

REPORT TO THE BOARD

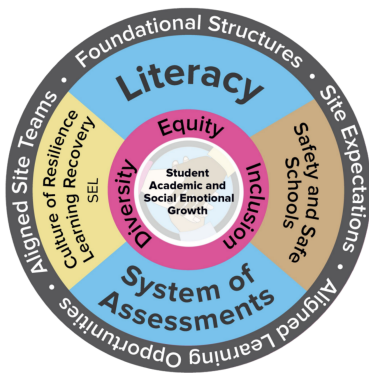
Item:	Update on Literacy Plan: Supporting Literacy Practices that are Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive
Prepared By:	Tonja Jarrell, Associate Superintendent; Ben Odell, Director; Lisa Van Horn, Director - Office of the Chief Academic Officer
Board Meeting Date:	March 8, 2023

Prepared as of March 2, 2023.

Grounding Literacy Toward Theory of Action: AR0100

Since the summer of 2021, NUSD has been focused on creating a cohesive, aligned, and comprehensive Literacy Plan to support all of our students in improving their writing skills and building literacy through writing. Work started with a summer school pilot, where teachers used rubrics and taught informational writing to students, providing an opportunity to identify student writing needs and begin formulating next steps around their needs. Work continued throughout the 2021-22 school year. CAO's staff gathered feedback from teachers, families, and students on the structure and implementation of the plan. A Literacy Plan work group was formed; teachers TK-12 from each site were invited to participate in this initial work. Teacher feedback on the pilot of the Literacy Plan as well as the rubrics and common tools was positive and provided key information to guide our next steps in refining and implementing the Literacy Plan, and in the 2022-23 school year, we are piloting informational writing prompts districtwide. We are using ongoing staff feedback along with the information and data that we gather from student writing in order to guide our professional development offerings for teachers and direct our next steps as we continue refining the Literacy Plan.

The last two years of work developing the districtwide plans for literacy and diversity equity, and inclusion (DEI) led us to developing the NUSD Areas of Focus, captured in this graphic.



The graphic was designed to not only capture our key Areas of Focus for the 22-23 school year, but to keep a laser-like focus on the systems and structures required for this work to be implemented. Moving from the inside of the graphic out, Student Academic and Social Emotional Growth is the core "why" for our work, simply put. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) is the lens through which we view all district wide initiatives and our four major areas of focus (Our Culture of Resilience (both Learning Recovery, and Social Emotional Learning (SEL)), Literacy, Safety and Safe Schools, and System of Assessments). The binding agents to keep the elements within the graphic working together are our

aligned learning opportunities, aligned site teams, foundational structures, and site expectations. There continues to be an intentional emphasis districtwide on literacy, through writing, and our system of assessments (to monitor student outcomes during the pilot).

Literacy is one strand in which we incorporate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into daily instructional practices. As stated before, DEI is the lens that we use to approach all of our work. In this Board report, it should become apparent how DEI has been integrated within our work with literacy. In future reports on our Areas of Focus, whether it is a report about Safe Schools, SEL, or the Literacy Plan, there will be a continuous link to our district's work with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Commitment to Increasing Access of Diverse Materials

Books, Materials, and Resources

Students were surveyed in February of 2022 so that their voices would continue to be utilized as a primary source of information to inform district actions. Students were asked if they believed that their classroom environment is inclusive; while 92.2% (499 of 543 respondents) of students overwhelmingly felt that their classroom environments were inclusive, a smaller percentage (76.1%, or 413 of 543 students) felt that their cultures were represented in the lessons, units, and content of the classes they take in school. In addition, approximately 25% of students (137 of 543) did not feel like they were represented in the books, magazines, and resources used in classes and the library at their school sites. One of our goals in increasing access to diverse materials is to ensure that all students see themselves represented in the materials used in classrooms and provided in libraries. In alignment with AR0100's commitment to improve material available in school libraries/media centers and the importance of students' voices guiding district actions, it was determined that more diverse, equitable, and inclusive books should be added to libraries. As a result, during the April 20, 2022 Board meeting, Trustees approved \$250,000 for the purchase of books and resources for two phases of purchases investing in materials that represent our students.

For the initial library order, the selection of texts were purchased to create more inclusivity in our curricula and student resources. Natomas Unified ordered 121 new book titles in fall 2022 for the libraries of each site that serves our students in grades PK-5. These books allow students to read from authors and see characters of different backgrounds, where students might see their community, their religion, and themselves reflected in the text and where students might have the opportunity to experience cultures different from their own. Co-Teaching Teachers On Special Assignment (TOSAs) developed plans for teachers to use some of the books in their classrooms for literacy based instruction. Our TOSAs also facilitated a Family Literacy Night at each of our elementary sites to invite the community to review the new books, network, and experience staff readings of these books to students in the last week of November and first week of December. The list of these Board Approved books are listed below in Appendix D.

