

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Title:** 2009-2010 Writing Assessment Plan

**Type of Executive Summary:**

- Action
- Action on First Reading
- Discussion
- Information

**Policy Implications:**

- Constitution \_\_\_\_\_
- General Statute # \_\_\_\_\_
- SBE Policy # \_\_\_\_\_
- SBE Policy Amendment
- SBE Policy (New)
- APA # \_\_\_\_\_
- APA Amendment
- APA (New)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Presenter(s):** Dr. Rebecca Garland (Chief Academic Officer, Academic Services and Instructional Support) and Ms. Angela Quick (Deputy Chief Academic Officer, Curriculum, Instruction, Technology and Accountability Services)

**Description:**

In June 2008, the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) adopted "A Framework for Change: The Next Generation of Assessments and Accountability" and subsequently directed the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to develop a new writing assessment system that would replace the annual on-demand writing tests at grades 4, 7, and 10 and to elevate the importance of writing throughout the K-12 curriculum. The new K-12 writing system includes authentic and on-demand writing assignments that mirror 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

In 2008-2009, students in grades 4 and 7 were asked to complete two content-specific writing assignments and two on-demand writing tasks. Students in grade 7 used word processing tools in order to complete their assignments. Most students in grades 4 and 7 housed their work in paper portfolios. Students in 18 pilot sites stored their work in an electronic portfolio. The SBE will hear findings from the first year of the writing project as well receive a proposal for the 2009-2010 writing assessment.

**Resources:**

N/A

**Input Process:**

Teacher surveys, on-site visits, stakeholder meetings

**Stakeholders:**

LEAs, administrators, teachers, students, parents

**Timeline For Action:**

This item is being presented for Discussion in April and will be returned for Action in May.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the State Board of Education consider the Department's proposal for the 2009-2010 writing assessment.

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**Audiovisual equipment requested for the presentation:**

- Data Projector/Video (Videotape/DVD and/or Computer Data, Internet, Presentations-PowerPoint preferred)  
Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
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Document Camera (for transparencies or paper documents – white paper preferred)

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Motion By: \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Vote: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Abstain \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_ Postponed \_\_\_\_\_ Revised \_\_\_\_\_  
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\*Person responsible for SBE agenda materials and SBE policy updates: Rick Klein, 919-807-3761



## NC Writing Instruction & Assessment System Pilot Lessons Learned and Proposed Adjustments for 2009-2010

Globally Competitive Students Committee - April 2009  
Draft for Discussion

### Overview

Consistent with the State Board of Education's (SBE) June 2008 mandate that the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) "change the current approach to writing assessment,"<sup>1</sup> DPI developed and piloted the new NC Writing Instruction & Assessment System (System) in the fall of 2008. Feedback from the field regarding the new System has thus far been mixed, with several clear messages emerging regarding what needs to change to improve the System, the means by which it is implemented, and the manner in which DPI supports LEAs in their implementation. To facilitate the SBE's discussion regarding the envisioned rollout of the System in 2009-10, this document will summarize the following:

- Details from the guiding *Framework for Change* directive
- DPI's vision for the System, including its intended goals
- Emerging findings from the ongoing 2008-09 System pilot
- Proposed implementation of the System for 2009-2010

### Details of the *Framework for Change* Directive

The June 2008 SBE mandate that DPI "change the current approach to writing assessment" was further qualified by the following specific directives:

1. To elevate the importance of writing throughout the curriculum, replace the current 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade writing assessments with a K-12 writing assessment system that includes authentic and on-demand writing assignments, appropriate to each grade level and backmapped from the graduation project.
2. Provide LEAs with rubrics that are aligned with the writing rubric used for the graduation project to use in assessing the K-12 writing assignments.
3. Provide for assessments to be housed and scored locally, and for DPI staff to conduct random audits to ensure that LEAs are employing the new assessment system appropriately.
4. Provide training and professional development to educators to ensure fidelity to the writing assessment process at each grade level.

Note that while the SBE mandate spoke explicitly only of "assessment," DPI has interpreted that mandate to include "instruction," as well, since assessment is a component of the instructional process. This interpretation is consistent with the Framework's directive to incorporate diagnostic/formative assessment into the state-guided assessment landscape.

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<sup>1</sup> SBE Framework for Change (June 5, 2008), Immediate Improvement #7, p.4.

## **Vision for the NC Writing Instruction & Assessment System**

Consistent with the SBE directive, DPI developed a vision for how to *ensure that students develop the writing skills needed to communicate effectively*.

The new System is built around the following guiding principles:

- To be competitive in 21<sup>st</sup> Century academic and/or occupational environments, a student must be able to communicate effectively through writing.
- Every student can learn to write effectively.
- Principles of effective writing are known and can therefore guide instruction regarding how to write effectively.
- The SBE must promote instructional and assessment practices that will produce students who can write effectively.
- Formative writing assessment, particularly when it feeds a constructive drafting-and-revising writing process, is an essential instructional practice.
- Writing assessment must be integrated into the content-based courses of instruction and be ongoing throughout the school year (rather than being a single-day event). Consequently, the System should not add layers of instruction and assessment to what is currently conducted in many classrooms throughout the state.
- All educators in a school building should be involved in crafting and implementing the building's plan for a coherent, integrated approach to writing assessment in the context of the regular course of instruction.
- Assignments and tasks should ...
  - be of instructional value.
  - be meaningful and interesting to students.
  - be locally scored.
  - produce immediate feedback that can be used to adjust instructional goals and delivery.

### **Note on Accountability**

The information that students, teachers, and schools receive from the writing and assessment System in 2008-09 and 2009-10 is intended to support the instructional process. This information will not be included in the formalized statewide accountability model. Currently, the 10<sup>th</sup> grade writing assessment is the only measure of writing included in the statewide accountability model. DPI may, in the future, conduct a standardized pulse-check on student achievement in writing using a sampling model similar to that used by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing assessment.

