Literacy is critical to success in the 21st century, and students who lack basic writing skills face considerable barriers to success within and after school. Students who do not learn to write well earn lower grades, especially when written tests and reports are used to assess learning. Students who struggle to write are less likely to use writing to support and extend what they are learning in their classes. As a result, students who lack basic writing skills are at a considerable disadvantage, both in the classroom and in the work force.

Over 60% of 8th graders in the U.S. are not proficient writers. NAEP Writing Assessment, 2007

Writing is a powerful, proven tool for improving reading and understanding across the subject areas. Some effective practices include

• Asking students to write about the texts they read;
• Teaching students the skills needed to create writing; and
• Increasing the amount of time that students spend writing.

Successful writers are successful students in the classroom and beyond!

The Kākau mea nui Project will work with teachers in all subject areas to

• Increase the amount of writing that students do on a daily basis;
• Engage students in the writing process; and
• Teach students the six traits of effective writing.

Students in 4th to 8th grades will use the web-based writing program My Access! to practice their writing skills and receive immediate feedback.
Writing at Home

How can you support your child’s writing? Engage your student in writing projects at home!

**Write a note:** Encourage your child to write a “thank you” note, a birthday card, or a postcard to Aunty or Tutu.

**Write a grocery list:** Ask your child to write down items needed at the grocery store.

**Write a contract:** Reflect on your child’s responsibilities at home and at school. Work together to write a contract for your expectations.

**Write a review:** Read a book or watch a movie with your child, and then write a quick review in a journal.

**Write a caption:** Create a scrapbook with your child. Allow your child to write captions for some photos that you include.

"The act of writing brings with it a sense of discovery, of discovering on the page something you didn’t know you knew until you wrote it."

-Author unknown

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