

Middle School ELA (6-8)



Middle School ELA



ELA: Writer's Workshop FAQ

June 2023

What is the shift in practice? We are shifting our middle grades ELA/ELA Advanced classes to a new course named *ELA: Writer's Workshop*. This course will utilize curriculum units and resources from the Teachers College Units of Study, as well as locally designed resources. Please note that advanced ELA has not been eliminated, but it may look different in a workshop model. The phase in started in the 2022-2023 school year in 6th grade, will continue in 2023-2024 in 7th grade, and will be complete in 2024-2025 in 8th grade. During the shift, we will gather feedback, examine student work, and review relevant data to monitor progress and make necessary revisions.

How did we make this decision? In 2019, a WP Writing Review Committee composed of teachers, administrators, instructional specialists, parents, and other stakeholders began the work of reflecting on our current practices in teaching writing, especially in our ELA courses. The committee explored state standards, curriculum, pertinent data, examples of student work, position papers, and professional readings on best practices. We also conducted surveys and interviews with students, parents, and staff.

The committee's work culminated in a report with a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening our teaching of writing in a way that lives up to our district's mission – "to educate and inspire **all** students, while nurturing their dreams, so they learn continually, think critically, pursue their aspirations and contribute to a diverse and dynamic world." A key component of these recommendations was to shift our middle school ELA courses to the writing workshop model to bring advanced and extended learning opportunities to all our students.

Why the workshop model? This shift addresses multiple committee recommendations, builds on student success in and familiarity with the model in elementary school, is an established best practice, and shifts the focus to teaching the writer, not just the writing product. We are confident that this shift in our practice will support the success, growth, and achievement of **all** our students, as well as expand the opportunities for advanced work in a way that is developmentally appropriate for middle school students.

- The workshop model supports all students through standards aligned skills instruction and differentiation for student-specific learning needs.
- Built into the workshop model are opportunities for collaboration, one-on-one and small group conferencing, independent exploration, and student choice.
- Individual writing goals are identified – extension and acceleration are planned for in the writing progressions.
- The workshop model promotes and benefits from a diverse community of writers, who learn and grow through collaboration and the sharing of ideas and experiences.

How did we prepare? In anticipation of the shift in learning opportunities, worked with curriculum and professional planning sessions, and received in-class. In addition, teachers began implementing compene years prior to the shift. This support is ongoing and implementation.

What about Critical Literacy? As was the case before, support services will be enrolled in Critical Literacy, additional support for students through Read 180, and

How does this impact students' enrollment in other courses? There is no negative impact on student enrollment in honor school level. In fact, one of the intended outcomes is students for success in our most challenging courses.

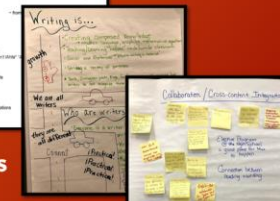
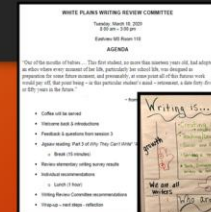
As we implement these shifts to our practice, we will continue to seek feedback, review relevant data, and reflect on our teaching of English Language Arts. We believe that these shifts are in the best interest of our students, will strengthen our instructional practice, and will result in improved student growth and achievement. Please feel free to reach out with additional questions and thank you for your support of schools.

Writing Review Committee

2019-2020

- Four full-day sessions
- Standards
- Curriculum
- Student work
- Data
- Interviews, surveys
- Professional reading
- Position papers
- And more ...

Recommendations



Writing Review Committee recommendations

"The committee identifies a connection between the purpose and audience of a writing situation and how students see themselves as writers. Student writers at the elementary level, where there is a focus on choice, audience, process, and celebration, tend to see themselves as good writers who enjoy revising, refining, and sharing their work. *In many writing contexts, students at the secondary level seem to increasingly focus on correctness and producing a final product that will earn a grade. Some students see writing as a task for one – the teacher – and want to please that grade. The committee believes that by focusing on developing lifelong learners and writers in a classroom setting.*"



WHITE PLAINS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WRITING REVIEW COMMITTEE
FINAL REPORT

Writing Review Committee Executive Summary

- Identify and develop opportunities for professional learning through...
 - Professional learning opportunities for teachers and administrators
 - Professional learning opportunities for students
- Identify and develop opportunities for professional learning through...
 - Professional learning opportunities for teachers and administrators
 - Professional learning opportunities for students
- Identify and develop opportunities for professional learning through...
 - Professional learning opportunities for teachers and administrators
 - Professional learning opportunities for students
- Identify and develop opportunities for professional learning through...
 - Professional learning opportunities for teachers and administrators
 - Professional learning opportunities for students

Tentative timeline

YEAR	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
2021-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Writing Units of Study • ELA – ELA ADV • Reading instruction in CL/R180 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try one Writing Unit of Study • Planning/exploration • ELA-ELA ADV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers try one Writing Unit of Study
2022-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Writing Units of Study • The Writers Workshop grade 6 • Reading Units of Study in CL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Writing Units of Study • ELA – ELA ADV • Align current CL units w/ELA units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try one Writing Unit of Study • Planning/exploration • ELA-ELA ADV
2023-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Writing Units of Study • The Writers Workshop grade 6 • Reading Units of Study in CL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Writing Units of Study • The Writers Workshop grade 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Writing Units of Study • ELA – ELA ADV • Align current CL units w/ELA units
2024-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Writing Units of Study • The Writers Workshop grade 6 • Reading Units of Study in CL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Writing Units of Study • The Writers Workshop grade 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Writing Units of Study • The Writers Workshop grade 8

Middle School ELA



Writing Review Committee

2019-2020

- Four full-day sessions
- Standards
- Curriculum
- Student work
- Data
- Interviews, surveys
- Professional reading
- Position papers
- And more ...