## Goals of the NC Writing Instruction & Assessment System

- To encourage **student writing throughout the school year.**
- To encourage **writing to be taught and assessed in all content areas.**
- To support schools in the use of writing assignments **as part of a formative assessment process** that informs instruction.
- To support schools and teachers in gathering local **benchmark and summative writing** data.
- To build a **school-level, shared understanding** of what constitutes clear, concise, and purposeful writing.
- To encourage educators to engage students in **complex, real-world writing assignments.**
- To encourage writing **to be taught through the use of an authentic writing process** involving draft-and-revise cycles and not as a preparation for a single, on-demand test.
- To electronically collect, through a centrally-hosted online portfolio system, ongoing student writing samples and scores that allow **educators to access student performance information** in order to modify instructional goals and delivery.
- To **provide educators an electronic system that will assist in providing timely feedback to students and parents** on student writing performance.
- To **encourage schools to build the capacity and scheduling practices necessary to administer assessments online** (anticipating that, in the near future, access to computers for instructional and assessment purposes will be a necessity, not a luxury).
- To **evaluate the need for future professional development programs in writing instruction** by analyzing actual student writing samples and educator scoring data.

## 2008-2009 NC Writing Instruction & Assessment System Pilot: Emerging Findings

DPI is compiling findings from the pilot after reviewing and discussing feedback gathered through:

- School site visits
- LEA conference calls
- Onsite meetings
- Email questions and correspondence
- 5,000+ survey responses on the new Writing Instruction & Assessment System pilot

The findings are preliminary, as many schools are still in the actual implementation.

**Most important emerging trend in the feedback:** Communication about purpose, logistics and implementation can be improved.

Teachers, administrators, and other LEA staff have provided valuable constructive criticism that will aid DPI in making adjustments to the System in the 2009-10 school year. Though many respondents have expressed that the change in focus to more authentic and integrated writing is a positive step, many LEAs have suggested that the time and effort needed to execute a plan of this magnitude was taxing on schools, especially since the school year had already begun. While the time line in 2009-2010 will mitigate some of the challenges, many of the challenges in execution must be addressed through better communication about the purpose of the new System and through provision of better tools to support implementation.

In order to address some of the LEAs' concerns, DPI has identified initial trends in the LEA feedback and has proposed measures to assist with the implementation of the System during the 2009-10 school year. These trends and proposed measures for addressing them are listed in the table on the following page.

Trend or Finding	Proposed Solutions	
<p><b>Clarity of Purpose</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The purpose of the System was not always clear to LEAs. Consequently, LEAs have implemented the System in ways other than how it was intended. In many cases, this has taken the form of treating the assignments more as tightly controlled standardized assessments than as authentic, classroom assessments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Earlier and more organized communication about the purpose of the System.</li> <li>Revised professional development focusing on achieving clarity of purpose of the System and the implications of the focus on “assessing for instruction.”</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Time from Instruction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School personnel have expressed concern about the amount of time devoted to the System.</li> <li>Many have suggested that it monopolized instruction time and/or required reorganization of the curriculum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making clear through resource guides that the writing that is already assigned within the classroom is the writing that can be captured in the System.</li> <li>Revised professional development - integrating the writing system into the current curriculum.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Comprehensive Guide to the Writing Instruction &amp; Assessment System</i></p>
<p><b>Time to Score</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers articulated dissatisfaction with the time involved in scoring the on-demand and content assignments, especially before they reached proficiency with the rubrics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requiring only a single scorer for on-demand for 2009-2010 (with option of dual-scorers for schools interested in determining how consistent teachers are in the use of the writing rubrics).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Including detailed descriptions of</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*purpose</li> <li>*components</li> <li>*implementation options</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proficiency in Scoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers expressed unease about the clarity of the rubrics and preparedness to score the assignments.</li> <li>Those responsible for scoring requested more information and examples of scoring, especially for content assignments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing multiple content area anchor and training sets in module two (<i>Assessing Writing Skills in the 21st Century</i>) of the PD Moodle.</li> <li>Revised professional development around scoring and rubrics.</li> <li>Revision and update of the assessment professional development Moodle.</li> </ul>	<p>This guide will emphasize using the online portfolio system to gather student work, provide feedback and determine trends in the achievement data. It will be a one-stop answer to all questions about writing.</p>
<p><b>Content Area Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some survey responders requested additional training and information about how to teach content writing and how to seamlessly integrate the writing system in the curriculum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revision and addition to Instructional Writing Moodle.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Computer Access</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LEAs articulated difficulty arranging computer access to students for writing assessments.</li> <li>LEAs expressed concern about monopolizing computers, scheduling conflicts and student preparedness for writing on the computer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish ‘best practices’ from the field on successful use of technology in writing.</li> <li>Allow LEAs/schools to self-select into online pilot for the 2009-2010 school year.</li> </ul>	

**Proposed Implementation of Writing Instruction & Assessment System for 2009-2010**

	<b>2008-2009 Pilot</b>	<b>Proposed for 2009-2010</b>	<b>Rationale for Decision</b>
<b>What is assessed?</b>	Two content-specific assignments and two on-demand tasks.	Two content-specific assignments and two on-demand tasks. The first on-demand tasks will be a diagnostic or benchmarking assessment depending on school preference.	Initially, the plan was to have four content-specific assignments in 2009-2010. Given the challenges heard from the field around logistics, we are proposing to keep the same number of assignments.
<b>Who will participate?</b>	General education and NCEXTEND 2 students in grades 4 and 7.	General education, NCCLAS and NCEXTEND 2 students in grades 4 and 7.	Inclusion of all populations following the standard course of study in the writing system.
<b>Who will use the electronic system to score and store student assignments?</b>	18 Pilot LEAs	Open to all LEAs or schools that wish to take advantage of the system.	Given both local school logistical capacity as well as budget, we will not mandate that the electronic system be used by all.
<b>When will student writing assignments be composed, collected and scored?</b>	1 On-demand in the Fall 1 Content-specific in the Fall 1 Content-specific in the Spring 1 On-demand in the Spring	On-demand - Sept/Oct Content-specific - Nov/Dec Content-specific – Jan/Feb On-demand – Mar/Apr	The dates are suggested but very much flexible. The first on-demand may be used as a diagnostic/pre-test in the early fall or may be used around mid-term as a benchmark of progress.
<b>Where can the on-demand tasks take place?</b>	In classrooms or computer labs	In classrooms or computer labs	Teachers are encouraged to give this assignment in a small group or individual setting. The environment should be controlled enough so as to ensure that the student is doing his or her own independent work.
<b>Where can the content-specific assignments take place?</b>	Classrooms Computer-Labs Media Centers Home Anywhere a student would do school work	Classrooms Computer-Labs Media Centers Home Anywhere a student would do school work	The content-specific assignment is not a “one-sitting” assessment but instead an authentic writing assignment using the draft-and-revise cycle.

