

# School-Wide Writing Assignment

## Directions for Parents and ESs

### DIRECTIONS FOR PARENTS

#### Writing Assignment

Each year the school focuses on a different type (genre) of writing. Parents will be given a writing prompt for all students grades 2-11, and any 12<sup>th</sup> grader that has not passed the CAHSEE English-Language Arts (ELA). For students in grades K-1, the writing assignment is optional and not required; however, an assignment will be provided for these two grades and K-1 students are encouraged to submit a writing sample for the practice and feedback.

Our school goal is to improve everyone's writing skills through this process, provide support to our parents in this important area in their student's education, and remove the fear and mystery for our students around their STAR and CAHSEE ELA assessments, as well as prepare our students for various college admission essays. The writing assignment is designed to be a positive experience for the student by building on their writing strengths.

#### The Writing Assignment Timeline and Deadlines

**August/September Learning Record (LR) Meeting:** ESs to give parents/students the writing genre practice materials, rubric, and genre checklist for this year's writing assignment.

Students are to receive instruction and practice in the writing genre during August/September/October/November.

**October/November LR Meeting:** ESs to give parents this year's grade level writing assignment. Parents are to keep the assignment secure and out of view until the day of their child's session.

**December LR Meeting:** The writing assignment sample is due no later than the December LR Meeting.

**January ES Area Facilitator (AF) Meetings:** ESs are to prepare and take their writing samples to their January ES AF Meeting for scoring using the school's rubric. The writing assignment samples from each year will be kept and saved by the school, will follow the student throughout their school career, and may be referred to by the ESs as needed. AFs are to provide administration with feedback on the students' writing.

**February LR Meeting:** ESs are to give parents feedback on their student's scored writing assignment sample.

**First Friday in March:** Deadline for ESs to mail their original student writing samples to the school office.

### Specific Directions for Writing the Student Writing Sample

- The ES is not required to be present while the student completes the writing assignment.
- The student may not refer to or use their checklist during their writing session.
- The student must handwrite the writing sample, as typing is not accepted.
- If the student is unable to physically write, he/she may dictate their response orally to the parent who is to write the student's exact words (or draw a picture and label it, if age appropriate). The parent needs to ask the spelling of words that they think the student does not know how to spell, then spell them as dictated. Any other exceptions must be approved by the school's director(s).
- Parents may choose a comparable writing assignment prompt of like genre and rigor for that school year if they have a strong objection to the school-provided assignment prompt. The prompt must be pre-approved by their ES and a copy of the prompt must be provided to their ES.
  - Students are to attempt to do all, or as much of the writing assignment as possible, in one continuous sitting. During that sitting, the student will want to implement the writing process to help them produce their best work: analyze the prompt, plan using memorized outlines or graphic organizers, proofread, and edit their writing sample.
- This is a school-required writing assignment that must be collected. ESs are to be certain they have clearly explained the purpose and goal of this assignment as previously explained. If a family is unwilling to participate in this assignment, the ES needs to discuss it with their advisor.
- It is recommended that students write in pencil and double-space their writing sample so they have the room for necessary revision and editing notations.
- The student's writing sample will be scored using the school-wide writing assignment rubric posted on the school's website for parents and ESs to view/print out. The student's sample will be scored according to the rubric categories to include: how well the writing stays on topic; includes sentence variety and appropriate paragraph structure; has correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling; and how well ideas are supported with appropriate use of details.

## **DIRECTIONS FOR ESs ONLY**

### **Preparation for Scoring:**

ESs will collect the writing sample and the prompt for each sample at their December LR Meetings, as this is the deadline for the assignment. Each ES will print out copies of the rubric from the school website for that year's assignment. They will attach the rubric and a copy of the student's writing prompt to the student's writing assignment sample. The ES is to only complete the information at the top and bottom (if applicable) of the rubric form. **DO NOT SCORE!** because ESs will bring their prepared student samples to their January ES Area Facilitator (AF) Meetings and the group will score them there.

### **Directions for Scoring:**

At the January ES AF Meetings, these steps will be followed:

- ESs will separate their collective samples by grade level.
- ESs will choose the writing samples from their grade level of expertise to score first.
- ESs will use their professional judgment to score each sample according to the school rubric.
- If a second opinion is needed while scoring, ESs are to ask their Area Facilitator to work with them on that difficult sample.
- ESs will continue to work through the stacks of samples at their ES AF Meeting until all are scored.
- When all are scored, the samples are to be sorted out by ES, as each ES will need to take their samples home with them at the end of the meeting.

### **Scoring Feedback:**

After scoring the samples, but while still at their AF Meeting, ESs will be asked to provide feedback to their AF who will collect and forward the information to the school's administration regarding the following:

How did our students' writing samples compare to students in regular classrooms? (Should be answered by those ESs who have had recent classroom experience of similar grade level). From what you observed, what element/aspect of writing did our students do especially well on?

From what you observed, what overall elements/aspects of writing do our students need to improve on?

What curriculum/strategies/websites/vendors/classes/professional development suggestions can you share with the group to help improve our students' writing?

### **After Samples Are Scored:**

- Each ES will take their scored original writing samples home with them at the end of their January ES AF Meeting.
- Each ES is to make 2 copies of the scored rubric and student writing sample with writing prompt, and disseminate them as stated below:
  1. Mail the original writing samples with scored rubrics in one packet to the school office by the first Friday in March. Mail originals to (School), Writing Samples, 1166 Broadway, Suite Q, Placerville, CA 95667
  2. One copy is to be kept in the ESs student file to follow the student while they are enrolled in our school. It can be used from year to year to show student progress, and to help the ES know where to focus the writing instruction.
  3. One copy should be given to the parent/student at their February LR meeting. The scored samples should be used to facilitate a productive educational session.
  4. ESs should be prepared to explain to the parent why their child received the scores that they did, and suggestions as to what can be done to help improve their child's writing.
  5. ESs should also be prepared to give some helpful writing curriculum suggestions and weblinks, and discuss some writing strategies for further instruction and practice.
  6. ESs may want to suggest that after their students practice in the genre, that the student does an end-of-year re-write of the prompt that the ES scores and reviews with the student.
  7. ESs may want to direct parents back again to the practice materials and writing instruction weblinks posted on the school's website.
- ESs are to enter the student's score in the ES Webfiles View/Active Students on the Student Detail/Testing Assessment button/School Assessment tab in the Writing Assignment section. The ESs are to enter the student's grade level for the 2009-2010 school year, the school year (2010), and the student's overall score.