

## *Writing Challenge: A perfect virtual project*

For teachers who are looking for an idea that not only focuses on learning standards but also prepares students for state assessments, Buckeye Community Hope Foundation's (BCHF) Writing Challenge is an excellent option. This year's theme is "Seeking Justice," an important and crucial conversation for classrooms at all grade levels.

The elementary prompt (grades three through five) asks students to find an injustice in their world (their school, the country, their friend group) and to write a letter to someone in a position of power, urging that person to make change that will address the inequities of their chosen topic.

Middle school students (grades six through eight) and high school students are all reading a novel on which they will concentrate on either a character's influence on social justice or on whether or not the plot and setting of the novel are relevant to the world today.

Last October, BCHF staff hosted a roundtable for teachers to give them an opportunity to suggest novel titles and to discuss how the Writing Challenge would work with their students. In November, students joined their teachers with BCHF School Improvement team members to start the first Student Voice Book Talk. In December, students came together again to discuss the books they were reading and how they were going to begin their writing challenge.

Student book talks will continue in January and February (see details on pgs. 9 & 10) to allow student scholars to participate in enlightening discussions with students from across the state and with teachers.

Even schools that haven't yet started the Writing Challenge with their students can participate – it's not too late! Writing Challenge materials – including a lengthy list of possible book titles that could be used for the challenge -- were sent to school leaders early November.

This challenge makes a perfect virtual project that students can work on independently. Teachers can teach small lessons on elements of the writing process (brainstorming, writing a thesis, how to cite textual evidence, characterization, etc.), then assign students to work independently on various aspects of the paper. Students can then bring that independent work back in breakout rooms or small groupings to revise, critique and edit each other's work.

Submissions are due March 15. Need another packet sent to your school or help getting started? Please contact Mindy Farry at [mfarry@buckeyehope.org](mailto:mfarry@buckeyehope.org).