	<b>2008-2009 Pilot</b>	<b>Proposed for 2009-2010</b>	<b>Rationale for Decision</b>
<b>How will the assignments be scored?</b>	2 scores for on-demand (both scoring the features and conventions) 2 scores for content-specific (1 of content and 1 of features/conventions)	1 score for on-demand (scoring the features and conventions) 2 scores for content-specific (1 of content and 1 of features/conventions)	Given the concern about time to score papers, the on-demand will be scored only once. The System will still have the capability of capturing multiple scores on assignments/tasks for the purposes of developing consistency around the rubric or checking the reliability of scoring. LEAs will continue to have the option of using this feature.
<b>Who chooses and gives the content-specific writing assignments?</b>	Teachers, LEA personnel	Teachers in consultation with students and in alignment with their long-term plan to teach the SCOS.	It is important to make the content-specific assignments a natural part of the SCOS for that particular content-area and, whenever possible, engage students in choosing topics that will engage them in writing.
<b>Who provides the on-demand tasks?</b>	NCDPI	NCDPI	Consistency state-wide.
<b>What are the restrictions on word processing tools?</b>	None on content-specific; Disabled spell-checker, etc. on the on-demand.	No restrictions on word processing tools on either on-demand tasks or content-specific assignments.	Students can safely assume the availability of these tools in the future when writing. This choice mirrors authentic writing scenarios and the future NAEP writing assessment.
<b>What types of data will be available to schools?</b>	Student score data	Student score data	This function of the System will allow schools to look at scores disaggregated in many different ways. In the electronic pilot, educators will be able to view the actual student work and how it was scored and use this information as a basis for professional development.

	<b>2008-2009 Pilot</b>	<b>Proposed for 2009-2010</b>	<b>Rationale for Decision</b>
<b>Who will lead the implementation of the System at the LEA level?</b>	LEA Test Coordinator LEA Instructional Leaders	LEA Instructional Leaders LEA Test Coordinator	The focus of the writing system is instruction and therefore will lie with the instructional leader in the LEA.  Testing and Tech Support staff will help with the implementation of the online system.
<b>What resources will schools have to guide successful implementation?</b>	Online Professional Development, Q+A, Writing TIPS, Test Admin Guide, Website	Additional and revised online PD courses; Complete, consolidated resource guide to assist in implementation.	Will eliminate misunderstandings about implementation and scoring from the pilot year. Will increase focus on assessment to inform instruction. Will fill gaps in curriculum guidance and online system operation.
<b>Will the data from the system be used in the accountability model?</b>	No (neither the ABCs nor AYP)	No (neither the ABCs nor AYP)	The purpose of the North Carolina Writing Instruction and Assessment System is to inform instruction and not for school-level accountability. The System includes auditing capabilities and the use of a NAEP-type sampling of student responses may be considered in the future.

## UPDATE April 2009

dpi 3/19/09 8:14 AM

Comment: April 2009 Update with comments

**Reprinting of this document is for background purposes. It includes comments that reflect proposed adjustments to the original writing plan presented to the board in August of 2008 based on the emerging findings from the 2008-2009 writing pilot.**

Important Note: In order to read and print this document and see the identified adjustments appropriately, the "comments" should be showing. **You should see a colored comment box in the upper right hand corner of this page.** If you do not, please go to the reviewing tool bar and choose "Final Showing Markup" from the drop-down menu.

## 08-09 Writing Assessment Proposal August 2008

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# I. Introduction to the New Writing Assessment

## Historical Information

North Carolina, believing that an emphasis on writing instruction was needed and that the measurement of writing would enhance instruction, began a statewide writing assessment program in 1983-84. While changes have occurred in the statewide writing assessment program over the years, the basic commitment to the instruction and assessment of writing has remained a major component of the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) and Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).

More recent changes in the writing assessment program began in September of 2001 when a process was initiated by the NCDPI staff that would result in the revision of the statewide writing assessment program including the rubrics and scoring procedures for grades 4, 7, and 10. Writing committees for each grade level were established that included general education teachers, English as Second Language (ESL) teachers, Exceptional Children (EC) teachers, curriculum specialists, principals, and university faculty. The North Carolina Writing Assessment Scoring Model was developed by NCDPI Testing and Development Section and NCSU-TOPS staff, refined by the writing assessment advisory committees, and approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) on January 9, 2003.

A pilot administration of the North Carolina Writing Assessment at grades 4, 7, and 10 was administered in March 2003 to all eligible students. The students in grades 4 and 7 received 75 minutes to respond to the on-demand prompt; students in grade 10 received 100 minutes. The writing assessments, the rubrics, the scoring model, and achievement level ranges were revised to reflect (1) the changes in the English/language arts curriculum emphasis and focus, and (2) the need to enhance the data analysis and reporting of student performance on the writing assessments. Changes to the North Carolina Writing Assessment at grades 4, 7, and 10 were implemented initially as an operational administration effective with the 2003-04 school year to reflect the revisions to the English/language arts curriculum adopted by the SBE (1999), the recommendations of the Writing Assessment Task Force (2001), and the recommendations of the SBE Ad Hoc Writing Committee (2002).

### **Type of Writing Assessed by Grade Level for General Assessment**

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Type of Writing</b>
4	Extended narrative response (personal or imaginative)
7	Extended argumentative response (problem/solution or evaluative)
10	Extended informational response (cause/effect or definition)

## Current Context

In June 2008 the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) adopted "A Framework for Change: The Next Generation of Assessments and Accountability" and subsequently directed the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to develop a new writing

assessment system that would replace the annual on-demand writing tests at grades 4, 7, and 10 and to elevate the importance of writing throughout the K-12 curriculum. The new K-12 writing system is to include authentic and on-demand writing assignments that mirror 21st century skills. The State Board of Education directed the NCDPI to prepare a transition plan for writing for 2008-2009 so there would be no lapse in writing assessments at grades 4, 7, and 10 while a new writing system is being developed. If possible, the 2008-2009 writing process could serve as a pilot for the new writing assessment system.

