

AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY

2008-2009




Teacher Packet



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	Travis County Do the Write Thing Challenge 2008-2009
	Instructions for Teachers
<p>Thank you for involving your 7th and 8th grade students in the 2009 Do the Write Thing Challenge!</p> <p>Before presenting the program to your students, please review the following information covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program rules• Entry deadlines• Judging criteria• Classroom discussion• Student recognition	

Program Rules

The following guidelines for the preparation of student writings have been distributed to all participating superintendents, principals, and teachers:

1. Students may use any form of written expression (e.g., essays, poems, plays or songs) as long as the writing is **non-fictional** and the language is positive and not derogatory. Students may submit only one entry per year. All entries must be the original work product of only one student.
2. Students should address three questions:
 - **How has violence affected my life?**
 - **What are the causes of violence?**
 - **What can I do about violence?**

Writings that do not address these questions will not be advanced in the judging process.

3. Entries should be approximately 500 to 1,000 words in length. Written forms of expression, such as poetry, that by their nature are usually shorter, may contain fewer than 500 words.
4. Entries are must be typed or written legibly in black ink on 8½" x 11" paper. Only one side of the paper may be used. The pages should be numbered.
5. Entries must be in English.
6. If the student participant uses a quotation or another person's material in his or her entry, the entry must identify by citing the original author's name or citing the source of the material. Writings based upon plagiarism will not be advanced in the judging process.

7. **Entries must have a Cover Sheet with the Consent Statement signed by the participating student and a parent or guardian. Entries without a signed Cover Sheet will not be advanced in the judging process. (A blank Cover Sheet containing the Student and Parent/Guardian Consent is attached.)**
8. Original entries must be submitted along with the student Cover Sheet.
9. 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.
Please do not screen student writings.
10. Your school must have a **minimum of 25** participants to be considered for the National Finalist competition.

Submission Deadlines

All entries along with Cover Sheet/Consent Statement attached, must be submitted to their school liaison no later than January 21, 2009. The school liaison must submit their entries to their DTWT coordinator no later than January 23, 2009.

Judging Criteria

Entries will be judged by a panel of community leaders appointed by the **Do the Write Thing Challenge** VIP Committee of Travis County, a coalition of business, community and government leaders. Entries will be judged on the basis of content, originality and responsiveness to the three questions:

- **How has violence affected my life?**
- **What are the causes of violence?**
- **What can I do about violence?**

In their writings, students should be encouraged to describe what they think are the causes of 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 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.

Classroom Discussion

Classroom discussion is not a requirement for participating in the Challenge. However, candid discussions have proved to be beneficial, sometimes in dramatic fashion. Teachers whose classes engaged in discussion have reported that students find they have an enhanced sense of connection to classmates. Some teachers have been amazed at the level of concern and honesty

students express in prewriting discussions. A classroom discussion also provides an opportunity for educators to learn about problems simmering in school before the problems become crises.

Many teachers whose classes have participated in the Challenge have invited outside speakers knowledgeable about violence to lead prewriting discussions. Others have provided their students with selected readings or newspaper articles about violence in advance of the discussion to stimulate thought. Speakers or articles that emphasize personal responsibility on the part of students for responding to the problem of violence have proven to be particularly useful.

On the National Campaign to Stop Violence website (www.dtw.org) you can find the National Campaign to Stop Violence's Discussion Paper on the Causes of and Solutions for Youth Violence. The Discussion Paper is based on the writings of previous year's National Finalists—the boy and girl from each participating jurisdiction who submitted the most thought-provoking entry. Feel free to download and copy this material for your class.

Some questions to generate discussion among your students before they prepare their entries for the Challenge are:

- When you hear the word violence, what thoughts or memories do you have?
- Where are you confronted by violence? Your home? Your school? Your neighborhood?
- Do you think you can tell when another person is on the brink of a violent act? Would you intervene? Under what circumstances would you intervene?
- What provokes people to be violent?

(Please refer to attached Lesson Plan.)

