

*Johnson County Schools  
Writing Benchmark Initiative  
2009-2010 School Year*

*Statement of Beliefs*

*Every teacher is accountable to teach the writing component of the state English/language arts curriculum for their grade-levels/subject areas, and to prepare students for the TCAP Writing Assessments that are given in grades 5, 8 and 11. The TCAP Writing Assessment measures students' writing skills that have been developed and built-upon through every grade in school, not just the grade in which they are tested by the state. In Johnson County Schools, every teacher is expected to provide relevant opportunities for their students to write in every subject and every course.*

*Purpose of the Writing Benchmark Initiative*

*The purpose of the Writing Benchmark Initiative is two-fold:*

- To measure progress toward improved student achievement on the TCAP Writing Test*
- To drive follow-up lesson planning and writing instruction based on student needs*

*Types of Writing for Benchmarks*

*Because writing skills are continually developed each year, the following types of writing will be used for Benchmarks:*

- Grades K-5:       Narrative*
- Grades 6-8:      Expository*

- *Grades 9-11: Persuasive (Students taking Special Education English courses who have not yet taken the TCAP Writing Test will participate in the Writing Benchmark Initiative in their Special Education English class.)*

### **Administration of Benchmarks**

*The administration of Benchmarks will be the same as the administration of the TCAP Writing Assessment with a 35 minute time-limit for all grade levels. There will be no teacher assistance/help for students during the Benchmark, except for students with required accommodations. Students in grades 9-11 will be required to use an ink pen for the Benchmarks, just as they are required on the Grade 11 TCAP Test.*

### **Benchmark Schedule**

*Writing Benchmarks will be administered two times (with a two-week window) each school year in grades K-11:*

- *October 5-16*
- *January 11-22*

### **Distribution of Benchmarks**

*The week prior to the Benchmark window, Paula Norton will email the Benchmarks to principals who will forward them to teachers. The Benchmarks will be in official test form with lined paper similar to the actual TCAP Writing Test in grades 3-11. Designated writing paper will be provided to each school to be used for Writing Benchmarks in grades K-2.*

### *Make-Ups for Absent Students*

*It is expected that every student will be administered the Benchmarks. Make-up Benchmarks will be given to students who are absent on the day Benchmarks are administered to the class.*

### *Rubric*

*To maintain consistency throughout the grades, the TCAP Test rubric will be used by all grade levels to holistically score the Benchmarks. Anchor papers will be used with the rubric to facilitate scoring.*

### *Anchor Papers*

*Every teacher who administers Writing Benchmarks will receive a set of anchor papers for his/her grade level. Teachers will use the set of anchor papers and the state rubric to score Benchmarks.*

### *Score Reports*

*Teachers will have one week to score their students' Benchmarks and complete a Score Report Form. Teachers will submit their Score Report Form to their principal who will forward the forms to Paula Norton at the central office. The due dates for the Score Report Forms are:*

- *October 23*
- *January 22*

### *Benchmark Papers*

*Each school's Writing Benchmark Initiative Committee (WBIC) member/s will collect the original Benchmark papers immediately*

*following each Benchmark assessment. The WBIC members will bring all the Benchmark papers to the WBIC 2010 Summer In-Service.*