



TO: All Participating Middle School Teachers
FROM: The Honorable Lori A. Dumas, Chair, Do the Write Thing Philadelphia
DATE: September 2019
SUBJECT: 2020 "Do the Write Thing" Challenge

Thank you for taking the time to involve your 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in the 2020 **"Do the Write Thing" Challenge**. Starting this fall, you will be joined by thousands of other classroom teachers from across the United States in a coordinated, unique effort to give students the opportunity to communicate their thoughts on the impact of youth violence on their lives and to make personal commitments to reduce violence. This program can make a very positive difference in your relationship with your students and help reduce the level of violence in your school. According to a Chicago teacher, "The *Do the Write Thing Challenge* Program is responsible for one of the most important things that happened in a classroom during all the years I have been a teacher. After the children had the opportunity to write on the issue of violence, discussion in the classroom became open and extraordinarily emotional. The ultimate result was positive beyond a teacher's wildest expectations."

In July of 2020, if your student is selected as a National Ambassador, you will be invited by the National Campaign to Stop Violence to attend the "Do the Write Thing" Challenge National Recognition Week in Washington, D.C. (travel and accommodations included). During previous National Recognition Weeks, "Do the Write Thing" National Ambassadors have met with a United States Supreme Court Justice, the United States Secretary of Education, the Attorney General of the United States, the United States Secretary of the Interior, Members of Congress and other prominent Americans to discuss the problem of youth violence. In addition, the students were honored at an embassy reception hosted by the Ambassador from the State of Kuwait to the United States and the book of their writings was placed in the Library of Congress, ensuring that the student's words will be available to all. For more information about the National Recognition Week please go to www.dtwt.org.

Enclosed is a packet titled Instructions for Classroom Teachers, which explains this year's **"Do the Write Thing" Challenge** in more detail. This packet includes information about program rules, entry deadlines, selection criteria, classroom discussion and student recognition. In addition you will find a brief summary of UTEP's research outlining the benefits of using the **DtWT Challenge** and information on how OJJDP's campaign on "Changing Minds" dovetails with the **DtWT Challenge**. Feel free to visit the national Do the Write Thing website, www.dtwt.org, to view more

information about the Challenge, as well as a video highlighting National Recognition Week. **Note that student writings are to be submitted to the local coordinator for the National Campaign to Stop Violence by 5:00 PM by Friday, March 13, 2020.**

If you have any questions or require writing pick-up arrangements, please contact Brooke Hutchins, Esquire at brooke.hutchins@courts.phila.gov or email dtwtphilly@gmail.com. Thank you again for participating in this year's program. We wish your students success and hope to see you and one of your students in Washington, D.C. next July.