Student, Teacher, and School Recognition

Local level

The Travis County **Do the Write Thing** Coordinating Committee coordinates the program locally. The Coordinating Committee will organize a local Recognition Ceremony to honor the boy and girl from each participating school who submit the best entries. In addition to the School Finalists from each school, the students' parents, teachers, principal, and superintendent will be invited to the Recognition Ceremony. The **Do the Write Thing** Coordinating Committee will also publish the writings of all School Finalists, and will distribute the book to civic leaders.

State level

The Travis County VIP Committee will select a boy and a girl to attend (with their teachers) a Recognition Ceremony for finalists from other areas of Texas. Last year, finalists from around Texas and their teachers were honored at a Recognition Ceremony in Austin where they were presented awards by the Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson. The celebration also featured an amphibious vehicle excursion around the Austin area, a tour of the Bob Bullock State History Museum, and a Saturday night bowling and pizza party in their honor.

National Level

Each local **Do the Write Thing** VIP Committee will designate two National Finalists—the boy and girl from their local jurisdiction who submit the most thought-provoking entries for the 2009

Challenge. The two National Finalists, along with each Finalist'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 2009.

During past National Recognition Weeks, National Finalists from jurisdictions around the U.S. have met with the Secretary of the Department of Education, the Attorney General of the United States, and members of Congress to discuss the problem of violence. In addition, students have been honored at embassy receptions hosted by the Ambassador to the United States from the State of Kuwait. A book containing their writings was placed in the Library of Congress.

Teacher Survey

Your input/feedback is vital to the future program development. Please complete the enclosed teacher survey as soon as your students have submitted their writings to you. Enclose your completed Teacher Survey with your student entries. The survey contains information and statistics the National Campaign and its **Do the Write Thing** Committees need to administer the Challenge.

Special Instructions

- Please submit all papers.
- Please do NOT screen or grade the papers.
- Emphasize to the students to focus on solutions – address all three questions.
- Please return a completed teacher survey, as the information it provides is very important.
- Remember to:
 - Staple the cover sheet/student consent form to the original entry.

DtWT Team Contact:

Marisa Vallejo
(512) 854-7546

Marisa.Vallejo@co.travis.tx.us



Do the Write the Thing Challenge: 2008-2009
TEACHER SURVEY

Name of teacher:

___DR. ___MR. ___MS. ___MRS. _____

Name of school: _____

Address of school: _____

School phone number: _____

School fax number: _____

Questions 1 and 2 (required)

1. How many of your students submitted writings for the 2008-2009 Challenge? _____
2. Did you have a classroom discussion about violence before your students prepared their writings for the 2008-2009 Challenge? (YES) (NO)
If YES, how many of your students participated (were present) for the discussion? _____

Questions 3 and 4 (optional)

3. What (in your opinion) were the top three causes of violence identified by your students in their discussions and writings?

4. What (in your opinion) were the top three solutions for violence identified by your students in their discussions and writings?

Lesson Plan, Classroom Activities,
and Sample Scenarios for Discussion

**2008-2009 Key Questions
for seventh and eighth grade student participants**

How has violence affected my life?

What are the causes of violence?

What can I do about violence?

*The Challenge Program meets several objectives of
the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills curriculum*

English/Language Arts TEKS

- 110.24.15: The student writes for a variety of audiences and purposes, and in a variety of forms
- 110.24.16: The student composes original texts, applying the conventions of written language such as capitalization, punctuation, handwriting, penmanship, and spelling to communicate clearly
- 110.24.17: The student applies standard grammar and usage to communicate clearly and effectively in writing.
- 110.24.18: The student selects and uses writing processes and self-initiated and assigned writing.

Your school may use this writing contest to comply with Title IV: Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities. By incorporating the discussions and consequential writings from *Do the Write Thing* Challenge into your school's prevention programs, you will be able to comply with a portion of Title IV, which is designed to support programs that prevent violence in and around schools, prevent the illegal use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, and to involve more parents and community groups in school-based prevention programs.

Social Studies TEKS

- 113.23.17.C: The student is expected to express and defend a point of view on an issue of historical or contemporary interest.
- 113.23.21.E: The student is expected to support a point of view on a social studies issue or event.

