

# **NativityMiguel Network of Schools**

## **Standards and Benchmarks in Writing for an 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduate**

*(Adapted 2006)*

**Team:**            **Curt Adams, Principal of San Miguel School of Tulsa**  
                      **Jeff Sindler, Principal of St. Ignatius Loyola Academy**  
                      **Brendan Sullivan, Principal of Nativity Prep of San Diego**

Writing is a highly complex, strategic process comprised of several essential skills. As a means of learning, this process is a valuable tool for learning for all students in all subject areas at all ages. While writing to learn, students discover connections, describe processes, express emerging understandings, raise questions, and find answers. For example, students learn content in science or social studies through keeping a response or process journal, or a learning log. Graduates from the NativityMiguel Network of Schools must demonstrate a beginning mastery of these essentials, not only because they help assure academic success in the high schools our graduates attend, but also because effective written self-expression is vitally important to their well-being. Developing writing mastery in a variety of narrative and expository genres enhances the likelihood that our underserved students will overcome any obstacles between themselves and their futures, futures in which they will be college-educated and capable of using their skills to offer leadership in their families and communities in the name of justice, peace and love.

### **I. Writing Mechanics**

Effective writing depends upon an effective spoken command of formal English and syntax. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

- A. To demonstrate competence in Writing Mechanics, especially grammar, usage and expression, and mechanics by use of correct Standard English, students will:
  - a.) Principal verb tenses and modes;
  - b.) Subject-verb agreement;
  - c.) Nominative, objective, and possessive pronouns;
  - d.) Pronoun reference;
  - e.) Comparative and superlative forms of adjectives;
  - f.) Appositives and appositive phrases;
  - g.) Infinitives, gerunds, and participles;
  - h.) Conjunctions for coordination and subordination;
  - i.) Idioms;
  - j.) Commonly confused words (i.e., differentiate homophones).
  
- B. To demonstrate competency in Writing Mechanics, especially use appropriate sentence structure in writing, students will:
  - a.) Simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences;
  - b.) Dependent and independent clauses;
  - c.) Complete sentences (i.e., avoid run-ons and fragments);
  - d.) Modifiers (i.e., avoid dangling and misplaced modifiers).
  - e.) Demonstrate appropriate language mechanics in writing.
  - f.) Correct capitalization;

- g.) Proper punctuation in writing, such as commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, and other conventions;
- h.) Correct spelling.

## **II. Skills and Strategies of the Writing Process**

Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

To demonstrate competence in the skills and strategies of the writing process students will:

- A. Understand and use the writing process: pre-writing strategies, writing and revising drafts, editing, and sharing final product;
- B. Paraphrase and quote;
- C. Construct paragraphs that include a topic sentence, supporting detail, and a conclusion;
- D. Develop organized, multi-paragraph essays with thesis statements, topic sentences supporting details, and conclusions;
- E. Use a variety of sentence styles and lengths and a variety of punctuation;
- F. Make precise word choices and use figurative language;
- G. Use technology in the writing process (e.g., word-processing, internet research, spelling/grammar check, etc.).

## **III. Writing Products**

Students adjust their use of written language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

To demonstrate competency in Writing Products, students will write narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive, and reflective modes, such as:

- A. Biographical or autobiographical stories or other narratives;
- B. Research reports;
- C. Critical analysis (e.g., persuasive, expository, and narrative essays, compare and contrast, literary analysis, reviews, etc.);
- D. Reflective expression (e.g., journal writing);
- E. Letter writing and other forms of written communication;
- F. Creative prose writing (e.g., dialogues, mini dramas, short stories, etc.);
- G. Poetry writing;
- H. Technical writing (e.g., lab reports, how-to, directions, memos, resumes, business correspondence);
- I. Timed writing (short and extended responses).