Our next library purchase will focus on adding diverse titles that allow our 6th-12th graders to see themselves reflected in texts and materials and to provide them the opportunity to learn about other cultures. This purchase is expected to take place Summer of 2023, prior to the 2023-24 school year. CAO's staff will gather student voice at the end of the year in order to measure the impact these books will have on students' perception of the materials provided that reflect their diversity.

Supplemental Instructional Materials

In addition to providing additional books in our classroom and school libraries, we have also formed a Supplemental Materials Work Group. NUSD's Supplemental Materials Work Group is creating a district wide process that supports teachers in vetting, approving, and identifying ways that class sets of diverse materials and resources can be effectively used in classrooms, aligned to state standards, representative of all students in NUSD, and vertically aligned across grade levels in NUSD. The group includes teachers (classroom and TOSAs) and administrators from across the district.

In alignment with AR0100, the collaboration between district and staff has been centered on actions that will provide equity and a continual focus on systematic access and academic support for all students. Part of this ongoing work includes adding "curriculum materials to augment or change the traditional textbooks' marginalization of people and groups." This ongoing collaboration with staff and labor partners ensures that the processes and procedures that we incorporate into district systems moving forward supports the goals outlined in the Theory of Action for Student Success.

One of the work group's goals is to provide recommendations for updates to NUSD's Board Policies (BP) and Administrative Regulations (AR) surrounding supplemental materials. The group is currently working to finalize a draft proposal in order to update the current BPs and ARs, as changes will need to be made to reflect our new processes. We expect that the new, recommended policies and regulations will be brought to the Board for review by the end of the 2022-23 school year.

Using the CCLI Process for: Writing Update

Informational Writing Pilot Assessments, Fall 2022 and Spring 2023

In the fall of 2022, our writing prompts were centered on our new science instructional materials for grades TK-8, while high school prompts had a focus on DEI. The purpose behind this design for the initial assessment was two-fold: first, we wanted to illustrate to staff ways to embed writing across content areas; and second, we wanted to highlight our newly adopted science curriculum with staff and students. Staff's intention in the design of the pilot phase writing assessment is to consistently and explicitly model literacy instruction both within English and Language Arts, but also through other subject areas. We believe writing instruction that happens throughout the day in all content areas will lead to increased outcomes for all students. In addition, having a districtwide writing assessment with aligned resources, such as rubrics, and professional development for teachers will impact our students' writing abilities.

As we have previously communicated and reported, results from the 2022 Fall Literacy assessment were promising: 13 schools showed increases in rubric scores from the pre to the post assessment. These initial results were used as a guidepost for continuing to move our literacy work forward. Because we used common prompts and common scoring rubrics, we were also able to see areas of improvement needed, for example, the lowest scoring area on the rubric in 5th grade across the district was citing and using evidence in text. This data should be informing writing instruction across 5th grade classrooms. But data from the literacy plan isn't just collected from students, but also from staff. With that in mind, a survey was sent to staff in December to reflect on the fall 2022 writing assessment.

Staff Input on the Pilot Informational Assessment

After assessing students in fall 2022, CAO's staff surveyed teachers to gather feedback on the initial implementation of a districtwide, on-demand writing assessment. Teachers provided the following feedback:

- Teachers thought prompts should vary year to year
- Teachers recommended prompts (listed here in order of votes) most closely aligned to DEI, Social Science, then Literature
- Staff want model writing lessons, scaffolds, and more options for exemplar papers
- Staff wanted professional development opportunities on developing instructional sequences to teach writing, teaching writing across content areas, and peer editing and revision strategies

Updating Writing Prompts for the Spring 2023 Assessment

Based on staff feedback and student data, staff pivoted on the proposed plans for the genre of the spring 2023 assessment. The plan for the pilot was to move to assessing the argumentative genre this spring. However, based on student writing scores and input from teachers and site administrators staff realized more time with informational writing was needed district wide across all grade levels. CAO's staff began to generate a new set of prompt questions for the spring literacy assessment. Based on that work, these prompts center on a reading from the new DEI library books that we have purchased, (please see Appendices A, B, and C to review prompts and see the titles of diverse texts being used) highlighting a different text for each grade level. These questions are vertically aligned, which means they increase in difficulty and complexity aligned to each grade level's standards, across grade levels on a single ELA content standard that focuses on the progression of skills between summary, theme, and author's purpose. The questions all center on a common standard that changes in complexity across grade levels, as shown below:

Grade Span	Question
TK-1	What does the character want you to know or believe?
2-4	What is the message of the story?
5-8	What is the theme of the story OR what is the central message of the book?
9, 11	What is the author's purpose in this story/excerpt?