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- 113.23.23.A: The student is expected to use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.
- 113.23.23.B: The student is expected use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision.
- 113.24.20.C: The student is expected to explain the importance of personal responsibilities such as accepting responsibility for one's behavior and supporting one's family.
- 113.24.20.D: The student is expected to identify examples of responsible citizenship, including obeying rules and laws, voting, and serving on juries.
- 113.24.24.B: The student is expected to explain the relationship between urbanization and conflicts resulting from differences in religion, social class, and political beliefs.
- 113.24.24.C: The student is expected to identify ways conflicts between people from various racial, ethnic and religious groups were resolved.
- 113.24.32.A: The student is expected to use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.
- 113.24.32.B: The student is expected to use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision.

Health TEKS

- 115.23.5.A: The student is expected to analyze and demonstrate strategies for preventing and responding to deliberate and accidental injuries.
- 115.23.5.B: The student is expected to describe the dangers associated with a variety of weapons.
- 115.23.5.C: The student is expected to identify strategies for prevention and intervention of emotional, physical and sexual abuse.
- 115.23.5.K: The student is expected to apply strategies for avoiding violence, gangs, weapons and drugs.
- 115.23.5.L: The student is expected to explain the importance of complying with rules prohibiting possession of drugs and weapons.

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- 115.23.7.A: The student is expected to analyze positive and negative relationships that influence individual and community health such as families, peers and role models.
- 115.23.7.B: The student is expected to develop strategies for monitoring positive and negative relationships that influence health.
- 115.23.12.E: The student is expected to predict the consequences of refusal skills in various situations.
- 115.23.13.E: The student is expected to examine the effects of peer pressure on decision-making.

To find out more about Title IV, visit the Texas Education Agency website at www.tea.state.tx.us.

Lesson Plan: Physical Education

- **How would you define violence in sports?**
- **How has violence in sports affected you?**
- **How do drugs affect the athletic performance of an individual and his/her behavior?**
- **What role can you play in preventing violence in sports?**

Physical Education TEKS

- 116.23.7.1B: The student is expected to demonstrate appropriate relationships to an opponent in dynamic game situations such as staying between opponent and goal and moving between opponent and the ball.
- 116.23.7.4I: The student is expected to recognize the effects of substance abuse on personal health and performance in physical activity.
- 116.23.7.6A & 8.6A: The student is expected to distinguish between compliance and noncompliance with rules and regulations and apply agreed upon consequences when officiating.
- 116.23.7.7A & 8.7A: The student is expected to solve problems in physical activities by analyzing causes and potential solutions.
- 116.23.7.7B & 8.7B: The student is expected to work cooperatively in a group to achieve group goals in competitive as well as cooperative settings.
- 116.23.7.7C & 8.7C: The student is expected to accept decisions made by game officials such as student, teachers, and officials outside the school.
- 116.23.7.7D & 8.7D: The student is expected to use peer interaction positively to enhance personal physical activity and safety such as encourage friends and join teams.
- 116.23.7.7E & 8.7E: The student is expected to recognize the role of games, sport, and dance in getting to know and understand others.
- 116.24.8.1A: The student is expected to coordinate movements with teammates to achieve team goals.
- 116.24.8.5A: The student is expected to use equipment safely and properly.

Lesson plan

Materials

1. The 3 key questions
 - **How has violence affected my life?**
 - **What are the causes of violence?**
 - **What can I do about violence?**
2. Tag board of sentence strips (enough on which to write each question)
3. Tag board or card stock (enough on which to write each question)
4. Tag board of card stock on which students can write their ideas and attach them to the board under the key questions
5. Markers
6. Tape

