

Appendix A: Recruitment Materials

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Appendix A1 –[District Administrator] Emails and Phone Call Talking Points

Template for [District Administrator] Email

Subject: Invitation to participate in REL Pacific’s Secondary Writing Toolkit evaluation study

Dear [District Administrator],

We are reaching out to you as [district] is eligible to take part in a study of the Secondary Writing Toolkit (“the Toolkit”), sponsored by the United States Department of Education (ED) in spring 2025.

The Toolkit has been developed to help educators implement the evidence-based practices outlined in the Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively Practice Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/22>). In other words, it reflects a translation of the research to practice. The Toolkit includes resources to support teachers’ Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and use of evidence-based instructional strategies in their own classrooms. A select group of schools in [site] will have the opportunity to try the Secondary Writing Toolkit in advance of public release as part of an implementation study conducted by researchers at Abt Global. The study will provide professional learning to coaches or teachers, allowing them to serve as peer facilitators who lead the PLCs within [district]’s schools.

Will you consider supporting this important work?

We would like to invite schools within your [unit of jurisdiction] to participate in this important work because we understand that writing instruction is a priority in [state]. We need your support and approval to reach out to the schools in your [unit of jurisdiction]. If they chose to join the study and can assure that teacher(s) and the administrator agree to participate, schools will receive the toolkit and professional development supports in the spring semester of 2025. Teachers will be asked to participate in a professional learning community spanning 4 to 5 months (each PLC will last about 1 hour). Peer facilitators (an eligible teacher or potentially another educator) will receive some additional professional learning (about 6–8 hours) to support their skills in leading these PLCs. School administrators and participating teachers and peer facilitators will be asked to participate in study data collection, including teacher instructional logs and an administrator survey. Teachers and peer facilitators will also be asked to complete a professional learning tracker and to participate in a focus group at the end of the year. To show our appreciation and help offset the costs of participation in data collection, we will be able to provide incentives to participating educators (see attached FAQ for details). We will also be able to provide participating schools with \$5,500, which may be used to support any costs of participation.

We’re asking for your approval to reach out to the schools serving grades 6-8 within your [unit of jurisdiction] and, if possible, your support in facilitating introductions. If we don’t hear from you by [date], we’ll give you a call to follow up.

<Contact Name>

<Contact Role and information>

Talking Points for [District Administrator] Call

- Introduction.
 - Detailed description of toolkit and alignment to [state's] priorities.
 - How schools in the [unit of jurisdiction] were identified for participation and eligibility requirements.
 - Clarify Abt's role in toolkit evaluation.
- Review intervention and study.
 - Length of study.
 - Breakdown of benefits for school, teachers, and students.
- Questions?
- Request for support/approval.
 - Next steps for reaching out to school administrators.
 - Best approach/approaches for demonstrating [district administrator's] support for study.
- Next steps.
 - Follow-up calls (if needed).
 - Ask for help in reaching out to school administrators—send letter to school administrators and convene information session, at which we'll speak.
 - Other.

Appendix A2 – Preliminary Letters to School Administrators and Teachers

Template for Letter [District Administrator] to School Administrators (to be lightly edited as appropriate to, for example, suit the role and context or reflect any prior communications)

Dear [School Administrator],

Effective writing is considered an important skill in [site]. We are reaching out to you as [district] has agreed to take part in a study of the Secondary Writing Toolkit, conducted by Abt Global and sponsored by the United States Department of Education (ED) in spring 2025.

The US Department of Education-funded Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) for the Pacific region, in partnership with WestEd, developed the Secondary Writing Toolkit has help educators implement the evidence-based practices outlined in the Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively Practice Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/22>). In other words, it reflects a translation of the research to practice.

Conducting the evaluation in [site] gives our educators early access to implement the evidence-based Secondary Writing Toolkit that includes additional, study-provided support from the Toolkit’s developers at WestEd. The Toolkit is designed to support grade 6–8 ELA teachers’ adoption of evidence-based writing practices and thus improve student writing. Initially, teachers will get support to understand their strengths and areas for growth in using the evidence-based practices in the Secondary Writing Practice Guide. Over time, teachers will demonstrate knowledge and skills for teaching writing as recommended, assess students’ strengths and areas for growth in writing, plan instruction that incorporates recommended practices and addresses students’ needs, and exhibit a sense of efficacy as writers and teachers of writing.

