Parent Guide to Writing Assessment and Feedback

How do students receive feedback on their writing under the new writing program?

The purpose of the program's assessment system is to "lift the level of actionable feedback" teachers provide to their students:

> The assessments help students answer the questions "How am I doing?" and "What, exactly, can I do to improve?" They also support a growth mind-set toward learning in general, and specifically toward learning to write, as students learn that they can lift the level of their writing in a step-by-step fashion by working hard, applying the skills and strategies that they've been taught, and being critical, evidence-based readers of their own writing.   (*Writing Pathways*, p. 2)

The focus is on **teaching <u>the writer</u> not the writing.** This means that rather than simply taking his or her red pen and revising the writer's current piece, the teacher will use the program's learning progressions (charts describing how writers progress in each writing area) to give feedback on transferable skills (skills that writers will use in all pieces, such as writing a strong lead).

Specific feedback methods including the following:
- **Conferring:** During daily writing time, teachers confer with students using the program's learning progressions to teach transferable skills
- **Student Self-Assessment Checklists:** Students use self-assessment checklists, either individually or with a peer, to analyze their writing, make corrections and set improvement goals
- **On-demand Performance Assessments:** Students complete pre- and post-assessments for each writing unit. Teachers score these assessments using a rubric focusing on different writing areas:
    - Structure: Overall, Lead, Transitions, Ending, Organization
    - Development: Elaboration, Craft
    - Language Conventions: Spelling, Punctuation

    Teachers use the results of these assessments to focus their conferring sessions. A teacher may review the entire rubric with a student or may choose one or more writing areas to discuss.