

GARRARD COUNTY SCHOOLS DISTRICT-WIDE WRITING PROGRAM

Revised 2026

1. Purpose and Vision

Garrard County Schools recognizes writing as “a purposeful act of thinking and expression that uses language to explore ideas and communicate meaning to others,” consistent with KRS 158.6453. Writing is distinct from handwriting or penmanship and serves both as a communication skill and a tool for learning.

Our district writing program establishes a coherent K–12 approach to purposeful, disciplinary-specific writing across the curriculum. Writing will help students think deeply, use evidence, communicate clearly, demonstrate learning, and prepare for postsecondary education, careers, and civic life.

GCS Commitment	What it means for writing
Growth Culture	Students see writing as a process of thinking, feedback, revision, reflection, and growth.
Standards-Driven Instruction & Assessment	Writing tasks are connected to grade-level KAS, intended learning, and discipline-specific ways of communicating.
Data-Driven Decision Making	Student writing is used as evidence of learning to identify strengths, misconceptions, and instructional next steps.

Writing and reading are reciprocal processes. Students use writing to process and deepen their understanding of grade-level texts, data, investigations, problems, experiences, and other sources of information.

2. Kentucky Requirements

Beginning with the 2026–2027 school year, HB 257 (2026) amended KRS 158.6453(19) to require the Superintendent to adopt a district-wide writing program. The program must be published on the district website and include disciplinary-specific writing across the curriculum, a variety of language resources and technological tools, and multiple opportunities for students to develop complex communication skills for varied purposes.

HB 257 also removed the requirement for an on-demand writing assessment and an editing/mechanics assessment as part of the Kentucky Summative Assessment. Garrard County Schools will therefore use a body of local evidence to monitor writing development rather than treating a single assessment as the definition of writing proficiency.

3. Garrard County Writing Commitments

Every Garrard County student will have opportunities to:

Students will...	Examples of what this may look like
Write to Learn	Quick writes, annotations, notes, reflections, exit slips, sentence-level responses, explanations
Write to Demonstrate Learning	Constructed responses, mathematical justifications, scientific explanations, historical arguments, analyses, performance tasks
Write for Authentic Purposes & Audiences	Published pieces, proposals, reports, presentations, digital products, community or career-related writing
Write Across Disciplines	Write as readers, mathematicians, scientists, historians, artists, health/PE students, and CTE learners
Use Evidence & Reasoning	Select relevant evidence, explain thinking, analyze information, justify conclusions, and communicate discipline-specific reasoning.
Revise & Improve	Use teacher/peer feedback and self-reflection to strengthen ideas, organization, evidence, language, and conventions as appropriate.

4. Common Language for Writing

Garrard County Schools will use the following common language to support consistency without reducing writing to a checklist.

KAS Writing Modes	Purpose
Opinion / Argument	Evaluate evidence, develop a position, and communicate reasoning intended to influence a point of view or arrive at a judgment
Informative / Explanatory	Examine, explain, describe, and communicate complex ideas, information, or processes
Narrative	Communicate real or imagined experiences, events, or sequences of ideas

Type	Definition	Common Examples
Writing to Learn	Informal writing used to process information, explore ideas, and deepen understanding.	Quick writes; annotations; learning logs; exit slips
Writing to Demonstrate Learning	Writing used to show understanding of content and standards.	Constructed responses; explanations; arguments; analyses; lab/science writing
Writing for Publication	Writing developed for an audience beyond the teacher and revised as appropriate.	Essays; proposals; reports; digital portfolios; authentic products

5. Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing expectations should reflect how communication and thinking occur within each discipline.

Content Area	Disciplinary Writing Examples
ELA	Literary and informational analysis; argument; research; synthesis; narrative; opinion; text-based responses
Mathematics	Justify solutions; explain reasoning; analyze errors; compare strategies; construct mathematical arguments
Science	Claims and explanations; CERs; data analysis; investigation records; conclusions; explanations of phenomena
Social Studies	Source analysis; evidence-based arguments; historical explanations; comparison of perspectives; civic writing; DBQs
Arts & Humanities	Reflection; critique; interpretation; creator/artist statements; explanation of artistic choices
Health & PE	Goal setting; reflection; self-assessment; wellness and decision-making responses
CTE	Technical writing; procedures; workplace communication; reports; proposals; career-specific documentation

6. Instructional Framework

Garrard County Schools will use a flexible writing cycle. The full process is appropriate for complex or publication tasks; shorter processes are appropriate when the purpose is immediate learning or demonstrating understanding.

READ / EXAMINE	THINK	WRITE	REVISE	COMMUNICATE
Study a text, problem, data set, investigation, image, experience, or other source.	Determine what matters; analyze evidence; make connections; reason.	Compose for a clear purpose, audience, discipline, and standard.	Use feedback, self-assessment, and revision when appropriate to improve the work.	Publish, present, explain, defend, reflect, or otherwise share thinking when appropriate.

Teachers should intentionally decide which parts of the cycle are needed for the learning purpose rather than requiring the same process for every writing task.

