

Nebraska Department of Education

2010 Statewide Writing Assessment

Grade 11 Task: PERSUASIVE WRITING

The school board has received funds to support one current or one new activity/program.

Think about a current or new activity/program you would support. It could be artistic, athletic, dramatic, educational, or social.

Write an essay persuading the school board that yours is a good choice. Give specific reasons to support your recommendation.

ADVANCED *

- * Creates a clear understanding of the writer's opinion/position
- * Structural development includes an effective introduction, body and conclusion.
- * Is engaging throughout; shows strong commitment to the topic
- * Language is specific, precise, and natural throughout
- * Sentences vary in length and structure throughout
- * Conventions are mostly correct.

*This writing sample received a score of 8.00, the highest score possible on the assessment.

Of all the skills and arts that one must demonstrate day after day, the skill of writing seems to be one of the most important. We all write every day, whether as a letter or e-mail, notes in class, or an essay detailing knowledge and reasoning. That is why I would urge the school board to appropriate funds for an extracurricular writing program that would simply focus on creative and expository writing. I think it would greatly benefit writers of all skill levels; thus, it would be helpful for all students. Supporting this learning program would improve students' writing abilities, it would give students a creative and expressive outlet, and it would of course be both fun and educational.

Supporting a writing program would first improve students' writing abilities in a variety of ways. Students would be able to practice writing in a number of forms, including informative and persuasive essays, formal letters and notes, short stories, and poetry. Through this practice, students would be able to familiarize themselves with the structure and tone of each specific writing form. Likewise, students could expand their vocabulary and improve their grammar through assigned exercises and also through application of this knowledge in their writing. Student's writing skills would be further improved by teacher and peer reviews for each student's work, focusing on clear and cohesive writing as well as making that writing more engaging to the reader.

Students' writing would allow for a creative and expressive outlet. Giving students the opportunity to write in many different styles would help them, especially the shy and quiet ones who may have some trouble expressing themselves in other ways. Students could put their thoughts and feelings on paper as opposed to keeping it all inside. They could expound their political and social views in essays, detail their feelings in poetry, and escape from everyday life with fictional pieces. And, of course, this expression would be productive, fun, and educational all at once, as students would learn more about writing and themselves through the program.

The indisputable importance of writing as a skill and an art can be stated plainly. It would seem to me, then, that funding could go to no better place than a writing program, in which students are able to improve their skills, express themselves, and have lots of fun along the way.