



2018 MICHIGAN SCHOOLS PARTICIPATION PACKET

www.dtwtdetroit.com



Dear Michigan Middle School Teachers,

All across America, students like yours are rising to the challenge of doing something to end youth violence. The Do the Write Thing (DTWT) essay **“Challenge”** gives middle school students an opportunity to examine the impact of violence on their lives and to communicate in written form what they think should be done to reduce youth violence. Personal responsibility is emphasized. By encouraging students to make personal commitments to do something about the problem, the program ultimately seeks to give them the opportunity to break the cycles of violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. Your involvement and support are crucial to the success of the **“Challenge”** in your school.

Please review the attached material concerning program rules, entry deadline, selection criteria, classroom discussion, and student recognition before presenting the program to your students. In this packet, you will find a variety of helpful information to administer the essay challenge at your school. This packet includes:

- Program rules
- School level selection criteria
- Common Core Standards
- Local and National Recognition Ceremonies
- School Application
- Research on the DTWT Program completed by the University of Texas at El Paso
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP) campaign on “Changing Minds” dovetails with the DtWT Challenge
- Student and Parent/Guardian Consent Statement
- Sample lesson plans
- Writing Rubric

Your school’s essays need to be received by our program’s Host School, Flagship Charter Academy, by Friday, March 30, 2018. The following is the address to mail all essays, including your school’s two finalists’ essays.

Do the Write Thing (DTWT) Essay Challenge
Attn: Zemen Marrugi
Flagship Charter Academy
13661 Wisconsin Street
Detroit, MI 48238

Please contact me at (586) 350-6336 or at info@zemenmarrugi.com if you have any questions about the Do the Write Thing essay challenge. A list of all participating schools will be posted on our website www.dtwtdetroit.com.

Regards,

Zemen Marrugi, M.Ed.
Michigan DTWT Chair



Essay Challenge Guidelines

Classroom discussion is not mandatory for participation in the “**Challenge**”. However, over the years we have found that students and their teachers gain much from the bonding that can result from the exchanges about the impact of youth violence that occur in pre-writing classroom discussions. Teachers have indicated that they are amazed at the openness and honesty of these classroom discussions. They also indicate that these discussions present excellent opportunities to identify and prevent youth problems before they reach crisis proportions. Many of the teachers whose classes have participated in the “**Challenge**” in the past have invited outside speakers knowledgeable about youth violence issues to lead pre-writing discussions. Other teachers have provided their students with selected readings or newspaper articles about violence in advance of the discussion to stimulate thought. Speakers or articles, which emphasize personal responsibility on the part of students for responding to the problem of violence, have proven to be particularly useful.

Common Core Standards

The Do the Write Thing essay challenge has been reviewed by a panel of highly qualified public school teachers for compliance with Common Core standards. The “**Challenge**” meets the English Language Arts Standards in Writing for Grades 7 and 8. (Standards W.7.1 through W.7.10 and W.8.1 through W.8.10) Please note that we have determined Standards W.7.2 and W.8.2 to only be applicable to nonfiction submissions.

Essay Criteria

- Student entries, at minimum, should address the follow three questions: **How has violence affected my life? What are the causes of youth violence? What can I do about youth violence?**
- All Michigan middle schools in 6th, 7th and 8th grades are eligible to participate.
- Students may use any form of written expression (e.g. essays, poems, plays or songs) if the language is positive and not derogatory.
- Students may submit only one entry per year.
- All entries must be the work product of only one student.
- All entries must be non-fiction.
- Entries should be written in English and approximately 500 to 1000 words in length. Written forms of expression such as poetry that by its nature may be shorter, may contain fewer than 500 words.
- If the student participant uses a quotation or another person's material in his or her entry, the entry must identify whose work is being used by citing the person's name or citing the source of the material. Writings based upon plagiarism will not advance in the selection process.
- Entries must have a consent statement signed by the participating student and a parent or guardian. Entries without a signed consent statement will not advance in the selection process.
- No personal information should appear on the body of the written entry.
- Entries must be submitted in the form that they are received from the student writer. Editing for content, grammar or spelling by someone other than the student is not permitted. ¹

¹ Teachers, please send us the writings and the consent statements of all of the students that submit an essay. In this program, everybody who makes a good-faith effort to participate deserves to be recognized and have his or her work considered in the selection process.