7. Text-Based & Evidence-Based Writing

Writing in Garrard County should frequently connect to what students are learning and to sources of information. Consistent with KAS, “text” may include print and digital texts, photographs, artwork, maps, graphics, data, multimedia, and other multimodal representations.

Students may be expected to...	Depending on the task, students may...
Use sources	Locate, select, evaluate, cite, compare, and synthesize information.
Use evidence	Identify relevant evidence and explain how it supports a claim, conclusion, or interpretation.
Communicate disciplinary thinking	Use vocabulary, structures, representations, and conventions appropriate to the content area.

8. Connection to GCS Instructional Systems

Existing GCS System	Writing Integration
Learning Targets	Writing tasks connect to the intended learning and clarify what students are expected to know, understand, or do.
PLCs	Teams examine student writing as evidence of learning and determine instructional responses.
Common Unit Assessments	When appropriate, constructed responses and other writing tasks provide evidence of content understanding and communication.
Instructional Walkthroughs / Learning Walks	Leaders look for evidence of students using writing to think, learn, demonstrate understanding, and communicate.
Professional Learning	PL supports disciplinary writing, text-based writing, feedback/revision, explicit language instruction, and effective writing strategies.
Continuous Improvement	Writing evidence informs reflection, planning, implementation, monitoring, analysis, and adjustment.

PLC guiding questions:

- What are students expected to learn?
- Where will students write to develop understanding?
- Where will students write to demonstrate understanding?
- What evidence or sources should students use?
- What does quality look like?
- What misconceptions or gaps are evident in student writing?
- What instructional response is needed?

9. Instructional Look-Fors

Writing implementation will be monitored through existing instructional leadership systems. Walkthroughs are intended to identify patterns, celebrate effective practice, and inform support—not simply to count writing assignments.

Look-for	Evidence may include
Purposeful writing	Students write to learn, demonstrate understanding, solve a problem, explain, analyze, argue, reflect, or communicate.

Grade-level content	Writing is connected to current KAS-aligned learning and disciplinary content.
Evidence & reasoning	Students use information, evidence, data, or sources and explain their thinking.
Disciplinary language	Students use vocabulary, structures, and conventions appropriate to the content.
Feedback & improvement	Students receive, discuss, and/or use feedback to strengthen their work when appropriate.

10. Language, Technology & Foundational Skills

Area	District Expectation
Language resources	Students use varied print, digital, multimodal, and other appropriate resources to read, write, research, collaborate, and communicate.
Technology	Technology supports research, drafting, collaboration, revision, creation, publication, and multimodal communication; it does not replace explicit writing instruction.
Handwriting	Kindergarten–Grade 1: explicit print handwriting instruction. Grades 2–3: explicit cursive handwriting instruction, consistent with applicable standards.
Scaffolds	Teachers use appropriate supports such as models, exemplars, sentence frames, graphic organizers, vocabulary resources, and oral rehearsal, with the goal of increasing student independence.

11. Assessment & Data Use

Garrard County Schools will use a body of evidence to monitor student writing development. Writing proficiency will not be defined by a single product or assessment; rather, students should demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively across purposes, audiences, disciplines, and levels of complexity.

Evidence	Potential Use
Daily formative writing	Identify misconceptions, monitor understanding, and adjust instruction.
Student work samples	Examine quality, reasoning, evidence use, language, and growth over time.
Common/unit assessments	Measure content understanding and appropriate writing expectations.
Performance tasks / portfolios	Show application, sustained writing, revision, and communication across purposes.
Rubrics / exemplars	Clarify quality and support consistent feedback and self-assessment.

12. Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Primary Responsibilities
Superintendent	Adopt and publish the district-wide writing program; ensure implementation and periodic review.
District Leadership	Coordinate implementation; align resources and PL; monitor district evidence; support schools and communicate progress.
Principals	Lead school implementation; support teachers through coaching, PLCs, PL, and walkthroughs; monitor patterns of student writing.
Teachers	Provide purposeful, standards-aligned, discipline-specific writing; teach needed skills; provide feedback; use writing as evidence of learning.

SBDM Councils	Support school-level implementation within the district-wide framework and address school-specific needs.
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13. Equity, Access & Independence

Every student will have access to rigorous, meaningful writing connected to grade-level learning. Teachers will provide appropriate scaffolds while maintaining high expectations. Supports should be intentionally adjusted as students develop greater independence and control over their communication.

14. Continuous Improvement & Annual Review

Identify	Plan	Implement	Monitor	Analyze	Adjust
Student and system needs	Instructional response and supports	Writing experiences and PL	Student work, PLCs, walkthroughs	Patterns in learning and implementation	Programs, supports, and next steps

The district will review the writing program annually and revise it as needed based on student work, assessment evidence, implementation patterns, stakeholder feedback, changes to KAS/KDE guidance, and applicable legislation.

15. Our GCS Commitment

Writing is not an additional initiative; it is part of how we teach students to think, learn, and communicate.

Grow. Commit. Succeed.