→ Recommendations

Writing Review Committee

2020-2021

- Curriculum projects/ revisions
- Professional learning
- Report and executive summary
- Presentation to board
- Reconvened Writing Review Committee
- Action steps/ work with recommendations

Breakout Groups

- Professional learning plan * Grading and assessment
- Writing across the disciplines * Responding to student work
- o Review committee recommendations related to your breakout group.
 - o Can you envision a task/ tasks to address one or more of the recommendations?
 - o What might you explore related to this breakout group?

Writing Review Committee recommendations

“The committee identifies a connection between the purpose and audience of a writing situation and how students see themselves as writers. Student writers at the elementary level, where there is a focus on choice, audience, process, and celebration, tend to see themselves as good writers who enjoy revising, refining, and sharing their work. *In many writing contexts, students at the secondary level seem to increasingly focus on correctness and producing a final product that will earn a grade. Some students see themselves as writing for an audience of one – the teacher – and want feedback narrowly focused on improving that grade. The committee wonders about the impact this may have on developing lifelong learners and effective communicators beyond an academic setting.*”



WHITE PLAINS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WRITING REVIEW COMMITTEE
FINAL REPORT

Writing Review Committee Executive Summary

During the 2019-2020 academic year, White Plains Public Schools, K-12, established a Writing Review Committee with three members, including parents, teachers, and students. The committee's purpose was to review and provide feedback on student writing across all grades and levels. The committee held four full-day sessions, including student interviews, committee shared meetings, collecting examples of student work, and reviewing teacher, teacher, and parent survey results of the meetings.

Over the course of that year, the committee reviewed district data relevant to student writing performance, including the 2019-2020 student writing portfolio, and the 2019-2020 student writing portfolio. The committee also reviewed the 2019-2020 student writing portfolio, and the 2019-2020 student writing portfolio.

as well as supporting all staff in learning how to confer with and provide meaningful feedback to student writers. The Writing Review Committee made a total of six recommendations in five general areas. These recommendations include:

- 1) Collaboration and Cross-Content Integration
 - Identify and develop opportunities for interdisciplinary integration through writing.
 - Align writing expectations across all schools and grades.
 - Develop a district-wide culture of writing, including rubrics, such as the National Day on Writing, visits from writers, and more opportunities for student publication.
- 2) District Structures
 - Develop a mission and vision statement for writing reflecting our shared values.
 - Consider scheduling structures and course offerings that best meet the needs of student writers.
- 3) Professional Learning
 - Create a multi-year, multi-grade instructional plan for professional learning.
 - Develop and implement structures for supporting student work.
 - Plan for ongoing, effective conferencing for teachers and SAs.
- 4) Assessment & Grading
 - Explore meaningful grading models that track mastery of skills.
 - Implement writing portfolios for students.
 - Track student use and master their own writing goals.
- 5) Curriculum & Classroom Practices
 - Increase opportunities for student choice in writing, including genres, subjects, and formats.
 - Build publication and celebration into curricula.
 - Incorporate elements of the writing workshop.

Middle School ELA



Why reimagine ELA?



The mission of the White Plains City School District is to educate and inspire **all** students, so they learn continually, think critically, pursue their aspirations and contribute to a diverse

- The workshop model supports all students through standards aligned skills instruction and student-specific learning needs.
- Built into the workshop model are opportunities for collaboration, one-on-one instruction, independent exploration, and student choice.
- Individual writing goals are identified – extension and acceleration are planned for students who need it.
- The workshop model promotes and benefits from a diverse community of writers through collaboration.

Looking at the workshop model – How?



- ELA advisory committee
- Materials and resources
- Professional learning
- Time to collaborate and plan

Middle School ELA



Why reimagine ELA?



The mission of the White Plains City School District is to educate and inspire **all** students, while nurturing their dreams, so they learn continually, think critically, pursue their aspirations and contribute to a diverse and dynamic world.

- NO impact on H/ADV/AP/Dual Enrollment courses at HS



Why reimagine ELA?

The mission of the White Plains City School District is to educate and inspire **all** students, while nurturing their dreams, so they learn continually, think critically, pursue their aspirations and contribute to a diverse and dynamic world.

- The workshop model supports all students through standards aligned skills instruction and differentiated student-specific learning needs.
- Built into the workshop model are opportunities for collaboration, one-on-one and small group work, independent exploration, and student choice.
- Individual writing goals are identified – extension and acceleration are planned for in the writing process.
- The workshop model promotes and benefits from a diverse community of writers, who learn and grow through collaboration.

Why reimagine ELA: Our Mission



The mission of the White Plains City School District is to educate and inspire **all** students, while nurturing their dreams, so they learn continually, think critically, pursue their aspirations and contribute to a diverse and dynamic world.

THANK YOU!

Leroy Dixon, Eastview MS Principal

leroydixon@wpcsd.k12.ny.us

Michael Eaton, Highlands MS Principal

michaeleaton@wpcsd.k12.ny.us

Douglas Cronk, English Coordinator 7-12

dcronk@wpcsd.k12.ny.us

