



STATE OF UTAH

SPENCER J. COX
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
84114-2220

DEIDRE M. HENDERSON
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Sept. 15, 2023

Dear Educator:

The Office of the Governor and the Utah State Board of Education invite you and your students to participate in Utah's 24th Annual *Do the Write Thing Challenge*.

The challenge offers seventh and eighth grade students across the state an opportunity to examine the impact of youth violence on their lives and then write what they think should be done to change the culture of violence. Personal responsibility is emphasized by encouraging students to commit to doing something about the problem. The program ultimately strives to help them break the cycle of violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. As the current climate with social media and social environment, the DtWT challenge offers the opportunity for students to express their views in a non-threatening manner teachers should encourage students to participate.

Two writings per participating school will be selected as the state's finalists and will be invited to attend a recognition luncheon where the top two authors will be announced in April 2024. State finalists will receive a scholarship deposit to Utah's my529 Education Saving Account. The top two writings will represent Utah where their essays will be published and placed in the Library of Congress.

Teachers are encouraged to incorporate the challenge into their regular classroom curriculum. Lesson plans can be found on the website at www.schools.utah.gov/prevention/dtwf. Rules, entry forms and additional information are also available on the website. The following is a list of ideas for the classroom:

- English: Use as an essay or poetry-writing assignment.
- Health: Discuss personal safety and well-being of others.
- Civics: Conduct an exercise on personal and civic responsibility.
- History: Use an historical perspective to examine youth violence.

The deadline for entries is Jan. 12, 2024. The 2023 challenge involved more than 1,100 students participating in classroom discussions about youth violence with more than 750 submitting essays from 20 different teachers. We look forward to increasing these numbers in the 2024 challenge.

We encourage your students' participation and look forward to this year's challenge.

Sincerely,

Spencer J. Cox
Governor