Selecting School Finalists

- Each school selects two finalists (one male and one female). The two school finalists' essays must be typed: black ink, 12 size font on 8 ½ x 12 paper. No handwritten submissions will be considered for the National Ambassador award. Only one side of the paper may be used and the pages should be numbered.
- The names of each school's male and female finalists will be published in this year's Do the Write Thing Book of Writings. The names of the school finalists will also be recognized on the Detroit Do the Write Thing website.
- All school finalists will be recognized at the regional recognition ceremony at the Library of Michigan. Information regarding ceremony will be shared with each school that participates.
- A school needs to provide a minimum of 100 student essays for their two school finalists to be considered for the National Ambassador Award. Schools cannot combine their essays with another school's essay numbers.
- All student essays must be received by **Friday, March 30, 2018** at the following address:

Attn: Zemen Marrugi
Flagship Charter Academy
13661 Wisconsin Street
Detroit, MI 48238

Selection Criteria for National Ambassador

Entries will be reviewed by the “Do the Write Thing” Committee, the coalition of business, community and governmental leaders that oversees and administers the “**Challenge**” in Detroit. In their writings, students should be encouraged to describe what they feel are the causes of youth violence **and** to offer specific suggestions about what they as individuals can do to reduce violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. Personal responsibility for responding to the problem of youth violence should be emphasized. Students should be encouraged to share personal experiences about the impact of violence on their lives and the lives of their peers. The panel of judges in your area will be looking at how well your students present their views on these matters.

The two National Ambassadors from Michigan along with each student's teacher and one parent or guardian will be invited by the **National Campaign to Stop Violence** to attend the “**Do the Write Thing Challenge**” National Recognition Week activities in Washington, D.C. in July of 2018.

During past National Recognition Weeks, National Ambassadors have met with United States Supreme Court Judges and clerks, the United States Secretary of Education, the Attorney General of the United States, the United States Secretary of Interior, Members of Congress and many notable celebrities to discuss the problem of youth violence. A highlight of the National Recognition Week is placing this year's Book of the Writings in the Library of Congress, ensuring that the students' words will be available to for future generations. In addition, students have been honored at embassy receptions hosted by the State of Kuwait.

Additional Resources: Videos

Bullying video to use as an anticipatory set: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rGtYs8cRhs>

Do the Write Thing 20th Anniversary: <http://www.dtwtdetroit.com/>



Do the Write Thing (DTWT) Michigan School Application

School Information:

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

School's Main Phone No: _____

Principal's Name: _____

Principal's Email: _____

DTWT Teacher Representative Information:

Teacher's Full Name: _____

Teacher's Phone No: _____ *Personal Mobile No: _____

School Email: _____

Personal Email: _____

Student Essay Information:

Grades of Students that Participated in the DTWT Essay Challenge: _____

(Only students in 6th, 7th and 8th Grade will qualify for the National Ambassador Award.)

Number of Students that participated in the class discussion about ending youth violence: _____

Number of Student essays being submitted from your school: _____

(Only schools with a minimum of 100 student essays submitted will qualify for the National Ambassador Award.)

School's DTWT Student Finalists (The school finalists' essays must be typed):

Female Student Finalist: _____

Home Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone No.: _____

Parent Name: _____ Phone No.: _____

Male Student Finalist: _____

Home Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone No.: _____

Parent Name: _____ Phone No.: _____



Benefits of the “Do the Write Thing” Challenge Program

During National Recognition Week 2014, researchers from the University of Texas at El Paso interviewed the students, parents and teachers who were in attendance. The purpose was to conduct research on how the “Do the Write Thing” Challenge Program affects its participants. Below are some of the outcomes.