Time

Two to three 45-minute periods

Sample classroom activity: Small groups

<p>1. Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Post the questions on wall or board. ✓ Arrange students in small groups. Distribute sheets of tag board and a marker or two to each group. ✓ Focus on the first question. Ask it, then allow students time in their groups to discuss ideas and observations. ✓ One student from each group should sum up briefly what was discussed. ✓ At this point, teacher may help direct discussion to be sure pertinent points are included in the discussion. <p>Students then decide what to write on their tag board and post on the board under the first key question. Repeat procedure for questions 2 and 3.</p>
<p>2. Writing</p>	<p>Following class discussion, encourage students to start writing their thoughts, ideas, observations, recollections, and personal stories that address the three questions. (No fictional writings in essays, please.)</p> <p>Lead them through the writing process until they have produced a final document for “publishing.”</p>
<p>3. Parental consent</p>	<p>Send home the Cover Sheet/Consent Statement for parent or guardian to sign. The student must also sign the document.</p>
<p>4. Submit entries</p>	<p>Submit original student entries and consent form attached to top of each, to your school’s <i>Do the Write Thing</i> coordinator by <u>*January 23, 2009.*</u></p> <p>Please do not screen entries; please submit them all. The DtWT evaluation process is blind-judging.</p>
<p>5. Complete teacher entry form</p>	<p>Complete and submit the teacher survey form. Your information and assessments are important to future DTWT programs!</p>

Sample classroom Activity: Whole-class method

<p>1. Discussion and prewriting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ After posting questions on the board, begin class discussion with the use of a scenario. You may refer to samples, or use your own. ✓ Read the scenario to the class. ✓ Read relevant current headlines from local newspapers, etc. ✓ Encourage students to list and brainstorm possible responses to the questions on the board.
<p>2. Writing</p>	<p>Following class discussion, encourage students to start writing their thoughts, ideas, observations, recollections, and personal stories that address the three questions.</p> <p>Lead them through the writing process until they have produced a final document for “publishing.”</p>
<p>3. Parental consent</p>	<p>Send home the Cover Sheet/Consent Statement for parent or guardian to sign. The student must also sign the document.</p>
<p>4. Submit entries</p>	<p>Submit original student entries and consent form attached to top of each, to your school’s <i>Do the Write Thing</i> coordinator by <u>*January 23, 2009.*</u></p> <p>Please do not screen the entries - please submit them all. The DtWT evaluation process is blind-judging.</p>
<p>5. Complete teacher entry form</p>	<p>Complete and submit the teacher entry form. Your information and assessments are important to this program!</p>

New 2009 Scenarios

Scenario 1

“He Loves Me, I Know He Does”

Jazmine is a popular student. She is dating John, a member of the football team. Jazmine starts noticing that John gets upset when she spends time with her girlfriends. At first, Jazmine thinks it’s cute and that John truly cares and loves her. Then, John starts demanding to know where she is and who she is with at all times. He calls her cell phone constantly. When a boy from school gives Jazmine a new CD to listen to, John is furious. When they are alone, he starts hitting her and calling her names. Then he starts setting down rules. Jazmine’s friends notice bruises and signs of cutting on her body. She makes excuses and begs them not to tell. Then they notice a change, she dresses and acts differently and she is spending all of her time with John. The isolation is unbearable and the beatings become more frequent.

Potential question for discussion:

- Do you know someone like John?
- Do you know someone like Jazmine?
- What if your friend was being abused by her boyfriend?
- What advice would you give Jazmine?
- What are some of the warning signs of relationship violence?

Scenario 2

“Daddy, No; Daddy, No; Please Stop”

My father has a very short fuse. He can snap at the drop of a hat when he drinks. My parents argue nonstop. Kids, jobs, money, spending so much and saving so little; it’s like a movie that plays over and over again except I can’t turn it off. I see the rage in my dad’s face as he hits my mom until he draws blood and tears. During her many beatings, I see him push her down, pull her hair, choke her and call her names. Too many times to count, I see her bruises, busted lips, black eyes and blood- stained torn clothes. This is not an unusual sight at my house. When my dad drinks, he is a different person. I hate to go home after school. I try to stay away as long as I can. The yelling and screaming are too much. Mom thought he was only hurting her...but daddy’s rage is also hurting me.

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Potential question for discussion:

- Do you know someone who is need of help from domestic violence?
- Do you know someone who uses alcohol and violence to try to drown their problems?
- Do you think children who witness violent acts are more likely to become aggressive and consider violence an appropriate response when they are angry?
- Do you know of programs available to assist families dealing with domestic violence?

