

**Developing Students' Writing through Office of Schools Support**  
Student Academy High School, January 14, 2013

**Participants:** Johnny Wilson, Jessica Davis, Pamela Mendez, Vanessa Madden, Jermaine O'Brien, David Coons, Katie Fischer, Kristen Pena, Samir Lamberg, Claudia Mason, Camille Harkin, Emily Ventura

**Topic:** Identify the core skills the team will focus on in the pilot.

**Attachments:** Action Plan

**Definition of Skills**

Meeting participants reviewed the areas in which students have been struggling based on a discussion of student work and experience. Through this they arrived at three key insights:

- **Students have trouble distinguishing fact from opinion.** In a number of written pieces, students make statements that are opinion and do not appear aware that they can or should connect this to evidence or facts.
- **Students are not in the habit of revising.** When students receive feedback, virtually none choose to submit revisions and when revisions are required they generally include virtually no changes.
- **Students do not introduce concepts.** Student writing tended to move immediately into an explanation without any overview or introduction. Some teachers thought this may have to do with skills in outlining and revising.

**Identifying Skills / Behaviors**

Meeting participants reviewed the CCLS Writing Standard and a summary of key Academic Behaviors to determine which skills and behaviors would be **most beneficial** to track on a weekly basis to **provide feedback to students and to inform planning and instruction.** They used following criteria to guide this process:

- I think that this skill / behavior is **foundational to building critical thinking and writing skills**
- I think I could get **accurate information** about this skill or behavior on a weekly basis
- I think I could **make progress** in improving this skill or behavior

After a "dot vote" to narrow choices, a set of 3 skills / behaviors were identified:

Skill	Reasons for Selection
Draw <b>evidence from literary or informational texts</b> to support analysis, reflection, and research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students tend to write about what they think or feel, but often don't support it with evidence.</li> <li>• Critical skill for both Regents and post-secondary success.</li> <li>• Can be assessed through extensive tasks or shorter assignments..</li> </ul>
Develop and strengthen <b>writing</b> as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students fight the revision process and don't understand the importance of revising a work product based on actionable feedback → critical for post-secondary success.</li> <li>• Revision helps build students' resiliency.</li> </ul>
Introduce <b>precise claim(s)</b> , distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many students still struggle with this, and it is foundational to the rest of argument writing.</li> <li>• Can be assessed through extensive tasks or shorter assignments.</li> </ul>

**Next Steps**

- **Jessica** will schedule the next team meeting with Ana by **May 15**, to develop rubrics / checklists

**Comment [MR1]:** The header should start with a topic that is meaningful and, beneath that, list the site and date of the discussion.

**Comment [MR2]:** At top, provide a list of all participants from the school or site.

**Comment [MR3]:** Provide a clear and focused description of the topic that makes it easy to reference in the future.

**Comment [MR4]:** List any attachments

**Comment [MR5]:** Brief descriptions with bold introductory subheads that summarize the concept in 7 words or less make it easy to review information.

**Comment [MR6]:** Briefly state the things that occurred such that an outside reader could look back at it and know what went on. Do not dwell on these, they are only important for context, rarely for substance.

**Comment [MR7]:** Use bullet points and boldface to highlight important information. Remember that often the boldface is the **only thing** people will read.

**Comment [MR8]:** When possible, number things so that there is a definitive and clear list people can work from.

**Comment [MR9]:** Use tables or simple paragraphs to organize information.

**Comment [MR10]:** End with clear next steps, listing each individual step with a bullet point that ideally fits in no more than 2 lines, with the name of the person responsible and the date by which it will be done included and in boldface. If you notice that you have more than 3 next steps ascribed to one person, ask whether these need to be reduced or combined.

**Comment [MR11]:** In a footer, include the name of the Eskolta facilitator(s) to make it easy to follow-up if needed.