Students

- Greater empathy and understanding for victims of violence
- Increased tolerance and less judgmental for differences of people
- Increased communication with peers and family members instead of reverting to violence
- More positive behaviors and attitudes towards peers and teacher
- More motivated to report violence to teachers and encouraged others to do the same
- Standing up for themselves to gain confidence
- More often reporting bullying and similar behaviors to adults and more aware of the importance of doing so
- Reaching out to kids who do not have friends and are often bullied
- Greater motivation to intervene, especially in bullying situations
- Believe they can make a difference
- Awareness that they can do things differently instead of using violent solutions

Parents

- Better understanding of the impact of violence on their children
- Increased communication with sons, daughters and other family members
- Much more aware of child’s concerns
- Improved communication at home with children and spouse
- Greater understanding of violence in the school and community
- Monitoring their children more in their neighborhoods to see what they are doing
- Want to see more schools and students involved in DtWT
- Interested in creating projects to help children with problems related to violence

Teachers

- Increased knowledge about their students leading to 1) attitudinal changes and 2) adapting their instruction
- Established mutually trusted relationships with students
- Awareness of how students became more tolerant, less discriminating and less hostile towards others
- Greater tolerance and compassion for students as a result of discussions and essays
- Change teaching modes including using writing as a preventive measure
- More healing and bonding of families
- More closely monitoring student behavior regarding bullying
- Teaching their students to not be by-standers

Research Team: Drs. Josefina V. Tinajero, Professor & DtWT Chair; Sarah Peterson, Associate Professor; Rick Myer, Professor and Craig Williams Association Professor, UT El Paso.

The “Do the Write Thing” Challenge Program Can Change Minds

The “Changing Minds” campaign is sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. According to OJJDP, in 2015, 60% of all American youth were exposed to violence, crime or abuse. Based on scientific research from Harvard, the research reveals that a child’s positive and negative experiences literally shape and reshape the brain. The more a child witnesses violence, the more neural connections are created in the regions of the brain that involve fear, anxiety and impulsiveness...while fewer are created in regions that involve reasoning, planning and behavior control. This increased stress can lead to “long-term behavioral and physiological disorders” including depression, drug abuse, diabetes, stroke and inflammation patterns.

However, the young brain is malleable. Fostering stable, supportive relationships can prevent or help reverse this damage, resulting in lifelong benefits for the child’s learning, behavior and overall health.

“Do the Write Thing” Challenge is a proven program that can mitigate the negative impact of violence on a child when teachers, educators and volunteers open pathways using the “Five Gestures” suggested by OJJDP to help heal a child.

CELEBRATE

- Publicly recognize and praise children
- Encourage children to try new things and teach them about being kind and helpful to others
- Engage children in open ended thinking
- Encourage positive interactions between children and their peers and teachers

COMFORT

- Offer children safe ways to express their feelings and ideas
- Help children empathize and take others’ perspectives
- Expand children’s network of consistently caring adults

LISTEN

- Encourage children to express their feelings and thoughts
- Be open to their ideas and opinions
- Help children to express their experiences and make sense of them
- Allow them to share their story without interruptions
- Create processes that allow students a chance to share and be heard

COLLABORATE

- Encourage children to think ahead by discussing challenges they would face in carrying out their plans and help them consider how they can prevent or solve them
- Guide students to first identify and understand their obstacles, communicate how they are feeling and describe the problems in their own words
- Acknowledge children’s problem-solving attempts whether or not the attempts are successful

INSPIRE

- Encourage children to spend time with other caring adults who can act as role models
- Help children develop strategies to bring them closer to short and long-term goal success
- Support children’s abilities to speak up when things go wrong or when they are victimized
- Help them become advocates for change

“DO THE WRITE THING CHALLENGE”

COVER SHEET AND STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT STATEMENT

Please Type (Preferred) or Print Legibly in Black/Blue Ink

Thank you for participating in the “Do the Write Thing Challenge.” To have your entry considered for selection as a Student National Ambassador, you and a parent or guardian must complete this Cover Sheet and sign the Student and Parent/Guardian Consent Statement below.

Student’s First Name: _____ **Student’s Last Name:** _____

School: _____ **Student’s Phone Number:** _____

Grade: _____ **Parent’s Full Name:** _____ **Parent’s Phone Number:** _____

Student’s Home Address: _____

School’s Phone Number: _____ **Student’s Gender:** _____

Teacher’s Full Name: _____ **Teacher’s Phone Number:** _____

Teacher’s Email Address: _____

STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT STATEMENT

The National Campaign to Stop Violence (NCSV), which sponsors the “Do the Write Thing Challenge,” will publish selected students writings and quotations in a book and in a discussion paper on youth violence. Before publishing your writing, the NCSV requires your written consent and the written consent of a parent or guardian. If you and your parent or guardian agree to permit the NCSV to publish your writing, please sign the statement following: We agree to give ownership of the attached student writing to the National Campaign to Stop Violence so that it can be considered for recognition and published. The NCSV may further disclose the writing to the media and other parties as part of their national program. As writings including factual life experiences may receive favorable response from the judges we ask that the parent/guardian attest that the writing is either true to the best of their knowledge or has been labeled as fictional.