Scenario 3

“The Party”

Angel and Jacob’s parents are going out of town for a business trip. They will have the house to themselves for a few days. Jacob decides to throw a party. Word spreads quickly. The music is loud. Many young adults are seen taking drugs and drinking alcohol.

Potential questions for discussion:

- If you were their friend what would you do knowing that most everyone at the party will be underage?
- Would you tell an adult if you knew some of the kids would be driving under the influence?
- What is the best way to handle this situation knowing that someone may get hurt in an accident?
- Do you think scenes from TV programs and movies influences teen drinking?

Scenario 4

“Mean Girls”

Amy just moved to town. She meets Julie who lives down the street and they become friends. It’s summer. School is out and they do everything together. They love to shop, swim and ride bikes. When school starts, Julie is back with her old clique from last year. Julie begins to ignore Amy and starts to spread rumors about her on My Space. Julies gives Amy’s *My Space* password to everyone. She has also given out her personal information making her a target for pedophiles. Now Amy’s best friend is her worst enemy. Amy is getting horrible messages from people she doesn’t even know.

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Potential questions for discussion:

- How many of you know someone else's password?
- What do you think your ex-best friend is going to do with your password?
- Do you think pedophiles search the Internet for victims?
- Are you a cyber bully?
- Are you a victim of cyber bullying?
- Should laws be passed to protect you from cyber bullying or online assault?
- How much personal information do you share on the Internet?

Scenario 5

“This is the Day.....If Only”

Three students tease Jose because he is small for his age. During class, they laugh, shoot rubber bands at him, poke him in the neck with a pencil and call him names. After class, Jose accidentally steps on one of the bully's shoes. The three punch Jose and push him to the ground. The physical and mental abuse has been going on for two years now. He is depressed and suicidal. The next day Jose brings a gun to school and writes a short message. “Blame the bully who made me do this, the cruel actions and words that drove me crazy. If only I had told someone, anyone.”

Potential question for discussion:

- Are you a bully?
- Are you the victim of a bully?
- Do you think fines and suspension from school have deterred bullies?
- Are there early warning signs of a victim who is ready to explode?
- Do schools and policy makers do enough to prevent bullying?
- When will you start standing up for the bully?

Scenario 6

“All in the Family....The Initiation”

Tony is the leader of a gang. They have just initiated his little brother Trey into the gang family. “We are your family now,” Tony tells Trey. The members are then told of a planned shootout with a rival gang who has been “disrespecting” them. The gangs meet at the designated time and place. Trey is given a gun. It happens in the blink of an eye. The rival gang is coming fast and furious. There is a lot of yelling, screaming and shooting. Then Trey gets hit and goes down. Tony sees what happens and freezes. He starts yelling “You shot my baby brother!” Tony runs after the rival gang member and shoots him. Then it’s all over. Trey is dead and so is the rival gang member. Tony now has to take his baby brother’s body home. He knocks on the door, his mother answers. She sees Trey lying bloody in Tony’s arms. She starts screaming and crying. Tony sits with tears streaming down his face, blood on his hands.

Possible questions for discussion:

- If you knew of the initiation, would you try to talk Trey out of it?
- How do you think Tony feels now?
- Why do you think gangs are so popular with young adults?
- Do gangs really protect their “gang families”?
- Have you lost someone you love to gang violence?
- Does TV glorify violence? (wrestling, violent video games and movies, TV shows such as *South Park* and *Family Guy*, music videos, etc.)
- Do violent video games teach children how to kill and also desensitize them to violent images?