In addition to staff feedback, after reviewing data from our initial assessment this past fall, we have made additional adjustments to the pilot based on student outcomes. One change is updating the writing prompts to include specific actions teachers will deliver to support teacher requests with more help to develop lesson plans for writing and to ensure students are better prepared for the writing. For example, in the upcoming informational writing assessment, students will be guided through reviewing "success criteria" or the best scores on the rubric during the prewriting stage so that they have clear ideas about what the expectations are. Not only will students be aware of their specific goals for writing, but teachers will be more aware of student expectations, which can help improve instructional focus in the future outside of this assessment. Another example is in primary elementary grades teachers will provide students with an opportunity to engage with the text prior to writing through a read-aloud. The prompts come with guidance on how to do the read-aloud and the resources. This ensures that students have a clear understanding of the content before they are asked to write about it. Finally, the prompt's directions guide teachers to utilize specific instructional strategies to ensure that students have the opportunity to collaborate and create meaning from the text prior to writing about it, such as pair-sharing and structured note-taking. These adjustments to the writing assessment will help ensure that students have all of the tools they need to write their best essays for the spring assessment as well as provide guidance to improving writing instruction outside of these assessment windows. This assessment can also be a guide to help implement different instructional strategies to be utilized in classrooms such as academic conversations and reviewing success criteria with students prior to their starting any work.

The pre-assessment took place from January 30 to February 24, 2023, with scores being reported from sites by March 10th. CAO's staff will provide updates to the Board as results become available. The post-assessment will take place from March 30 to April 28, 2023, with scores reported by May 19. Appendix B and C have samples of Spring 2023 assessment directions.

Launch of Argumentative (Opinion) Writing Pilot Assessment, Spring 2023

There are three genres or forms of academic writing in our state standards. We launched our district wide literacy work with informational writing. This year's pilot is providing feedback to guide the continuous implementation of our writing cycles, and we will begin to pilot the next form of writing, argumentative (called opinion in primary grade levels), later this spring.

Form of Writing	Purpose of Writing	Structural Differences	Emphasis on CAASPP by Grade Band
Informational	To provide information to the audience	Introduction, body, and conclusion sections	Grade 3-5: 35% Grades 6-8: 35% Grades 9-12: 40%
Argumentative	To convince the audience of your opinion	Introduction., body, and conclusion with a counter argument and synthesis of sources	Grade 3-5: 30% Grades 6-8: 35% Grades 9-12: 40%
Narrative	To provide a story	Contains a beginning, middle, and end	Grade 3-5: 35% Grades 6-8: 30%

In April and May, we are conducting a small group writing pilot for our next genre, argumentative writing. On a survey taken in fall, 47 teachers volunteered to participate in next steps with the Literacy Plan, and all have been invited to take part in drafting the argumentative rubric and piloting argumentative prompts with their students. This pilot will consist of a group of volunteer teachers pre-assessing argumentative writing within their classroom, providing explicit argumentative writing instruction, utilizing NUSD's draft argumentative writing rubrics to score student writing, and providing feedback on all parts of the pilot.

In the 2023-2024 school year, Natomas Unified plans to launch an argumentative writing pilot across the district written through DEI focused prompts.

Using the CCLI Process for: Professional Development

Staff Input on Professional Development

In this writing assessment, we were also able to determine, for example, that staff who attended an optional, literacy based professional development demonstrated more student writing growth. On a four-point scale, teachers who attended professional developments focused on writing demonstrated student growth of .61 versus .48 growth for teachers who did not attend any professional development focused on writing. With this in mind, we want to ensure we gather staff feedback about what motivates them to attend professional development, so we conducted another survey in December. We will continue to utilize teacher feedback and student outcome data to inform the development of our future professional development sessions.

Also, based on teacher feedback, work has also begun offering professional development opportunities that would incentivize a higher staff attendance. Co-Teaching TOSAs have worked to develop professional developments that staff requested and that student data required. TOSAs have already begun to deliver these options. As part of our CCLI process, in December of 2022, staff were invited to provide feedback on a survey about professional development in NUSD.