In response to the Board's charge, the NCDPI organized a writing committee and directed members to "push the envelope" and propose a writing assessment system design that is innovative and differs substantially from the traditional assessment of writing. The writing committee is composed of NCDPI staff representing the areas of Testing/Accountability, English/language arts, Exceptional Children, Comprehensive Support, Career and Technical Education, Technology, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Health, English as Second Language (ESL), and Foreign Languages as well as external members representing several LEAs, the North Carolina Office of School Readiness, and North Carolina State University. The writing committee determined by consensus at its first meeting that whatever was proposed must ensure that students learn to write for a variety of purposes and audiences and that student writing be clear, organized, concise, and purposeful. The committee examined assessment programs from several states, representing differing methods to assess writing, as well as current research conducted at the national level. The committee discussed at length instructional practices and test and measurement issues concerning a proposed new system. The committee determined that this new system needed to be capable of generating pertinent information at the student, classroom, school, district, and state levels.

**Update April 2009:** *The focus and purpose of the system is on instruction and assessment.*

### **Vision for a New Model of 21st Century Writing Assessment**

In keeping with the guiding mission of the SBE relative to 21st century assessments, the new North Carolina Writing Assessment System entails a paradigm shift from the traditional annual on-demand writing test to ongoing authentic writing assessments. This year-long assessment system will consist of **four** authentic, content-specific writing tasks/assignments (formative) and two on-demand writing tasks/assignments (one benchmark, the other summative). The content-specific tasks will involve prior reading and research that will culminate in a written product. The on-demand writing tasks will be similar to the traditional writing tests in which students will respond to prompts. During both types of writing sessions, middle grade students will complete their work using technology tools. In elementary school teachers may use their discretion regarding the appropriate use of technology tools for their students.

**Update April 2009:** *Proposing that only two content-specific assignments will be required in 2009-2010*

The new Writing Assessment System engages students in "real world" writing involving content-specific subject matter. Middle grade students, using tools such as a word processor to compose and edit their work and then saving and storing it in an electronic portfolio, will be engaged in a process or system that further prepares them for life and work in the 21st century. The system reinforces the belief that student writing should occur throughout the course of the school year, not just in preparation for a one time, isolated testing event, yet still includes an accountability measure through the use of the benchmark and summative components.


Middle grade students will use a centrally hosted, statewide electronic system to compose and store their writing tasks/assignments. Teachers will be able to access student work in the electronic portfolio in order to provide feedback and score the writing tasks/assignments. The electronic system will allow NCDPI to access student writing and to collect score data. Through the use of this electronic system, the NCDPI will have the capabilities to monitor compliance and to audit, ensuring that the assessment system produces results that are valid and reliable. Review of student writing will allow NCDPI to draw conclusions about student performance in writing across the state, determine areas for needed professional development, and provide useful feedback to teachers and administrators about student writing performance.

Elementary students will store their hand-written or word-processed products in paper portfolios. NCDPI will monitor student portfolios to ensure compliance and reliability.

### **2008-2009 Pilot**

In order to determine the appropriateness of the content, all students in grades 4 and 7 will complete two content-specific writing assignments and two on-demand writing tasks. Students in grade 7 will use word processing tools in order to complete their assignments. All 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, with the exception of students in ten pilot LEAs, will store their work in local portfolios. Teachers will use State rubrics to score student writing. NCDPI will monitor student portfolios to ensure compliance and check for reliability.

**Update April 2009:** Ultimately, the pilot had 18 participant LEAs.



In order to determine the efficacy of the electronic storage and retrieval system, students in ten LEAs will participate in a pilot that will closely approximate the electronic storage, uploading, and retrieval of student work. NCDPI staff will report to the SBE in September 2009 the specifics of the electronic pilot.

#### **Note:**

During 2008-2009 students in Grade 10 will participate in the traditional 10th Grade Writing Test. The Writing Committee will continue to discuss options for a new writing assessment system at the high school. Two components of that comprehensive system will be the English test at Grade 10 and the High School Graduation Project.

### **Professional Development**

The success of any instructional/test and measurement initiative depends heavily upon the quality and effectiveness of targeted professional development programs. Professional development for the North Carolina Writing Assessment System will be delivered to educators and stakeholders primarily electronically through the use of a moodle (online course management system). This professional development will consist of two courses: one specifically designed around the instruction of writing and the involvement of content teachers in the writing process, and the other focusing specifically on the assessment of student writing. The second course will focus on formative and summative assessment and on the use of the electronic system(s), scoring rubrics, scoring applications, and sample student responses.

Upon the successful completion of each course, participants will have the ability to print a certificate of completion, including a specific number of CEUs. This certificate can then be submitted by the participant to the LEA for professional development credit.

This paradigm shift from face-to-face to electronic professional development delivery empowers teachers and allows them to access training according to their schedules. The new Writing Assessment System also empowers teachers in that they are directly involved in the assessment process.

## II. A Comparison of Current and Proposed Writing Assessment

	Traditional Assessment of Writing	Proposed New Assessment of Writing for 4 and 7
<b>When we assess</b>	One prompt administered statewide on one day-historically during March	<b>Four</b> content-specific writing tasks/assignments (two in first year pilot) completed during the school year (formative), two on-demand tasks/assignments, one in late fall, one in late spring (benchmark, summative)
<b>How we assess</b>	Only paper/pencil administrations	Entire system at grade 7 electronic based
<b>Why we assess</b>	One score for accountability purposes	To collect formative and summative assessment data and use this data to provide feedback to improve student writing.
<b>How we assess</b>	Writing instruction delivered in preparation for a single day test	Year-long writing instruction (implementing the writing process) delivered across all content areas for different types of writing tasks/assignments
<b>How we train</b>	Professional development consisted of the publication of scorer training materials and online score applications	Professional development consists of online instructional modules, such as writing across the curriculum, formative assessment and online assessment modules such as understanding the various applications of the scoring rubrics, the differences between scoring content-specific writing tasks/assignments and on-demand tasks/assignments
<b>Who scores assessment</b>	Student responses scored by contractor	Student responses scored by educators/ teachers ( <b>2 independent</b> scorers for on-demand and 2 scorers for content-specific)