Scenario 7

“My Mama’s Prescriptions”

Susie’s mother has recently had back surgery. Her doctor has prescribed a powerful narcotic to help relieve the pain. Susie decides she can make some fast money at school by selling some of her mom’s pain pills. She goes into the girl’s restroom and starts asking other students if they want to “get high”. Kaitlyn buys a couple pills from her. Later that evening she takes two of the strong narcotics, not knowing exactly what they are. Kaitlyn is alone in her room. She takes the pills and starts shaking and hallucinating. She then passes out. Hours later her mother calls her for dinner. She doesn’t respond. Her mother goes to her room and finds Kaitlyn unconscious on the floor. She screams and calls 911 for an ambulance. Kaitlyn is taken to the hospital where she

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is listed in critical condition. Doctors frantically order a battery of tests to try and find out what is wrong so they can begin treatment. News of the overdose quickly spreads to Susie.

Potential questions for discussion:

- Are you asked to buy prescription drugs to get “high”?
- Would you take a chance taking an unknown drug just to get “high”?
- Should Susie tell someone what drug Kaitlyn took? It could save her life.
- Should Kaitlyn’s friends tell her parents about Susie?
- What can parents and policy makers do to avoid situations such as this with prescription drugs?

Scenario 8

“Go, Fight, Win”

Tyler and Jake are playing basketball for their high school teams. The game is quickly becoming competitive. They push and shove to get the ball and score. Under the rim, Tyler shoves Jake and he tumbles to the floor. Jake gets up. He is mad. He shoves Tyler. Tyler shoves back and punches him in the stomach. Some words are exchanged. Then the crowd starts yelling, “fight, fight, fight!” They begin egging them on. Their blood starts pumping and the fists start flying. The crowd is getting into it. A referee is punched in the face. Coaches from both teams quickly run to the court to help defuse the situation.

Potential Questions for Discussion:

- Is there too much pressure on players to win games?
- Are players encouraged to be violent to win?
- Do coaches choose combative players to help them win?
- Are some sports more violent than others?
- Is there too much violence in high contact sports?
- Did the crowd help instigate the fight?
- Does the crowd have any responsibility for the fight?
- Have you seen unsportsmanlike like conduct from adults at your games?
- Do high contact sports lead to violence off of the court?



Travis County
Do the Write Thing Challenge 2008-2009

Instructions for Students

Thank you for accepting the 2008-2009 Do the Write Thing Challenge (DtWT).

Please review the following program rules before you write.

Student Program Rules

1. Students may use any form of written expression (e.g. essays, poems, plays or songs) as long as the writing is **NON-FICTIONAL** and the language is positive and not derogatory. Students may submit only one entry per year. All entries must be the original work product of the student.
2. Students must address the following three questions:
 - **How has violence affected my life?**
 - **What are the causes of violence?**
 - **What can I do about violence?**
3. Entries should be approximately 500 to 1,000 words in length. Written forms of expression, such as poetry, that are usually shorter, may contain fewer than 500 words.
4. Entries are preferred typed but may also be written legibly in black ink on 8½" x 11" paper. Only one side of the paper may be used. The pages should be numbered.
5. Entries must be in English.
6. If the student participant uses a quotation or another person's material in his or her entry, the entry **must** identify this by citing the original author's name or citing the source of the material. *Writings based upon plagiarism will not be advanced in the judging process.*
7. **Entries must have a Cover Sheet with the Consent Statement signed by the participating student and a parent or guardian. Entries without a signed Cover Sheet will not be advanced in the judging process.**
8. Original entries along with the student Cover Sheet must be submitted to designated teachers by January 23, 2009.

Student Cover Sheet

Thank you for participating in the Do the Write Thing Challenge. For a student's entry to be considered for recognition, both the student and the student's parent or guardian must complete all the information on this form (except blanks marked optional), and also sign the Consent Statement below.

Student's Information

Please type or carefully print student's information the boxes below:

FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	LAST NAME	
STUDENT'S SCHOOL		SCHOOL PHONE NUMBER	
TEACHER'S NAME		STUDENT'S GRADE	
HOME ADDRESS	APT. No.	CITY/STATE	ZIP
HOME PHONE NUMBER		STUDENT'S SEX (CIRCLE) Male Female	
CELL OR PAGER NUMBER (OPTIONAL)		E-MAIL (OPTIONAL)	

Student and Parent/Guardian Consent Statement (required)

The National Campaign to Stop Violence, which sponsors the *Do the Write Thing* Challenge, will publish selected students' writings and quotations in a book and in a research paper on youth violence. Prior to publishing a student's writing, the National Campaign requires the written consent of the student, as well as the written consent of the student's parent or guardian. If the above-named student and his/her guardian agree to permit the National Campaign to publish the student's writing, sign the following statement: We agree to give ownership of the attached student writing to the National Campaign to Stop Violence so that the writing can be considered for recognition, and publication. Some forms of publication may include websites, booklets, and pamphlets as well as others.