The staff responses highlighted 3 key findings:

- Staff prefers professional development sessions that last between 60-120 minutes (79% of respondents, 201 responses)
- Staff would prefer attending professional development sessions in the evening with a virtual format, such as zoom (65% of respondents, 189 responses)
- Teachers would be most motivated to attend professional developments on writing if they received additional pay for planning and prep (99% of respondents or 185 of 186 responses)

With these three data points in mind, as of February 1, 2023, there was a shift for the rest of this school year in our district-led, literacy, and DEI professional developments:

1. Attention will be given to offering District-led/developed PD sessions that are 60-120 minutes in length.
2. There will be DEI PD opportunities available via Zoom.
3. For every two hours in district-led, writing professional development outside of the school day, teachers will earn the 2 hours of pay (following the collective bargaining agreement) AND will earn an additional 1 hour of pay to take that learning and plan, outside of their contracted work day, how they will implement it in their classrooms. The purpose of this is for teachers to have time to take what they learned and build it into their instructional plans for students, so that students can experience an immediate impact from the professional development. This additional compensation for planning time will take effect for completion of NUSD offered writing focused PDs from January 9-June 30, 2023.

In addition to these shifts, various forms of other professional development are taking place for teachers. For example, high school teachers had the opportunity to go on classroom walks in elementary classrooms to observe writing instruction and begin to discuss vertical articulation of when specific skill development of

writing should happen for different grade levels. Teachers were able to collaborate on best practices and bring these strategies back to their own sites to incorporate into their writing lessons.

Communicating About the Literacy Plan

CAOs staff has partnered with the Communications and Family Engagement (CAFE) department in order to provide ongoing updates and information to all of our stakeholders, including parents, community members, students, and staff. This communication includes information about literacy, spotlights of students and teachers, and updates about the literacy plan. This has been a priority in the past several months. Below is a timeline and topics of the communication that has been shared:

Date	Title	Email/Video/Article	Source
2/25/22	Literacy Skills Major Focus of NUSD	District Updates Article	NUSD Website
10/24/22	Purpose and Introduction to the Literacy Plan	Email to Staff District Updates Article	NUSD Communications NUSD Website
10/28/22	Purpose and Introduction to the Literacy Plan	Article	NUSD Spotlight Newsletter
10/28/22	More PD Offerings Available for Certificated and Classified Staff Literacy Planning Writing & Literacy Scoring Information	Email to Staff	NUSD Communications
11/2/22	Literacy Spotlight Strong Writing Instruction	Article - Stand Alone	NUSD Spotlight Newsletter
11/4/22	Literacy Planning and Initial Work	District Updates Article	NUSD Website
11/8/22	What is a Writing Rubric and How is it Useful	Article - Stand Alone	NUSD Spotlight Newsletter
11/18/22	How to use a Rubric to Support Student Growth	Article	NUSD Spotlight Newsletter
12/1/22	Celebrating Writing Growth	Email to Staff	NUSD Communications NUSD Website
12/1/22	Celebrating Writing Growth as Part of major Focus on Literacy	Article - Stand Alone	NUSD Spotlight Newsletter
12/7/22	NUSD's Literacy Website	Article - Stand Alone	NUSD Spotlight Newsletter
12/9/22	Writing Focus	Email	NUSD Communications
1/13/23	Assessments Show Students' Academic Growth	Article	NUSD Spotlight Newsletter

Next Steps:

NUSD is committed to the Cycle of Continuous Learning and Improvement. During this Literacy Plan pilot, CAO's staff continue to look at data, engage with stakeholders, and reflect on the process, which leads to adjusting our implementation based on results. Our next steps reflect what we have learned from the fall pilot, and we will continue to adjust based on the results we see from our partners. This includes gathering feedback from students, in alignment with AR0100, after the spring informational writing assessment and throughout the 2023-24 school year about the effectiveness of incorporating culturally diverse prompts, resources, and library books within their schools, and the impact of that on the culture and sense of belonging students feel with their site.

In addition, one of our next steps learned from fall 2023 is to continue to reinforce that the district writing assessment is not just an assessment, but a tool to identify student needs and adjust instruction based on those needs. CAO's staff will continue to provide professional development that improves writing instruction, and the pre and post assessments will be tools to see student growth and plan next, best instructional steps based on student needs.

Utilizing the feedback from our small argumentative pilot in spring 2023, we plan to continue with a district wide pilot of argumentative writing next year while continuing our work in support students with informational writing. It is of note that professional development opportunities are not constrained to informational and argumentative texts, but are focused on supporting student mastery of California state standards. Several opportunities for training on informational writing have been added to the spring catalog, with additional opportunities planned including a professional development on creating model writing lessons and writing sequences. That being said, with the pilot argumentative writing prompts next year, we will have focused professional development opportunities for staff with at least usage of two SDER days in the 2023-2024 school

year for continued professional learning in writing including the differences between argumentative and informational forms of writing, and opportunities to better understand argumentative writing's components.