**Update April 2009:** Two content-specific writing tasks/assignments

**Update April 2009:** Proposing only requiring one scorer for the on-demand assignments.

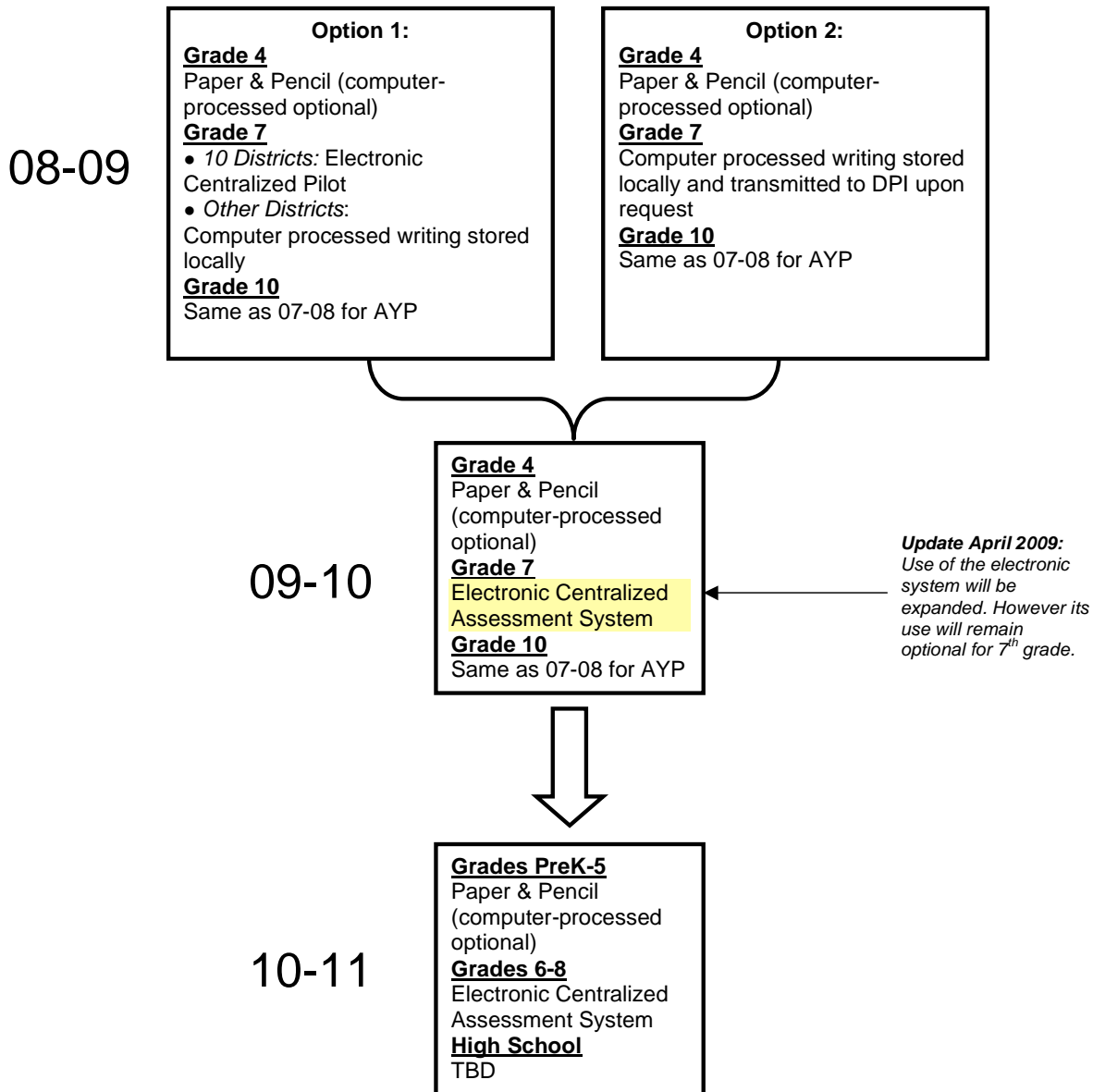
### Sample Prompts

In the new model, we ask students to perform authentic writing tasks that mirror what they will see in post-secondary education and in work. The right hand samples will allow for a richer and deeper assessment of student writing when compared with the traditional on-demand prompts in the left column.

