black ink on 8 1/2" x 11" paper. Only one side of the paper may be used and the pages should be numbered.
- ◆ Entries must be in English.

- ◆ If a story is fictional, it must be identified as such to be advanced in the selection process, however, strong preference will be given to non-fiction in final selection process.
- ◆ If the student participant uses a quotation or another person's material in his or her entry, the entry must identify whose work is being used by citing the person's name or citing the source of the material. Writings based upon plagiarism will not be advanced in the selection process.
- ◆ Entries must have a "Cover Sheet" with the consent statement signed by the participating student and a parent or guardian. No personal information should appear on the body of the written entry. **Entries without a signed Cover Sheet will not be advanced in the selection process.** (See the attached Cover Sheet with the Student and Parent/Guardian Consent Statement.)
- ◆ Entries must be submitted in the form that they are received from the student writer. Editing for content, grammar or spelling by someone other than the student is not permitted.¹

Submission Deadlines

All entries must be submitted to the **Communities In Schools of the Coastal Bend Administration office**

Selection Criteria

Entries will be reviewed by your jurisdiction's "Do the Write Thing" Committee, the coalition of business, community and governmental leaders that oversees and administers the "Challenge" in your area. Entries will be selected on the basis of content, originality and responsiveness to the three questions: *How has violence affected my life? What are the causes of youth violence? What can I do about youth violence?* Grammar and spelling will not be used as criteria for selection.

In their writings, students should be encouraged to describe what they feel are the causes of youth violence **and** to offer specific suggestions about what they as individuals can do to reduce violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. Personal responsibility for responding to the problem of youth violence should be emphasized. Students should be encouraged to share personal experiences about the impact of violence on their lives and the lives of their peers. The panel of judges in your area will be looking at how well your students present their views on these matters.

¹ Teachers, please send us the writings and the Cover Sheets of all of the students who submit an entry. In this program, everybody who makes a good-faith effort to participate deserves to be recognized and have his or her work considered in the selection process.

Classroom Discussion

Classroom discussion is not mandatory for participation in the “**Challenge**”. However, over the years we have found that students and their teachers gain much from the bonding that can result from the exchanges about the impact of youth violence that occur in pre-writing classroom discussions. Teachers have indicated that they are amazed at the openness and honesty of these classroom discussions. They also indicate that these discussions present excellent opportunities to identify and prevent youth problems before they reach crisis proportions.

Many of the teachers whose classes have participated in the “**Challenge**” in the past have invited outside speakers knowledgeable about youth violence issues to lead pre-writing discussions. Other teachers have provided their students with selected readings or newspaper articles about violence in advance of the discussion to stimulate thought. Speakers or articles, which emphasize personal responsibility on the part of students for responding to the problem of violence, have proven to be particularly useful.

Below are some questions designed to generate discussion among your students before they prepare their entries for the “**Challenge**”. For other ideas, please visit www.dtw.org.

Questions to Consider:

- How does violence affect your daily lives?
- Where are you confronted by violence? Your home? Your school? Your neighborhood?
- What are some of the causes of youth violence in your community?
- What can you as an individual do to reduce youth violence in your community?

Common Core Standards

The “Do the Write Thing Challenge” has been reviewed by a panel of highly qualified public school teachers for compliance with Common Core standards. The “Challenge” meets all of the English Language Arts Standards in Writing for Grades 6, 7 and 8. (Standards W.7.1 through W.7.10 and W.8.1 through W.8.10) Please note that we have determined Standards W.7.2 and W.8.2 to only be applicable to nonfiction submissions. (Please see attached schedule for more details on the “**Challenge**” fulfilling Common Core Standards)

Student Recognition

Local Level:

Each jurisdiction participating in the “**Challenge**” has established a “Do the Write Thing” Committee to coordinate the program. A “jurisdiction” may be a city, a county, a city-county combination or even an entire state. A complete listing of participating localities can be found on the **National Campaign to Stop Violence** website, www.dtwt.org. Most “Do the Write Thing” Committees will organize a recognition ceremony to honor the boy and girl from each participating middle school who are selected as School Ambassadors.² In addition to the “School Ambassadors” from each school, you, along with the students’ parents and your principal, will be invited to attend the recognition ceremony. Most “Do the Write Thing” Committees will also publish the writings of all their “School Ambassadors” and distribute the publication to area community, business and governmental leaders.³

National Level:

Each “Do the Write Thing” Committee will designate two “National Ambassadors.” The two National Ambassadors along with each student’s teacher and one parent or guardian will be invited by the **National Campaign to Stop Violence** to attend the “**Do the Write Thing Challenge**” National Recognition Week activities in Washington, D.C. in July of 2017.⁴ In addition, one representative of the jurisdiction’s middle school system will be invited to the National Recognition Week activities.

