



Hopkins County Schools Comprehensive K-12 Writing Policy

Hopkins County Schools recognizes that writing is a part of literacy, a necessary communication skill for students, and should be authentically taught and practiced in all content areas. The writing policy is a tool to ensure that all students have the opportunity to use writing for achievement at high levels.

Under the authority of KRS 158.6453(19), this policy defines writing as:

"A purposeful act of thinking and expression that uses language to explore ideas and communicate meaning to others. Writing is a complex, multifaceted act of communication and is distinct from basic handwriting or penmanship."

Individual School-Based Decision-Making (SBDM) councils must review and adjust their local writing programs to ensure absolute congruency with this district policy.

SECTION I: MANDATED WRITING PROGRAM COMPONENTS

To ensure every student in the district graduates with the communication skills necessary for postsecondary success, career self-sufficiency, and global competitiveness, the district writing program must incorporate the following five statutory pillars:

1. Foundational Handwriting Skills

While digital typing proficiency is critical, research and state mandates recognize that handwriting is a key cognitive driver of early literacy.

- **Print Handwriting:** Explicit, developmentally appropriate instruction in print handwriting must be provided and mastered during Kindergarten and Grade 1.
- **Cursive Handwriting:** Transition and instruction in cursive handwriting must be delivered during Grade 2 and Grade 3.
- **Monitoring:** Elementary schools must maintain documented student work samples demonstrating age-appropriate handwriting progression at each of these grade levels.

2. The Three Modes of Writing

Instruction across all grade levels (K-12) must actively engage students in the recursive writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and reflecting) across three primary modes:

- **Writing to Learn:** Short, informal, and reflective tasks used daily to help students process, synthesize, and explore content-area concepts.
- **Writing to Demonstrate Learning:** Tasks designed to show the teacher what a student



understands within a unit of study (e.g., short answer responses, essays, summaries, and assessments).

- Writing for Publication: Rigorous, multi-stage pieces written over time for an authentic audience, displaying ownership, independent inquiry, and polished communication mechanics.

3. Subject-Specific Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing must be integrated as an essential, everyday learning tool across all core and elective disciplines. Subject-specific writing is not the sole responsibility of the English Language Arts (ELA) block.

- Mathematics: Students must regularly compose written justifications of mathematical logic, explain problem-solving pathways, and interpret complex data sets.
- Science: Students must construct written hypotheses, formulate claims supported by empirical evidence, and write technical reports of natural or scientific phenomena.
- Social Studies & Historical Inquiry: Students must write arguments drawing from primary and secondary source materials, evaluate geographic datasets, and analyze historical contexts.
- Career, Technical, and Creative Fields: Practical and workplace communication skills (e.g., technical instructions, business correspondences, proposals, and digital texts) must be taught in appropriate pathways.

4. Diverse Genres and Text Types

Curriculum maps must ensure students compose a balanced range of writing throughout their academic careers. Students must write:

- Opinion (Elementary) / Argumentative (Secondary): Structured pieces designed to support logical claims with evidence, addressing specific audiences.
- Informative and Explanatory: Technical or descriptive texts that examine a topic, analyze information, and convey complex ideas clearly.
- Narrative: Writing designed to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

5. Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices

All school environments must be built upon the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices. Schools must maintain literacy-rich classrooms where students actively consume, analyze, and produce print and non-print texts.

Section II: Establishment of Local Writing Requirements

In the absence of state-level on-demand writing assessments, the district will establish local accountability. Every K-12 school council must implement the following local assessment



structures:

1. **Longitudinal Writing Review:** Every student K-12 will maintain writing samples (physical or digital). These selections will serve as a continuous record of growth and must follow the student from level to level within Hopkins County Schools.
2. **Minimum Elementary School Requirements (K-5):**
 - **Kindergarten & First Grade:** A minimum of one informative piece and one opinion piece per semester, supported by regular journal entries.
 - **2nd & 3rd Grade:** A minimum of one personal narrative, one informative piece, and one opinion piece annually, including introduced constructed response samples.
 - **4th & 5th Grade:** A minimum of one personal narrative, one informative piece, and one opinion piece annually, alongside cross-curricular writing assets (e.g., Math & Science ERQs and Social Studies writing tasks).
3. **Minimum Middle & High School Requirements (6-12):**
 - **Grades 6-8:** A minimum of two multi-paragraph argumentative pieces, two informative/explanatory texts, and one narrative piece annually, alongside at least three cross-curricular pieces representing Math, Science, or Social Studies.
 - **Grades 9-12:** A minimum of argumentative essays, two technical/informative research reports, and one creative/multimodal communication asset annually, including disciplinary writing samples across all core courses.

Under HB 257, the district and its administrators must actively support teachers in executing this writing plan.

1. **Instructional Leadership:** School principals are responsible for monitoring the vertical and horizontal alignment of writing instruction. Leaders will perform short-cycle classroom observations and audit teacher lesson plans to ensure writing is actively taught across all subjects.
2. **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):** Teachers will meet regularly in grade-level or department PLCs to analyze student writing artifacts, calibrate grading criteria using state writing rubrics, and share instructional strategies.
3. **Targeted Professional Learning:** Schools must provide at least one job-embedded professional development opportunity annually, either through a professional learning day or PLCs. This must focus on discipline-specific writing instruction and scoring student writing from different genres.