



ALL PARTICIPATING MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
2022-2023 DO THE WRITE THING
October 2022

Students from across the country plead that we, as a nation, ensure their safety and the safety of their friends, families, schools, and communities. They are speaking up, calling on us to listen and to take action to end the violence they face. Do the *Write* Thing (DtWT), a hallmark program of the National Campaign to Stop Violence, has heeded those calls for the past 28 years. Do the *Write* Thing seeks to empower youth and reduce youth violence through their writings.

Although COVID-19 has disrupted classes across the country, we know it is more important than ever to listen to our young students who are still dealing with the effects of violence. By agreeing to include your 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in the 2022-2023 DtWT program, you will be giving them a voice. You will be joined by hundreds of other school principals from across the United States in a coordinated, unique effort to give students the opportunity to communicate their experiences and insights on the impact of youth violence on their lives and to make personal commitments to reduce violence. All costs for this program are generously paid for by our sponsors.

Over the past twenty-eight years, Do the *Write* Thing has proven to be effective in reducing youth violence in schools and communities across the United States. In that time over 1.2 million students have participated through written submissions while another 1.8 million have joined classroom discussions to voice their views and experiences. Hundreds of books have been published and circulated containing the words of these students, both locally and nationally. Recent research conducted by the University of Texas found that the program had a positive impact on the relationship between students, parents, and teachers. Participating students exhibited a “greater empathy and understanding for the victims of violence.” Additionally, the research showed that participating students show **“more positive behaviors and attitudes towards peers and teachers.”** DtWT has helped motivate widespread community involvement, through the support of thousands of volunteers, aimed at making schools and neighborhoods safer for young people.

The packet enclosed, entitled Instructions for Classroom Teachers, explains Do the *Write* Thing in more detail. This packet includes a letter to participating classroom teachers and information about program rules, entry deadlines, selection criteria, classroom discussions, common core application, and student recognition. In addition, you will find a brief summary of UTEP’s research outlining the benefits of using DtWT and information on how OJJDP’s campaign on “Changing Minds” dovetails with DtWT. All of this information can also be downloaded from our website, www.dtwt.org.

We are suggesting a deadline of Friday, March 10, 2023 for the submission of student writings, but each city will have their own deadline and method of submission. Please check with your local DtWT Coordinator, Rachel Gemar, by email at rachel.gemar@mt.gov or by phone at (406) 444-2056. Montana’s DtWT Chair, Natalia Bowser, can be reached at nbowser@mt.gov or (406) 444-4244.

If you have any questions about the national program, please call Lisa Cone at 1-800-256-0235. Thank you again for supporting Do the Write Thing 2023! We wish your students success and hope to see one of your teachers and one of your students in Washington, D.C. next July if conditions permit.