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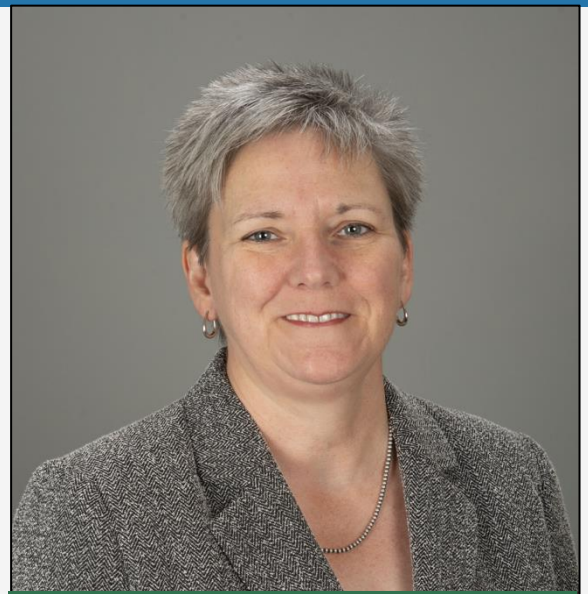
BALTIMORE CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Revolutionizing Writing Instruction Baltimore City Public Schools

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Dr. Mary Weller- Director, Science

PRESENTATION SPEAKERS



Dr. Mary Weller
Director, Science



Jaclyn Giddens
Special Assistant

BOARD FOCUS AREAS

Students with Diverse Learning Needs	Improve services and outcomes for students with disabilities and diverse learning needs.
School Portfolio Strategy	Evaluate and revise our School Portfolio Strategy to ensure meaningful, high-quality options that are the preferred choice for Baltimore students and families.
School Climate and Student Well-being	Cultivate school environments that are safe, promote belonging, and nurture the whole child.
More High-Performing Schools	Increase the number of Baltimore schools that are consistently performing at a high level and delivering high-quality academic outcomes.

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS: AT A GLANCE

2025-26 SCHOOLS & PROGRAMS

159				
Total Schools and Programs				
1	40		71	4
Pre-K/Kindergarten School	Elementary Schools		Elementary/Middle Schools	Middle Schools
9	24		1	9
Middle/High Schools	High Schools		Elementary/Middle/High School	Programs (not schools)
Staff Data				
9,823			5,298	
Total Staff			Teachers	



“Revolutionizing” Writing Instruction

Our goal was to build coherent writing instruction across City Schools.

Why We Started The Writing Revolution (TWR)

THE PROBLEM

Overall, ELA scores had been a persistent struggle, and we didn't have a strong, dedicated focus on writing.

THE INSIGHT

Writing is a critical skill that has to be developed across **every** content area, not just ELA.

THE CHALLENGE

Making that shift meant teachers would need real, sustained support and resources, not just a new expectation.

Building the Foundation

Cross-content workgroup Content directors from across offices-including Special Education and Multilingual Learners- came together to lead the work.

Recruited "Revolutionaries" Teacher leaders recruited across schools to champion the work, develop resources and model practices for peers.

Trained directly by TWR The workgroup and revolutionaries were trained by The Writing Revolution team itself.

NOT ANOTHER NEW THING

TWR strategies and resources were embedded directly into our existing HQIM, strengthening what we already had and reinforced through ongoing, vertically aligned professional learning.

Rollout & Early Momentum



Where We Started

Launched in designated grade levels across ELA and Science.

Proof of Practice (PoP) Sites

Additional support, monthly meetings and school visits to refine the work, data collection and analysis.

A Standout Early Mover

The science team leaned in early and deeply driving some of our strongest implementation.

K-12 Science Implementation

Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA)

MISA is administered annually in March to students in grades 5 & 8 and at the end of high school Biology. Students engage with novel, real-world problems to demonstrate *sensemaking* through application of science knowledge and science practice.

01

City Schools MISA proficiency rates historically lag behind the overall state proficiency rates by about 20% across the tests.

02

Each student is faced with eight (8) open-ended constructed responses (CR) questions worth either 2 or 3 points.

03

Analysis of 2024 and 2025 data showed most student responses to 3-point CRs in grades 5 and 8 were scored as either 0 or 1.

Integrating TWR Strategies within Science Instructional Materials

The project launched in 2025 focused on grades K, 3, 5, 8, and 9 (Biology).



Developmentally appropriate writing skills support accurate science content within the lesson.

Students practice sentence level, paragraph level, and revision strategies.

Students develop strategies for independently organizing and communicating their scientific knowledge.

REVOLUTIONIZED Elementary Science Example of *Because, But, So*

4th Grade Unit 3 Lesson 11: Domino Energy

Objective & Overview:
Students will be able to develop and use a domino model to describe and predict the changes in kinetic and potential energy.

- When a domino is standing, it has potential energy. When the domino falls, its potential energy is converted to kinetic energy.

Prompt: How do dominoes model and predict changes in kinetic and potential energy?

Stem: Dominoes model changes in energy.

Student Copy

Dominoes model changes in energy because _____

Dominoes model changes in energy but _____

Dominoes model changes in energy so _____

Stem: Dominoes model changes in energy.

Answer Key

Dominoes model changes in energy because they have potential energy when standing and kinetic energy when falling.

Dominoes model changes in energy but the total energy stays the same.

Dominoes model changes in energy so you can predict how energy changes in other situations.

Use the oceanic food web to answer the following question.

Applied "because, but, so" strategy

Choose one organism in the food web and name two other organisms that are not directly connected to it. Explain how those organisms would be affected if the organism you chose were removed from the food web.

Student Copy

Stem: The zooplankton has an indirect effect on the penguins.

The zooplankton has an indirect effect on the penguins because _____.

The zooplankton has an indirect effect on the penguins but _____.

The zooplankton has an indirect effect on the penguins so _____.

Answer Key

Stem: The zooplankton has an indirect effect on the penguins.

The zooplankton has an indirect effect on the penguins because penguins eat fish and krill which eat zooplankton.

The zooplankton has an indirect effect on the penguins but penguins are more directly impacted by fish, krill, and squid.

The zooplankton has an indirect effect on the penguins so zooplankton is important to the health and stability of the entire food web.

Braided District Supports in SY 25-26

COACHES

Full day training during Coaches Institutes

Monthly inputs

Full TWR Platform Membership

TWR course enrollment options

LEADERS

June Leadership

Writing for Leaders

Opportunity to be proof of practice sites

TWR course enrollment options

TEACHERS

Cycles of Professional Learning & year-long arcs for resourced grades/courses.

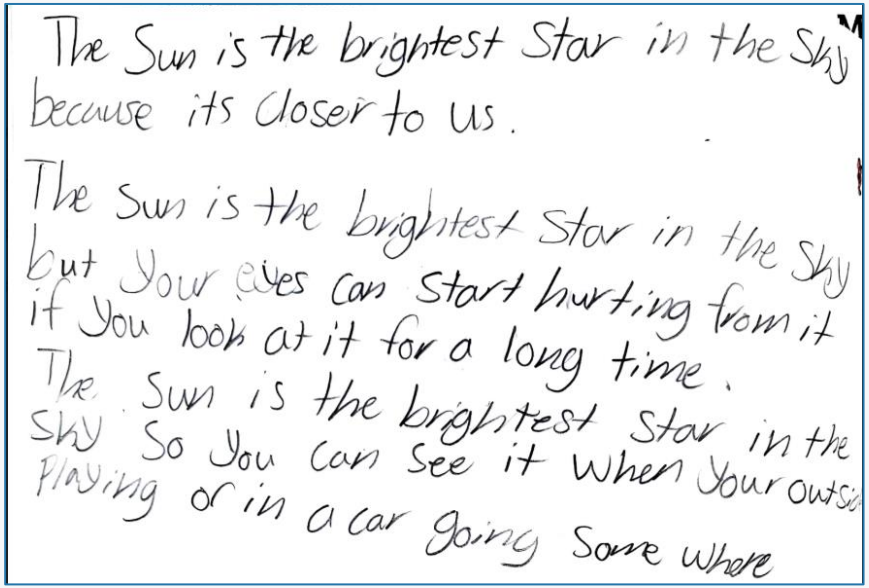
Support from Literacy Coaches

TWR course enrollment options

Student Thinking Made Visible

Written responses reveal students' understanding about important science concepts while simultaneously building skill to write clearly and conventionally.

Teacher feedback can be aimed to strengthen thinking and support students' revisions.


The Sun is the brightest Star in the Sky because its closer to us.

The Sun is the brightest Star in the Sky but Your eyes can Start hurting from it if You look at it for a long time.

The Sun is the brightest Star in the Sky So You can See it When Your outsi Playing or in a car going Some Where

Implementation Feedback

"I can apply the Sentence Expansion strategy in my Biology classroom through Do Nows, lab conclusions, and exit tickets to strengthen students' scientific writing and academic discourse. This strategy supports students in moving from simple claims to evidence-based explanations using cause-and-effect reasoning. I can also share this approach with during collaborative planning to support cross-curricular writing development."

High School Science Teacher, May 2026

Implementation Feedback

The ”Because, But, So” strategy helped me apply evidence better in my science writing.

-8th Grade Student

My 3rd Grade WIDA Levels 1-2 (students) were able to write complete, simple sentences with science vocabulary which helped for their final tests.

-Elementary Educator

I love the concept about sentence kernels. It (sic) would definitely help…my students develop the concepts they need to understand.

-Middle School Educator

2026 MISA Results

After initial implementation in SY 25-26, gaps remain in overall MISA proficiency rates, but there are promising results within the constructed response portion of the test.

Elementary

Overall decrease in the percentage of student responses scored 0.

PoP Elementary School

The percentage of student responses scored as 0 decreased about 23% on average.

Middle School

Overall decrease in the percentage of student responses marked as "Refusal."

Looking Ahead

Writing Instruction

Harnessing the Science of Learning

Writing helps students:

- understand and retain information,
- acquire familiarity with the complex syntax of written language, and
- develop analytical abilities.

01

Embed writing in content.

Provides students something to write about AND reinforces important knowledge.

02

Focus feedback on ideas first.

Focuses on the practical application of grammatical concepts concretizes the abstract.

03

Leverage deliberate practice.

Divides the skill into manageable chunks to be practiced and stored in long-term memory.

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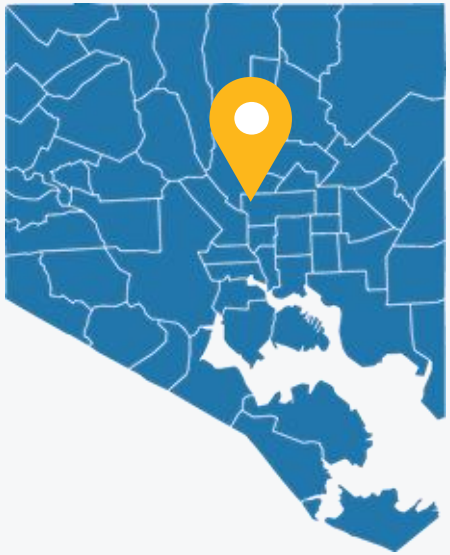
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Thank You!

Questions?

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