Several of our school sites are also utilizing various programs to support writing. This includes Writing AZ and Step Up to Writing. Staff will monitor the effectiveness of these programs on the writing focus based on student data, and will decide on next steps based on the program's effectiveness on students. Finally, staff will compare the writing results from pre assessment to post assessment, and will also compare these writing scores to student CAASPP performance tasks and CAT scores and diagnostic scores from IXL and iReady to determine the impact of our Literacy Plan. It is important to note that Natomas students will take the CAASPP in March and April, which is between our writing pre-assessment and summative assessment, and will be another datapoint of students' progress in writing.

Staff will continue to survey and meet with teachers to determine what professional developments would be most helpful in providing support for informational and argumentative writing, and will continue to offer these professional developments in 2023-2024. These professional development opportunities will be both embedded within contractual hours such as during the district wide professional development day, Staff Development, Early Release (SDER) days, and during our collaboration time on Wednesdays that can be utilized for professional development and will also be offered for additional pay outside of contractual hours.

Training will continue for administrators during site walks so that site leaders know what to look for in classrooms and can provide feedback to teachers that reinforce strong practices and help guide them as they work to continuously improve their instructional practices. Supporting administrators to be instructional leaders on their campuses will continue to improve this process.

So far this year, the CAFE department has highlighted teachers to provide positive examples of best practices around writing, and these messages will continue so we can spotlight the great work happening across the district in improving students' writing skills. Our next steps will be to continue identifying best practices and sharing them with all stakeholders through our ongoing communication plan. In addition, we will continue to celebrate successes as our students' writing proficiency increases over time.

As scores become available, staff will update the Board through ongoing communication with the scores of the spring writing assessments across the district.

CAO's staff will continue to provide updates to Trustees as we move forward.

Appendix A: Grade Level Prompt Overview

Grade Level	Prompt	Story Link
TK	Do your best to write and draw what the character of the story of <i>I Am Enough</i> wants us to know or believe. Use as many details as you can to describe what the character from <i>I Am Enough</i> wants us to know or believe.	I Am Enough Video
Kinder	Do your best to write and draw what the character of the story of <i>The Colors of Us</i> wants us to know or believe. Use as many details as you can to describe what the character from <i>The Colors of Us</i> wants us to know or believe.	The Colors of Us Video
1	Do your best to write and draw what the character of the story of <i>Sulwe</i> wants us to know or believe. Use as many details as you can to describe what the character from <i>Sulwe</i> wants us to know or believe.	Sulwe Video
2	Do your best to write about the message in <i>Islandborn</i> . Use as many details as you can to explain the message in <i>Islandborn</i> .	Islandborn Video
3	Do your best to write what the author's message was in writing, <i>We Are Water Protectors</i> . Be sure to give evidence as you describe the message of the story.	We Are Water Protectors Video
4	Do your best to describe the message in <i>Rosa</i> by Nikki Giovanni. Find evidence to support your ideas about the message of the story.	Rosa Video
5	Do your best to write, explaining a theme in <i>Todos Iguales/ All Equal: A Ballad of Lemon Grove</i> by Christy Hale. Use evidence to support your ideas.	Todos Iguales/ All Equal: A Ballad of Lemon Grove Video
6	Do your best to write, explaining a central message in, <i>Love Will See You Through: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Six Guiding Beliefs (as told by his niece)</i> by Angela Farris Watkins. Find evidence to support a central message in the text.	Love Will See You Through: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Six Guiding Beliefs Video
7	Do your best to write, explaining a theme from this excerpt from <i>Hidden Figures</i> by Margot Lee Shetterly. Use textual evidence to support your ideas.	Hidden Figures Excerpt
8	Do your best to write what the author's purpose was in writing <i>Maniac McGee</i> by Jerry Spinelli. Cite evidence as you describe what the theme was in writing <i>Maniac McGee</i> .	Maniac McGee Excerpt
9	Do your best to write what the author's purpose was in writing <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> . Cite evidence	The Curious Incident of the Dog in the

	as you describe what the author's purpose was in writing <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> .	<u>Night-Time</u> Excerpt
11	Do your best to write what the author's purpose was in writing <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i> . Cite evidence as you describe what the author's purpose was in writing <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i> .	<u>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</u> Excerpt

Grade 3 Informational Writing Prompt

Directions: The purpose of this writing assessment is to gauge progress of students' writing ability after the initial fall assessment and subsequent writing instruction. The assessment is to measure their mastery of the Common Core State Writing Standards, NOT their ability to recall content or information. Use the district informational writing rubric, [prior to the assessment](#), to communicate to students the expectations and success criteria for writing in their grade level standards. Students may use pre-writing tools (e.g. Thinking Map, Graphic Organizer, Four Square Writing Template, Pictures, etc.) to help them organize their ideas, but they may not receive help from the teacher or other students on building their ideas or their final writing product. The final writing product should be measured by grade level standards. Do not answer student questions about the prompt, but please do encourage them to do their best. **The writing assessment, after completing the instructional activities provided below, should take place in one 30-45 minute session. Pre-writing and resource analysis may take place in sessions prior to the writing assessment.** Any pre-writing work that is completed outside of the assessment session must be collected and re-distributed when needed to complete the assessment.

Prior to the Assessment: Please complete on a day prior to assessment day.

Resources: [Provide time for students to read, discuss, and share their ideas on these resources prior to the assessment](#)

- [We Are Water Protectors](#) Read Aloud
- [Rubric for pre and post](#)
- [Common Writing Terms Glossary](#)

Instructional Activities: [Complete these activities prior to the assessment](#)

1. "First, we are going to look at how to receive the best possible scores for your writing." Review the [Rubric](#) for this grade level with students.
2. Introduce the book linked in the resources above.
3. Tell students that today they will be gathering ideas on what the author's message is in *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom. Tell students they may take notes or draw pictures during this time to help them remember important ideas we discuss. Remind students they may use their notes or picture reminders when they write, but you will not be telling them what to add to their notes. Read the resource listed above as a class. Stop throughout the lesson to check for understanding, allow students to ask questions, and provide opportunities for students to share their ideas and discuss through Think-Pair-Share activities. Students may take notes or draw pictures as part of the prewriting process at this time. Please note that while students may add to their notes at this time, teachers should not be telling students what to write in their notes at any point in this process. They may use these notes on the day of the assessment.

Day of the Assessment:

Prompt:

The teacher says, "Today we will take a writing assessment to see how much you have grown in informational writing. We will read the story, *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom. While we read the story, we will ask ourselves, 'What is the message of this story?' You can take notes from the story, draw pictures, or anything you need to help you understand and remember the answer to the question 'What is the message of this story?'"

"First, we are going to look at how to receive the best possible scores for your writing."

****Review each [Rubric criteria of a 4](#) with students for Grade 3****

"Now, we will read the story, *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom. While we are reading, think to yourself, 'What is the message of this story?'"

****Play the YouTube video [We Are Water Protectors](#) by Carole Lindstrom****

"Now, talk to your neighbors, what is the message of the story? Why do you think that is a theme? Provide evidence for your arguments while you discuss this. You may take notes during the discussion."

****Provide a 5 minute turn and talk for students to discuss this.****

"Now, do your best to write what the author's message was in writing, *We Are Water Protectors*. Be sure to give evidence as you describe the message of the story. You may begin writing now."

****Provide 30-45 minutes for students to write.****

****Collect and keep all writing and pre-writing materials****

Grade 9 Informational Writing Prompt

Directions: The purpose of this writing assessment is to gauge progress of students' writing ability after the initial fall assessment and subsequent writing instruction. The assessment is to measure their mastery of the Common Core State Writing Standards, NOT their ability to recall content or information. Use the district informational writing rubric, [prior to the assessment](#), to communicate to students the expectations and success criteria for writing in their grade level standards. Students may use pre-writing tools (e.g. Thinking Map, Graphic Organizer, Four Square Writing Template, sketches, etc.) to help them organize their ideas, but they may not receive help from the teacher or other students on building their ideas or their final writing product. The final writing product should be measured by grade level standards. Do not answer student questions about the prompt, but please do encourage them to do their best. **The writing assessment, after completing the instructional activities provided below, should take place in one 60 minute session. Pre-writing and resource analysis may take place in sessions prior to the writing assessment.** Any pre-writing work that is completed outside of the assessment session must be collected and re-distributed when needed to complete the assessment.

Prior to the assessment: Please complete on a day prior to assessment day.

