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Writing Coaches of Montana: A Resource for Building Toward Literacy Standards

Writing Coaches of Montana's mission is to help prepare all students in the Montana public schools to become confident, competent writers by graduation. We support teachers by recruiting, training and supervising community volunteers who conference individually with every student in the classroom on writing assignments that require critical thinking and revision.

WCM aids public school students to develop the skills required by Montana content standards. Working under the direction of teachers, our coaches engage in trained dialogue techniques which increase students' critical thinking and writing skills. We have identified ways in which our coaching model can help your students achieve Montana literacy standards.

Montana Anchor Standards for Writing: *write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content (CCRA.W.2).*¹

- Coaches prompt students to generate ideas, clarify arguments, and expand the content of their writing.

Writing Standards, 6-8 grades: *establish and maintain a formal style (W.6-8.1); with some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed (W.6-8.5).*

- Coaches assist students in examining diction and tone, which increases students' understanding of how to consistently write in a formal style.
- Coaches help identify which ideas need to be clarified, contracted, and/or expanded for a desired audience.

Writing Standards, 9-12 grades: *develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience (W.9-12.5).*

- Coaches illuminate a draft's biggest needs through engaging with students in the writing process. Students retain full autonomy and ownership of their intellectual work because coaches do not make edits; they offer reflections and suggestions. Students choose which parts of their work to prioritize, which helps them build an understanding of the revision process.

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science & Technical Subjects, 6-12 grades: *develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form and in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns (WHST.9-12.1).*

- Coaches ask students to explain and support the arguments and opposing arguments presented in their writing.
- Coaches come from diverse backgrounds and provide an outside perspective, so students can use coaches to gauge the knowledge level and concerns of the intended audience.

¹ All standards are referenced from https://opi.mt.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=LJo_b0WXmc0%3d&portalid=182.