Student’s Signature Date

Parent’s Signature Date

Student’s Email Address

Parent’s Email Address

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Do the Write Thing Lesson Plans
By Carla M. Furcron

Objective:

SWBAT identify instances of violence and its effects on themselves and others.

SWBAT write an essay about youth violence which includes their experiences and possible solutions to the problem of youth violence.

Materials:

Do The Write Thing Book of Writings; pictures from Lansing and Washington, DC

Bullying-Don't Be Such a Nerd (YouTube video)

Procedures:

DAY 1:

If possible, present in an assembly including the entire grade level to introduce the program. If not, present to my own class.

Open by sharing with students that young people are making strides in many areas that in the past was not the case. (Examples: Young people raising money to help those who are sick or less fortunate; young people starting businesses to earn money for college; young adults running for and winning political offices).

Continue by discussing how many young people are taking responsibility for improving their school and community environments by taking a stand against violence. Introduce the Do the Write Thing program as a way that they can be a part of that movement.

Show the slide show of the students they know who have been recognized as National Ambassadors in the Do the Write Thing essay challenge and tell them that they will have the opportunity to participate as well. Share with students the questions they will write about.

Respond to student questions about the program before closing.

DAY 2:

Show video in class, stopping before the resolution is revealed and allow students to discuss, first with a partner or small group and then with the group at large, what they think they would do in the position of the characters.

Possible discussion starters:

What do you think each student (the bully, the victim & the bystander) is thinking or feeling?

What do you think you would do in each person's place?

After the group discussion, remind students that bullying, even if no one is physically hit, is an act of violence. Allow students to share other examples of violence and start a list of students' contributions. Close by asking students to think about how we perceive violence with our senses.

DAY 3:

Open the session with the previous day's question: How do we perceive violence with our senses?

In the past, students have been able to readily cite that we can see someone being hit or we feel pain when someone hits us, so give one or two examples of how the other senses are involved when violence occurs. (Perhaps a person might remember the smell of the gravel on the playground when someone was picking on them; they might remember the sound of voices calling them mean names, etc.)

Again allow a few minutes for group discussion and then time for students to share their responses with the entire class.

DAY 4

On this day, students will be asked to think about their own personal experiences or the experiences of someone they may know with violence. Because, the subject can be upsetting to students, remind students they are not required to share aloud. If a student doesn't have/doesn't want to revisit a personal experience, allow them to think of an image they have seen from a movie or just on the street that elicited a feeling from them.

What were the circumstances that led to the violence?

Who was involved?

Did anyone intervene to try to stop the violence? If so, how?

What was the outcome?

Focus the day's discussion more on what led to resulting violence. Allow students to have "free reign" in terms of describing why violence occurred. Also allow students to respond to each other and ask each other questions. Record student responses.

DAY 5

Students will focus on one incident or period of violence that they have experienced or witnessed for the purpose of writing about the situation. Students will be assured that their writing will go no further than the teacher if they do not want to submit for the DTWT essay challenge. Students will begin their essays in class and may assist each other as they write. Students will be given the weekend to complete their essays if they do not finish in class.

Those students who would like to, may read their essays to the class before they are submitted.

Student Name _____

**Do the Write Thing (DTWT)
Essay Challenge Rubric**

| Does the essay answer the following questions? | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. How has youth violence affected your life? | | |
| 2. What are the causes of youth violence? | | |
| 3. What can I do about youth violence? | | |
| Have all of the following requirements been met? | | |
| 500-1000 words | | |
| 12 font size | | |
| 8 ½ x 11 paper | | |
| One sided Paper | | |
| Numbered Pages | | |
| Essay is written in one of these formats: essay, poem or short non-fiction story | | |
| Is the essay related to the theme of youth violence? | | |
| Original/Creative writing? | | |
| Has a strong emotional impact on the reader (This is an extremely important part!) | | |
| Student Parent Consent Statement sign and attached to student essay | | |
| Writing does not include any personal information | | |

Teacher Feedback: