Secondary Education
Writing to Learn Expectations
2015 – 2016

Purpose: Nonfiction writing increases student achievement across all content areas, including on multiple-choice state tests.

Research: Effective non-fiction writing was a key finding of the seminal 90/90/90 schools (90% poverty, 90% minority, and 90% of students exceeding standards) research, highlighting the important characteristics of these successful schools. This valuable practice has proved to be sustainable over many years. We know that writing enhances learning because it deepens thinking.

More specifically - from <u>Research Matters:</u> "What Are the Effects of Writing-to-Learn Programs?" by Rick VanDeWeghe

"Implications for practice:
- We can, indeed, expect students to learn content better if we incorporate writing to learn in our instructional practices.
- We should use more metacognitive prompts. We might for example, ask students, "what are you sure you understand about X, and what are you still puzzled about?"
- We need to be patient for writing-to-learn results to appear because students become more skilled at metacognitive writing over time.
- We need to have them write often, because frequent write-to-learn activities will help them become more effective learners.
- The actual writing tasks need not be long. Shorter, more frequent opportunities to write about learning are better.
- If we do provide feedback, it should be the kind that supports and extends students' metacognition--for example, "That's an interesting thought about Ophelia, What made you think about her in that way?"

More evidence supporting writing in content area classrooms can be found in <u>Writing Matters in Every Classroom</u> pages 36 – 38.

Expectations for Secondary Teachers
How will we increase writing?
- **Write daily in each class (Writing to Learn strategies can be used for this…)**
    - Modifications for Physical Education/Performance-Based Classes – one day per week
- **Paragraph Writing – Students will produce one piece of extended/paragraph writing per month. Teachers will score and provide feedback to students each month.**
    - Scoring: 0 – 4 using the Paragraph Rubric (sharing the paragraph checklist with students as well)
    - Record scores monthly using Mastery Connect
    - Bldg Principal/Writing Team/BLT to determine school-wide remediation focus
- **Argumentative Writing On-Demand (cold write)**
    - <u>High School</u>: Argumentative Prompt from ACT+Writing released prompts (30-minute timed), School-wide 2 times per school year prior to District-Choice ACT (date/class period TBD by BLT)
    - <u>Middle School</u>: Argumentative Prompt from ACT Writing released prompts (30-minute timed), 8th grade during 2nd semester (date/class period TBD by BLT)
    - Scored by ELA teachers or collaboratively by whole staff (BLT discussion/decision)
    - Bldg Principal/Writing Team/BLT to determine school-wide remediation focus
    - *<u>Middle School ELA</u>: Caulkins Writing Benchmarks per the Assessment Schedule (6 essay cold writes total)*

Professional Development & Support
- Building-based PD needs to be determined by BLT. The introduction of 16 Writing to Learn Strategies and scoring the Paragraph Writing was provided by the Writing to Learn teams in 2014 – 2015. Collaborative scoring professional development will be provided to the Writing to Learn teams during 2015 – 2016.