



ALL PARTICIPATING MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
2021 DO THE WRITE THING
OCTOBER 2020

We have witnessed students from across the country plead that we, as a nation, ensure their safety and that 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. Through Do the Write Thing (DtWT), a hallmark program of the National Campaign to Stop Violence, we are heeding those calls and have been for the past 25 years. Through Do the Write Thing, we seek to empower youth, through their writings with the ability to reduce youth violence.

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 2021 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-four 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 1.2 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 at El Paso on Do the Write Thing found 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 12, 2021 for the submission of student writings, but each city will have their own deadline and method of submission so please check with your local DtWT coordinator or chair. Information for your local DtWT coordinator or chair can be found on our website, www.dtwt.org

If you have any questions, please call Lisa Cone at 1-800-256-0235. Thank you again for supporting this year’s DtWT. 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.