Resources: [Provide time for students to read, discuss, and share their ideas on this resource prior to the assessment](#)

- [The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time](#) Excerpt
- [Rubric for pre and post](#)
- [Common Writing Terms Glossary](#)

Instructional Activities: [Complete these activities prior to the assessment](#)

1. "First, we are going to look at how to receive the best possible scores for your writing."
Review the [Rubric](#) for this grade level with students.
2. Introduce the excerpt linked in the resources above.
3. Tell students that today they will be gathering ideas on what the author's message is in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Tell students they may take notes or draw pictures during this time to help them remember important ideas we discuss. Remind students they may use their notes or picture reminders when they write, but you will not be telling them what to add to their notes. Read the resource listed above as a class. Stop throughout the lesson to check for understanding, allow students to ask questions, and provide opportunities for students to share their ideas and discuss through activities like think-pair-share or a collaborative thinking map. Students may take notes or draw pictures, as taught during writing instruction, as part of the prewriting process. Please note that while students may add to their notes at this time, teachers should not be telling students what to write in their notes at any point in this process. They may use these notes on the day of the assessment.

Day of the assessment:

Prompt: The teacher says, "Today we will take a writing assessment to see how much you have grown in informational writing. We will read the story, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. This book is a fictional story about a young man with autism who begins journaling his experiences, and provides an ongoing view of his thoughts throughout the book. While we read the story, we will ask ourselves, 'What is the author's purpose in writing this story, or what does the author want the audience to know, do, or understand from reading this?' You can take notes from the story, draw pictures, or anything you need to help you understand and remember the answer to the question, 'What is the author's purpose in writing this story?'"

“First, I am going to remind you how to receive the best possible scores for your writing.”

****Review [Rubric score of a 4 with them for Grades 9-10.](#)****

“Now, we will listen to the story *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. While it is playing, think to yourself, ‘What is the author’s purpose in writing this story?’”

****Read the excerpt from [The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.](#)****

“Now, talk to your neighbors, ‘What is the author’s purpose in writing this book and what does the author want the audience to know, do, or understand based on this piece of writing?’ Provide evidence for your arguments while you discuss this. You may take notes during the discussion.”

****Provide a 5 minute turn and talk for students to discuss this.****

“Now, do your best to write what the author’s purpose was in writing *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Cite evidence as you describe what the author’s purpose was in writing *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.”

****Provide one full class period for students to write.****

****Collect and keep all writing and pre-writing materials.****

Appendix D: Books Purchased for PK-5 students for each site

Title	Grade Level	Recommended By:
A Boy Called Bat	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
A Different Pond	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
A Lady has the Floor: Belva Lockwood Speaks out for Women's Rights	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Aru Shah and the End of Time	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Be a King: Dr. Martin Luther King's Dream and You	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Before She Was Harriet	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Between the Lines: How Ernie Barnes Went from the Football Field to the Art Gallery	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Can I Touch Your Hair? Poems of Race, Mistakes, and Friendship	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Chef Roy Choi and the Street Food Remix	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Danza! Amalia Hernandez and the Ballet Folklórico de Mexico	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Every Month is a New Year: Celebrations Around the World	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Far Apart, Close in Heart: Being a Loved One when a Family Member is Incarcerated	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Jasmine Toguchi, Mochi Queen	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Let the Children March	2-4	Common Sense Media, Chicago Schools from Follett
Malala's Magic Pencil	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
My Beautiful Birds	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Not So Different: What You Really Want to Ask about Having a Disability	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Ruth Bader Ginsburg: the Race of R.B.G. vs Inequality	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Seeing Into Tomorrow	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Shaking Things Up: 14 Young Women who Changed the World	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Silent Days, Silent Dreams	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Stella Diaz has Something to Say	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
The World Is Not a Rectangle: a Portrait of Architect Zaha Hadid	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett
Young, Gifted, and Black: Meet 52 Black Heroes from Past and Present	2-4	Chicago Schools from Follett

The Undefeated	2-4	Studies Weekly, Common Sense Media
Fall in Line, Holden!	3-5	Studies Weekly
Indian Shoes	3-5	CCRTL
Lupe Wong Won't Dance	3-5	CCRTL
A Good Kind of Trouble	3-5	Common Sense Media
Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round: My Story of the Making of MLK Day	3-5	Common Sense Media
American Immigration: Our History, Our Stories	3-5	Common Sense Media
Black Brother, Black Brother	3-5	Common Sense Media
Blended	3-5	Common Sense Media
Bud, Not Buddy	3-5	Common Sense Media
Chasing Freedom: The Life Journeys of Harriet Tubman and Susan B. Anthony, Inspired by Historical Facts	3-5	Common Sense Media
Clean Getaway	3-5	CCRTL, Common Sense Media
Fast Pitch	3-5	Common Sense Media
Finding Junie Kim	3-5	Common Sense Media
Front Desk: Book 1	3-5	Common Sense Media
Kid Activist: True Tales of Childhood from Champions of Change	3-5	Common Sense Media
Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History	3-5	Common Sense Media
Little Leaders: Exceptional Men in Black History	3-5	Common Sense Media
Love Will See You Through: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Six Guiding Beliefs	3-5	Common Sense Media
Merci Suarez Can't Dance: Merci Suarez Book 2	3-5	Common Sense Media
My Name is Truth: The Life of Sojourner Truth	3-5	Common Sense Media
New Kid, Book 1	3-5	Common Sense Media
Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness	3-5	Common Sense Media
Stella by Starlight	3-5	Common Sense Media
The Journey of Little Charlie	3-5	Common Sense Media
The Only Black Girls in Town	3-5	Common Sense Media
The Parker Inheritance	3-5	Common Sense Media
Todos Iguales/All Equal: A Ballad of Lemon Grove	3-5	Common Sense Media
We Rise, We Resist, We Raise our Voices	3-5	Common Sense Media
Wishtree	3-5	Common Sense Media, Chicago