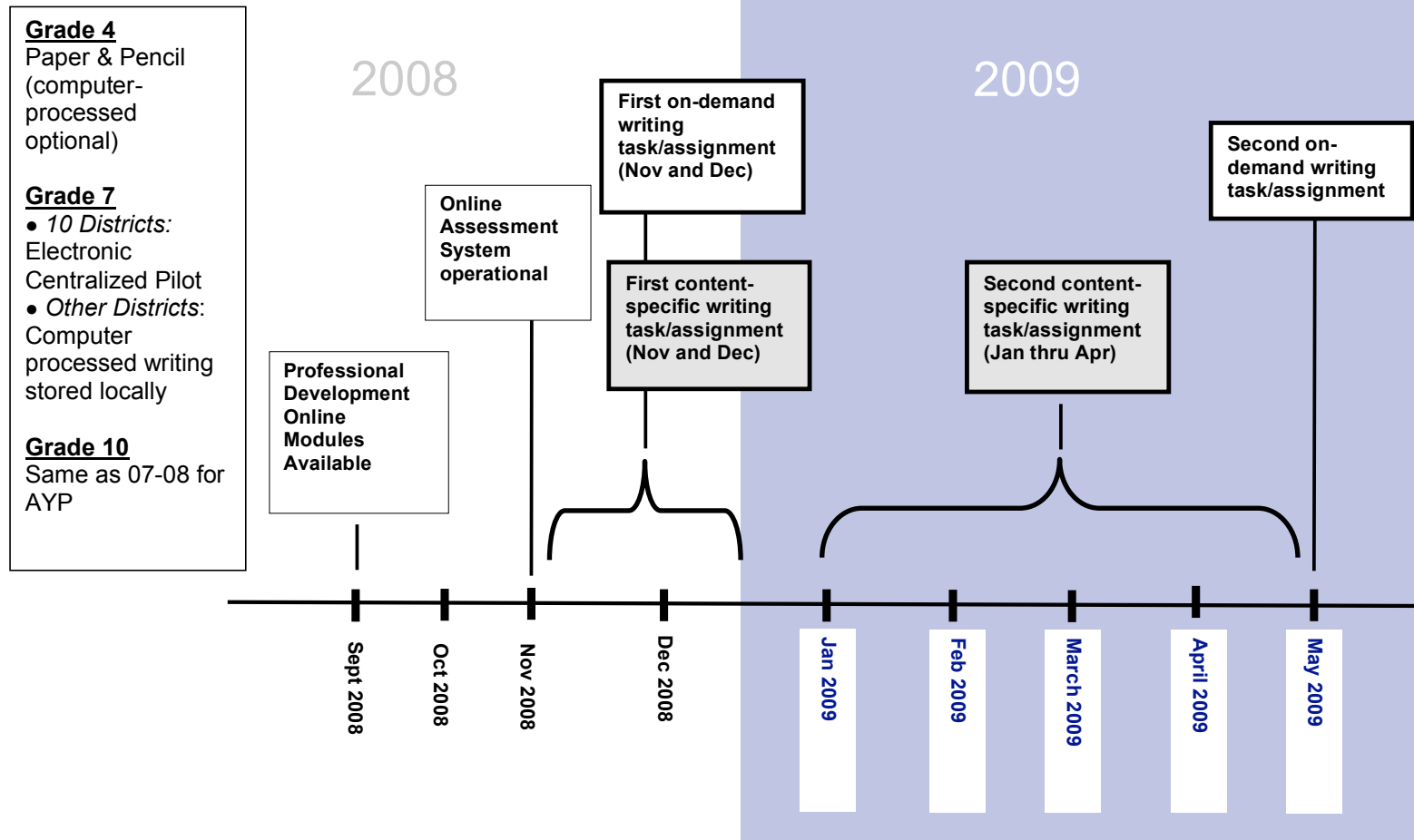
Sample On-Demand Prompt	Sample Authentic Content-Specific Prompt
<p>At the end of every school year, your principal chooses one way the school could be improved. Your principal bases the choice on recommendations from students. This year students proposed the following improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An outdoor lunch area</li> <li>New sports equipment for the gym</li> <li>Laptop for student checkout</li> </ul> <p>Write a letter to your principal justifying which improvement would be <b>best</b> for your school.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>• MUSIC •</b></p> <p><i>Choose two famous musicians with differing styles, rhythm, and repertoires. Compare the interpretation of the same song performed by both musicians. Be sure to include correct music terminology. Your assignment is not to exceed 700 words.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>• MATH •</b></p> <p><i>Julie would like to divide a small plot of land (200 ft x 150 ft) into two sections. One section is for her horses and one section is for her vegetable garden. She wants to use fencing she already has that can make almost any shape. She has 110 pieces of fencing. Each piece is 4 yards long. <b>How could Julie divide her land so that the fenced in area for the horses is as large as possible and there is enough land left for the vegetable garden?</b></i></p> <p><i>Be sure to include</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A written report explaining which geometric shape would work best for Julie</li> <li>Calculations, charts, or graphs which support your opinion</li> <li>A rule or statement about how the area and shape of any fenced in area are related mathematically</li> </ul> <p><i>Your assignment is not to exceed 700 words/characters.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>• SCIENCE •</b></p> <p><i>Write a letter to the editor concerning animal rights and the protection of endangered species. Be sure your letter to the editor includes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A logical, defensible position</li> <li>An historical background of this issue</li> <li>The position of advocacy groups speaking out on this issue</li> <li>Specific examples and projections for the future</li> </ul> <p><i>Your assignment is not to exceed 700 words.</i></p>

### III. Implementation and Timelines

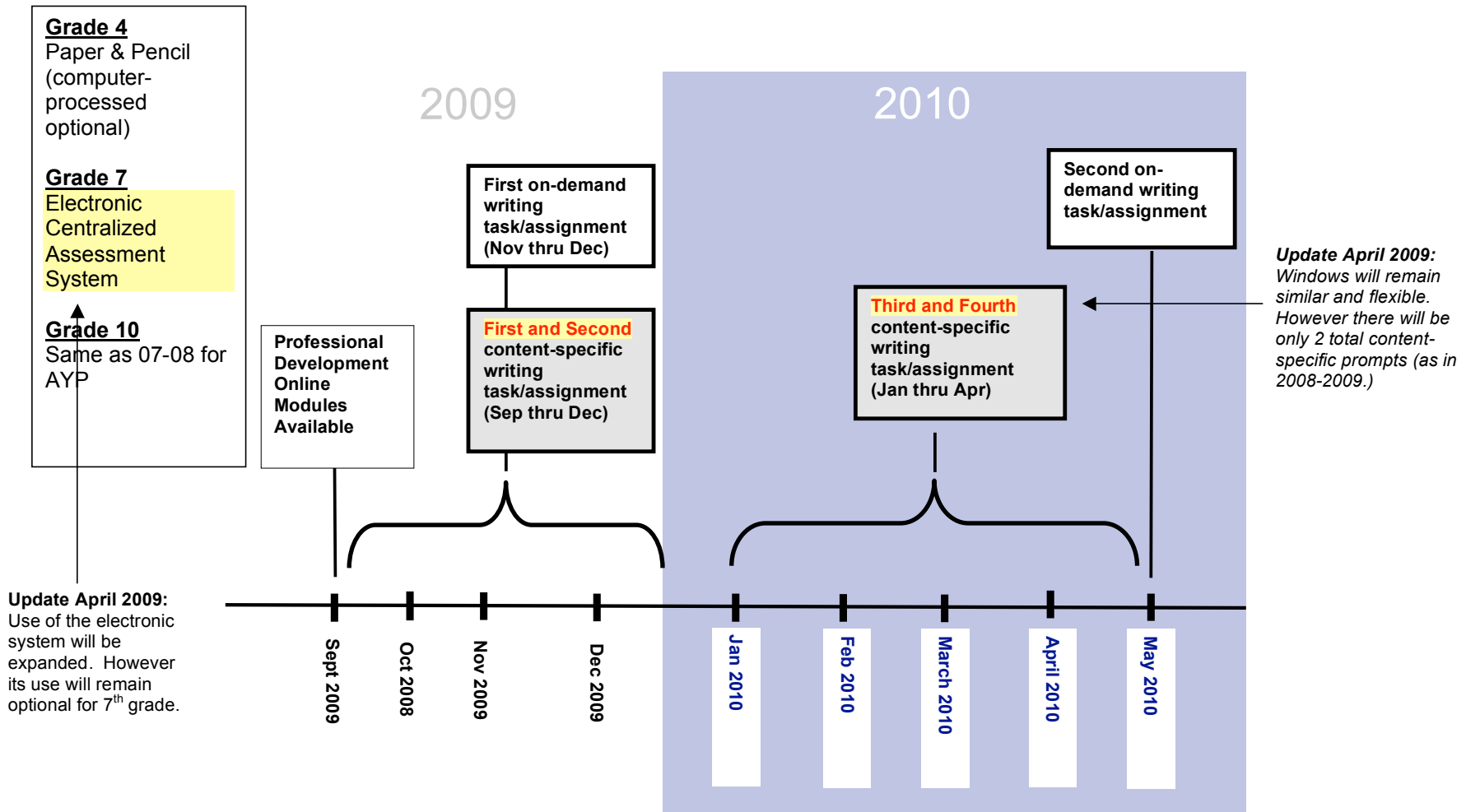
Currently DPI is considering the following implementation scenarios. The vision is the same starting in 09-10 however two options can be pursued in 08-09 to achieve the same step forward in writing assessment.



