

1 **REGULATIONS GOVERNING WRITING INSTRUCTION AND**
2 **ASSESSMENT POLICY**

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4 **PURPOSE**

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6 To update procedures and practices to be followed in support of Policy IGAA.

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8 **INTRODUCTION**

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10 A major goal of the Alexandria City Public Schools is to provide a rigorous, relevant, and
11 internationally benchmarked education to enable all students to succeed as citizens in the
12 global community. To be prepared for post-secondary education and a range of potential
13 career pathways, every student must become proficient in written expression for a range
14 of purposes using a variety of rhetorical domains (i.e., descriptive, narrative, expository,
15 and persuasive writing). Effective writing instruction enables students to:

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17 1. Express their ideas, thoughts, and opinions clearly and effectively.
18 2. Summarize, synthesize, and evaluate information learned from a variety of sources
19 into a written product.
20 3. Match writing styles and formats to respond to a specific purpose and intended
21 audience.
22 4. Develop a deeper understanding of essential knowledge, skills, and procedures in all
23 content areas.
24 5. Revise and edit all written communications using the principles and rules of Standard
25 English grammar and usage.
26 6. Progress from dependent writers to independent writers who consistently assess and
27 revise their own writing.
28 7. Increase students’ language proficiency in the use of formal academic language in a
29 variety of forms of written expression.
30 8. Enhance their reading comprehension through written reflection and analysis.

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32 **TEACHER REQUIREMENTS**

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34 Teacher guidelines for writing instruction and assessment include:

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36 1. Writing in the content areas should be a regular part of all subject areas to reinforce
37 students’ understanding of essential knowledge, skills and procedures, including
38 students’ reading comprehension, through emphasis upon the reading-writing
39 connection.
40
41 2. The writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing) should be
42 used to help students practice and perfect writing skills. Teachers need to determine
43 which assignments require the completion of all stages of the writing process (versus
44 more informal types of written discourse, such as journal entries).
45

- 46 3. Throughout their school career, students should develop proficiency in major forms
47 of written expression, including narrative, descriptive, expository, procedural,
48 persuasive and literary analysis writing.
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- 50 4. Regular opportunities for students to write should include but not be limited to:
51 ▪ Formal essays
52 ▪ Brief and extended response essay questions
53 ▪ Formal and informal written responses to unit essential questions
54 ▪ Writer’s Workshop
55 ▪ Warm-up and activator activities at the beginning of lessons and at key transition
56 points within a lesson
57 ▪ Journal writing in all content areas, as appropriate
58 ▪ Reader responses to literature, texts, articles and/or other primary and secondary-
59 source documents
60 ▪ Directions
61 ▪ Letters
62 ▪ Science labs
63 ▪ Mathematical explanations
64 ▪ Social studies document-based questions
65 ▪ Other forms of written expression, as appropriate
66
- 67 5. Students should engage in regular opportunities for research-based writing, including:
68 ▪ Formulating and investigating a formal research question
69 ▪ Using a range of sources to ensure balance and completeness in analysis
70 ▪ Constructing and defending a thesis statement
71 ▪ Developing a well-organized and fully supported introduction, body, and
72 conclusion
73 ▪ Using a universally accepted protocol for citing sources
74 ▪ Constructing a viable bibliography
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- 76 6. Writing assignments shall receive either formal or informal feedback in a timely
77 manner.
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- 79 7. Writing expectations should be communicated to students through the use of rubrics
80 at the same time as the purpose, timeline and specific criteria for writing assignments
81 are explained.
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- 83 8. Grammar, usage, and mechanics will be taught within the context of authentic writing
84 experiences, as opposed to isolated skill practice.
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- 86 9. The ability to self-assess one’s writing is a key skill for students to master. Teachers
87 must model how to revise, edit and provide students with ample opportunities to
88 practice these skills.
89
- 90 10. Teachers will prepare students for unit transfer tasks (in alignment with the document
91 “Sequence of Writing Assignments in English, Mathematics, Science, and Social
92 Studies,” available on the Curriculum Blackboard website). This preparation should

93 include explicit instruction (including modeling and formative feedback) related to
94 the requirements of specific writing genre required by each task.
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- 96 11. Writing terminology—including genre descriptions—should be consistent with the
97 document “ACPS Writing Genres: Establishing a Common Language for Transfer
98 Tasks and Writing Across Content Areas,” available on the Curriculum Blackboard
99 website.

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101 **SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

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103 School guidelines for writing instruction and assessment should include:

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105 1. Writing expectations will be communicated to parents through Back-to-School
106 Nights, curriculum nights, conferences, newsletters, and/or other forms of
107 communication.
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109 2. Writing assignments should be reflected in each quarter’s grades.
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111 3. The principal or his/her designee will monitor the appropriate grade-level use and
112 completion of writing assignments using the ACPS Measurement Topic Rubrics in
113 alignment with the documents referenced above. Monitoring will be through the
114 standard means of lesson observations and lesson plan reviews.
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116 4. Teachers will build common expectations within and across grade levels, including
117 shared examination and scoring of student written products to build inter-rater
118 reliability as part of the scoring process. Student exemplars on the Blackboard
119 Curriculum page will serve as anchors for establishing inter-rater reliability.
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121 5. Specific writing tasks for each curriculum unit will be delineated in the ACPS
122 curriculum guides. A compilation of writing tasks for the English Language Arts,
123 mathematics, science and social studies shall be published on the ACPS website.
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125 6. Whenever possible, writing assignments should reinforce students’ reading
126 comprehension, including reflective and analytical writing in response to fiction and
127 informational text.
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130 Approved: February 24, 2015
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