		Schools from Follett
Hidden Figures	3-7	Common Sense Media, Chicago Schools from Follett
The Blossoming Universe of Violet Diamond	3-7	CCRTL
Benny Doesn't Like to Be Hugged	K-3	Studies Weekly
Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story	K-3	Studies Weekly
Milo's Museum	K-3	CCRTL
Grandmother's Visit	K-3	Studies Weekly
Hair Love	K-3	CCRTL
All Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom	K-3	Common Sense Media
Freedom Over Me: Eleven Slaves, Their Lives, and Dreams Brought to Life	K-3	Common Sense Media
I Am Martin Luther King Jr.: Ordinary People Changing the World	K-3	Common Sense Media
Ida B. Wells: Discovering History's Heroes	K-3	Common Sense Media
Malcolm Little: The Boy Who Grew Up to Become Malcolm X	K-3	Common Sense Media
Nelson Mandela	K-3	Common Sense Media
Saving American Beach	K-3	Common Sense Media
The First Step: How One Girl Put Segregation on Trial	K-3	Common Sense Media
The Legendary Miss Lena Horne	K-3	Common Sense Media, Chicago Schools from Follett
The Youngest Marcher: The True Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks: A Young Civil Rights Activist	K-3	Common Sense Media
Why?: A Conversation About Race	K-3	Common Sense Media
Your Legacy: A Bold Reclaiming of our Enslaved History	K-3	Common Sense Media
I Love Saturdays	K-3	CCRTL
Islandborn	K-3	CCRTL, Studies Weekly
Mango, Abuela, and Me	K-3	Studies Weekly
Drawn Together	PK-3	Studies Weekly
Eyes That Kiss in the Corners	PK-3	Studies Weekly
I Am Every Good Thing	PK-3	Studies Weekly
My Papi has a Motorcycle	PK-3	Studies Weekly
Noah Chases the Wind	PK-3	Studies Weekly
We Are Water Protectors	PK-3	CCRTL, Studies Weekly

Alma and How She Got Her Name	PK-3	Studies Weekly
Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut	PK-3	CCRTL, Chicago Schools from Follett
I Talk Like a River	PK-3	Studies Weekly
Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match	PK-3	Studies Weekly
Sulwe	PK-3	Studies Weekly
Thank You, Omu!	PK-3	Studies Weekly
Alfie: (The Turtle that Disappeared)	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
All of Us	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Anybody's Game: Kathryn Johnston, the First Girl to Play Little League Baseball	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Bilal Cooks Daal	PK/TK - K	Studies Weekly
Birdsong	PK/TK - K	Studies Weekly
Cece	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Celebrating Differences	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Even Superheroes Have Bad Days	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Feel the Beat	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Festival of Colors	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Green Pants	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Hello Hello	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Hip-Hop Lollipop	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
How to Say... I Love You in Five Languages	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Think Big	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Julian is a mermaid	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Living in... Russia	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Most People	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Music is...	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Not-so-Lucky-Lefty	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Rescue & Jessica: a Life-Changing Relationship	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Ruby's Chinese New Year	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
She Persisted	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
Space Heroes	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
The Girl who Thought in Pictures	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
We Are Family	PK/TK - K	Chicago Schools from Follett
I Got Good Hair	PK/TK - K	CCRTL

Don't Touch My Hair	PK/TK - K	Common Sense Media
Jazz Age Josephine	PK/TK - K	Common Sense Media
Rosa	PK/TK - K	Common Sense Media
Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story about Racial Injustice	PK/TK - K	Common Sense Media
The Day You Begin	PK/TK - K	CCRTL, Studies Weekly, Common Sense Media