The majority of the costs for the National Recognition Week activities will be paid by our primary sponsors: the **Kuwait-America Foundation** and the **Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science**. The people of Kuwait have donated money to the “**Do the Write Thing**” campaign for over 20 years. This has been done to say thank you to the American people for the liberation of Kuwait in 1991.

During past National Recognition Weeks, National Ambassadors have met with a United States Supreme Court Judge, the United States Secretary of Education, the Attorney General of the United States, the United States Secretary of Interior, Members of Congress and many notable celebrities to discuss the problem of youth violence. A highlight of the National Recognition Week is placing a book of the writings of the 2017 student national ambassadors in the Library of Congress, ensuring that the students’ words will be available to all and for future generations. In addition, students have been honored at embassy receptions hosted by the State of Kuwait.

² Schools with fewer than twenty-five entries will be grouped together for review and School Ambassador selection purposes.

³ While all “Do the Write Thing” Committees are encouraged to hold local recognition ceremonies and publish books of student writings, and while most local “Do the Write Thing” Committees do undertake these activities, the responsibility for organizing and funding these functions rests with each local Committee. Some start-up Committees do not initiate these functions during the early years of operation.

⁴ Jurisdictions must have at least 500 student writings to qualify for participation in the National Recognition Week activities in Washington, D.C.

Do the Write Thing and Common Core State Standards

Writing is the core component of the “Do the Write Thing” Challenge (DtWT). After classroom discussions about youth violence, participating middle school students are asked by their teachers to make a commitment not to be involved in violence and provide written answers to three questions:

1. How has violence affected my life?
2. What are the causes of youth violence?
3. What can I do to reduce youth violence?

The DtWT experience is flexible, allowing for adaptation as needed by school districts and individual classrooms. Thus, the writing component of DtWT can cover significant portions of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts:

Writing

Essays that include a narrative component, such as those that address the first question, can fulfill 3.A-E for grades 6, 7, and 8.

Essays that address the second two questions can fulfill 1.A-E, 2.A-F, 7, 8, and 9 for grades 6, 7, and 8.

All essays can be used to fulfill 4 for grades 6, 7, and 8.

Depending on the level of teacher involvement in students’ writing for the DtWT Challenge, the program can be used to fulfill 5 (peer review), 6 (technology), and 10 (writing over a range of time and revision) for grades 6, 7, and 8.

Speaking and Listening

Classroom discussions, before and after presenting DtWT can be used to fulfill 1.B-D for grades 6, 7, and 8.

6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
Writing		
6.1.A-E	7.1.A-E	8.1.A-E
6.2.A-F	7.2.A-F	8.2.A-F
6.3.A-E	7.3.A-E	8.3.A-E
6.4	7.4	8.4
6.5	7.5	8.5
6.6	7.6	8.6
6.7	7.7	8.7
6.8	7.8	8.8
6.9	7.9	8.9
6.10	7.10	8.10
Speaking & Listening		
6.1.B-D	7.1.B-D	8.1.B-D

“DO THE WRITE THING CHALLENGE”

COVER SHEET AND STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT STATEMENT

Please Type (Preferred) or Print Legibly in Black/Blue Ink

Thank you for participating in the “Do the Write Thing Challenge.” To have your entry considered for selection as a Student National Ambassador, you and a parent or guardian must complete this Cover Sheet and sign the Student and Parent/Guardian Consent Statement below.

Students’ First Name: _____ Student’s Last Name: _____

School: _____ School’s Phone Number: () _____ - _____

Grade: _____ Parent’s Full Name: _____

Student’s Home Address: _____

Student’s Phone Number: () _____ - _____ Student’s Sex: _____

Teacher’s Full Name: _____ Teacher’s Phone Number: () _____ - _____

Teacher’s Home Address: _____

STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT STATEMENT

The National Campaign to Stop Violence (NCSV), which sponsors the “Do the Write Thing Challenge,” will publish selected students writings and quotations in a book and in a discussion paper on youth violence. Before publishing your writing, the NCSV requires your written consent and the written consent of a parent or guardian. If you and your parent or guardian agree to permit the NCSV to publish your writing, please sign the statement following: We agree to give ownership of the attached student writing to the National Campaign to Stop Violence so that it can be considered for recognition and published. The NCSV may further disclose the writing to the media and other parties as part of their national program.

Student’s Signature

Date

Parent’s Signature

Date

Student’s Email Address

Parent’s Email Address

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