**Timeline for 08-09 Writing Pilot**

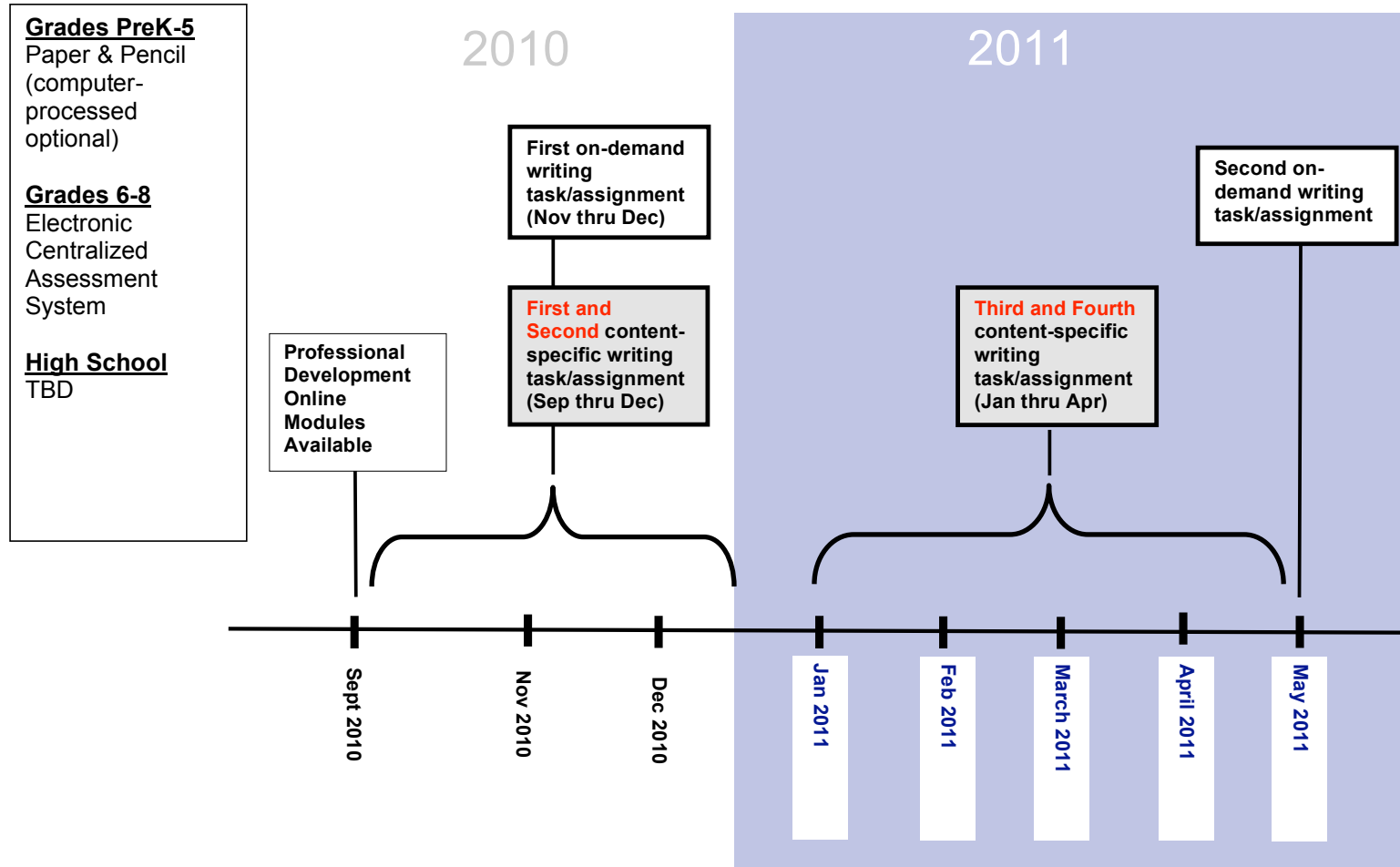


**Timeline for 09 - 10 Writing Pilot**



Update April 2009: Proposed plan for 2010-2011 to be determined.

### Timeline for 10 - 11 Writing Pilot



## IV. Rubrics

### Content Area Rubric

This scoring rubric applies to the content-specific writing tasks/assignments in content areas such as Mathematics, Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities, Arts, Technology, etc and will be used in conjunction with the writing features and convention rubrics below.