Agreed:

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT	SIGNATURE OF PARENT
STUDENT'S NAME (PRINT)	PARENT'S/GUARDIAN'S NAME (PRINT)

Entries must have a Cover Sheet with the Consent Statement signed by the participating student and a parent or guardian. Entries without signed Cover Sheet will not be advanced in the judging process.

**Travis County
Do the Write Thing Challenge
Fax Reply from School Officials**

To: Travis County Juvenile Probation Department
2515 South Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78704
Attention: Marisa Vallejo
Fax number (512) 854-5521

From: _____
Name/Title

Name of School

Date: _____

Please check one:

____ Will Participate in the 2008-2009 Do the Write Thing Challenge

Contact person: _____

Phone number: _____

Fax Number: _____

E- Mail Address: _____

____ Will NOT participate

NOTE: *The courtesy of a faxed reply is requested by October 17, 2008.*





TRAVIS COUNTY JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENT

ESTELA P. MEDINA
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
COURT SERVICES
DETENTION SERVICES
PROBATION SERVICES
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES
SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES
DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE

September 10, 2008

Dear Parent:

As a member of the **Do the Write Thing (DtWT)** Coordinating Committee, it is my pleasure to provide you with information on this exciting educational opportunity for your child.

The **Do the Write Thing** Challenge Program is an initiative that was founded in 1996 by the **National Campaign to Stop Violence (NCSV)** designed to give middle school students in 7th and 8th grade an opportunity to evaluate and examine the impact of violence on their lives. Students are provided with an opportunity to express in writing what they think should be done to change our culture of violence. The ultimate goal of this challenge is to help break the cycles of violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods by encouraging students to make personal commitments to do something about the problem.

The **Do the Write Thing** Challenge is a writing Opportunity that allows students to accept the "challenge" by making a written personal commitment not to engage in violence and preparing writings on the causes and solutions for youth violence. The students will be asked to provide written statements to the following questions:

- **How has violence affected my life?**
- **What are the causes of violence?**
- **What can I do about violence?**

The **Do the Write Thing** Challenge is an essential part of a long-term strategy to help students and adults better understand each other and work together to prevent violence. This creates a network of positive communication between youth, their teachers, and the community.

Process of Selection:

- The school liaison distributes materials to the designated 7th and 8th grade teachers and explains the program guidelines and curriculum to the participating teachers.
- The participating teachers will conduct the DtWT Program's Lesson Plan and will initiate classroom discussion.
- Students who choose to participate in the writing "challenge" submit their writings to their respective classroom teacher.
- The school liaison collects all entries for submission to the assigned DtWT coordinator by **January 23, 2009**.
- A panel of volunteer readers will select one male and one female finalist from each participating school.
- A VIP committee comprised of local dignitaries and community leaders will select one male and one female National finalist from the pool of school finalists.



- The school finalists' and National finalists' entries will be printed in a bound publication and distributed locally.
- The writings of the National Finalists will be printed in a leather bound publication and placed in the Library of Congress.
- A local recognition ceremony will be held in May to honor all of the student finalists, their parents, teachers, principals, and school district superintendents.
- The two National finalists will be honored in a ceremony in Washington D.C. in the summer of 2009. The supporters of the National Campaign to Stop Violence will cover the travel expenses to Washington D.C. for the National Finalists, a parent or guardian, and a teacher or other school representative.

Thank you for your interest and participation in this program. Feel free to contact the Do the Write Thing Committee at (512) 854-7546 should you require additional information.

Sincerely,

The Do the Write Thing Team