Points	Descriptions
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student response addresses all aspects of the writing task/assignment</li><li>• All directions are followed</li><li>• Appropriate and accurate specific examples are cited and explained</li><li>• Sound reasoning is employed</li><li>• Use of the skills of evaluation, analysis, and synthesis is apparent</li></ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student response addresses most aspects of the writing task/assignment</li><li>• Most directions are followed</li><li>• Appropriate examples are cited and explained, however, some inaccurate information is included</li><li>• Reasoning employed is on the inferential level</li><li>• Use of the skills of synthesis and analysis is apparent</li></ul>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student response addresses some aspects of the writing task/assignment</li><li>• Some directions are followed</li><li>• Some examples may be cited, may attempt to be explained, and inaccurate information is included</li><li>• Reasoning employed is on the concrete level</li><li>• Use of literal skills is apparent</li></ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student response addresses no aspect of the writing task/assignment</li><li>• Few or no directions are followed</li><li>• Examples, if cited, are inaccurate or inappropriate</li><li>• There is little or no evidence of any reasoning employed</li><li>• There is little or no evidence of any apparent skills</li></ul>

## Writing Features Rubric

The writing features rubric will be used to assess both the on-demand responses and content-specific writing tasks. The writing features rubric has been back-mapped to the NC Graduation Project.

<b>Points</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topic/subject is clear, though it may or may not be explicitly stated</li><li>• Maintains focus on topic/subject throughout the response</li><li>• Organizational structure establishes relationships between and among ideas and/or events</li><li>• Consists of a logical progression of ideas and/or events and is unified and complete</li><li>• Support and elaboration are related to and supportive of the topic/subject</li><li>• Consists of specific, developed details</li><li>• Exhibits skillful use of vocabulary that is precise and purposeful</li><li>• Demonstrates skillful use of sentence fluency</li></ul>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topic/subject is generally clear, though it may or may not be explicitly stated</li><li>• May exhibit minor lapses in focus on topic/subject</li><li>• Organizational structure establishes relationships between and among ideas and/or events, although minor lapses may be present</li><li>• Consists of a logical progression of ideas and/or events and is reasonably complete, although minor lapses may be present</li><li>• Support and elaboration may have minor weaknesses in relatedness to and support of the topic/subject</li><li>• Consists of some specific details</li><li>• Exhibits reasonable use of vocabulary that is precise and purposeful</li><li>• Demonstrates reasonable use of sentence fluency</li></ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topic/subject may be vague</li><li>• May lose or may exhibit lapses in focus on topic/subject</li><li>• Organizational structure may establish little relationship between and among ideas and/or events</li><li>• May have major lapses in the logical progression of ideas and/or events and is minimally complete</li><li>• Support and elaboration may have major weaknesses in relatedness to and support of the topic/subject</li><li>• Consists of general and/or undeveloped details, which may be presented in a list-like fashion</li><li>• Exhibits minimal use of vocabulary that is precise and purposeful</li><li>• Demonstrates minimal use of sentence fluency</li></ul>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topic/subject is unclear or confusing</li><li>• May fail to establish focus on topic/subject</li><li>• Organizational structure may not establish connection between and among ideas and/or events</li><li>• May consist of ideas and/or events that are presented in a random fashion and is incomplete or confusing</li><li>• Support and elaboration attempt to support the topic/subject but may be unrelated or confusing</li><li>• Consists of sparse details</li><li>• Lacks use of vocabulary that is precise and purposeful</li><li>• May not demonstrate sentence fluency</li></ul>
<b>NS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This code may be used for compositions that are entirely illegible or otherwise unscorable: blank responses, responses written in a foreign language, restatements of the prompts, and responses that are off topic or incoherent.</li></ul>

## Writing Conventions Rubric

The writing conventions rubric will be used to assess both the on-demand responses and content-specific writing tasks.

Points	Descriptions
2	<p><b>Exhibits reasonable control of grammatical conventions appropriate to the writing task</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibits reasonable control of sentence formation</li> <li>• Exhibits reasonable control of standard usage including agreement, tense, and case</li> <li>• Exhibits reasonable control of mechanics including use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>Exhibits minimal control of grammatical conventions appropriate to the writing task</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibits minimal control of sentence formation</li> <li>• Exhibits minimal control of standard usage including agreement, tense, and case</li> <li>• Exhibits minimal control of mechanics including use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling</li> </ul>
0	<p><b>Lacks control of grammatical conventions appropriate to the writing task</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lacks control of sentence formation</li> <li>• Lacks control of standard usage including agreement, tense, and case</li> <li>• Lacks control of mechanics including use of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling</li> </ul>

## V. Writing Professional Development

Two professional development courses, each with three modules, will be offered on-line. All teachers must complete and demonstrate mastery of the content in these modules.

Writing Assessment System Online Course	Writing Instructional Delivery Online Course
<p><b>Module 1— Writing Assessment System Operation</b> Designed to Answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the computer requirements for the writing assessment system?</li> <li>• How do I operate the computer system functions for the writing assessment system?</li> <li>• What are the steps for operation?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Operations to be performed BEFORE each assessment window</li> <li>○ Operations to be performed DURING each assessment window</li> <li>○ Operations to be performed AFTER each assessment window</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When will each assessment window open and close for the submission of student responses and scoring the student responses?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Module 1 - Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC):</b> Designed to Answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is the Teacher as a Writer powerful and how does it effect classroom instruction?</li> <li>• How do teachers use writing to help students learn?</li> <li>• How can teachers implement writing across and among the content areas?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 2— Writing Assessment System Introduction:</b> Designed to answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the writing assessment system?</li> <li>• Who has to participate in the writing assessment system?</li> <li>• When do I start participating in the writing assessment system?</li> <li>• How is the writing assessment system used in Accountability?</li> <li>• Why is this system being piloted at Grades 4 and 7?</li> <li>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Module 2 - Understanding Types of Writing Assessments:</b> Designed to Answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is effective feedback and how do I to provide it to students?</li> <li>• What are the purposes of formative assessment, and how does it support writing across content areas?</li> <li>• What are strategies for implementing formative assessment within classroom instruction?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module 3— Writing Assessment System Scoring</b> Designed to answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of responses will students be asked to submit for the writing assessment system?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Authentic writing tasks/assignments—4 total from different content areas (2 each semester)</li> <li>○ On-Demand submissions—2 total from state-provided prompts (1 each semester)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What are the criteria for scoring the writing assessment submissions?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Content Area rubric and composing features</li> <li>○ On-Demand rubric and composing features</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Module 3 - Deconstructing Writing Tasks &amp; Using Rubrics:</b> Designed to Answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the types of writing tasks and how are they constructed?</li> <li>• How to evaluate a writing sample using a rubric as an assessment tool?</li> </ul>

\*More detailed outlines of the modules are available.