Will you consider being a part of this important work?

If [School Name] decides to participate in the study, your school will receive the Toolkit and professional development supports in the spring semester of 2025. This will allow your grade 6–8 ELA teachers to get early access to the Toolkit and professional learning for a teacher (or, potentially, a coach or administrator) to serve as peer facilitator to help teachers implement the Toolkit. Teachers and peer facilitators will participate in a professional learning community (PLC) for approximately 4 to 5 months (each PLC will last about 1 hour). Peer facilitators will receive an additional 6–8 hours of professional learning. As part of study data collection, teachers and peer facilitators will be asked to complete a professional learning tracker and instructional logs describing their experiences and to participate in a focus group to discuss perceptions of the toolkit. School administrators will be asked to complete a survey to provide information about implementation and school context. To show their appreciation and help offset the costs of participation, Educators at your school will receive incentives for participating in data collection and your school will receive \$5,500 (please see attached FAQs for more detail on data collection and incentives).

Please look for an email in the next day or so from REL Pacific, in which they will ask to talk with you more about this opportunity. For more information regarding the study, please contact Dr. Nicole Arshan, Principal Investigator, Abt Global, at WritingStudy@abtglobal.com or 301-347-5641.

Sincerely,

[District Administrator]

Template for Letter from School Administrators to Staff (to be lightly edited as appropriate to, for example, suit the role and context or reflect any prior communications)

Dear [Teacher],

Effective writing is considered an important skill in [site]. We are reaching out to you because [district] is has agreed to take part in a study of the Secondary Writing Toolkit conducted by Abt Global and sponsored by the United States Department of Education (ED) in spring 2025.

The US Department of Education-funded Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) for the Pacific region, in partnership with WestEd, developed the Secondary Writing Toolkit to help educators implement the evidence-based practices outlined in the Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively Practice Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/22>). In other words, it reflects a translation of the research to practice.

Conducting the evaluation in [site] gives us early access to implement the evidence-based Secondary Writing Toolkit that includes additional, study-provided support from the Toolkit's developers at WestEd. The Toolkit is designed to support grade 6–8 ELA teachers' adoption of evidence-based writing practices and thus improve student writing. Initially, teachers will get support to understand their strengths and areas for growth in using the evidence-based practices in the Secondary Writing Practice Guide. Over time, teachers will demonstrate knowledge and skills for teaching writing as recommended, assess students' strengths and areas for growth in writing, plan instruction that incorporates recommended practices and addresses students' needs, and exhibit a sense of efficacy as writers and teachers of writing.

Will you consider being a part of this important work?

In Spring 2025, grade 6–8 ELA teachers will be asked to participate in a professional learning community (PLC) focused on the Secondary Writing Toolkit. School staff will be invited to complete online professional learning trackers and instructional logs and invited to participate in a focus group. REL Pacific will show their appreciation and help offset the costs of participation with fully participating teachers and peer facilitators by providing an incentive for participation in data collection activities-- up to \$350 for teachers or \$450 for teachers who are also peer facilitators. Please see the attached FAQs for more detail, including specific time commitments and incentives for participating in data collection.

Please look for an email in the next day or so from REL Pacific, in which we will ask to talk with you more about this opportunity. For more information regarding the study, please contact Dr. Nicole Arshan, Principal Investigator, Abt Global, at WritingStudy@abtglobal.com or 301-347-5641.

Sincerely,

[School Administrator]

Appendix A3 – – Follow-up Emails, Phone Call Talking Points, and Agendas for Information Session and Webinar

School Administrator Recruitment Follow-Up Email [forwarding initial email]

Subject: Reminder: Invitation to participate in REL Pacific toolkit evaluation study

Dear [School Administrator],

Recently you received an email asking you to be a part of a study conducted by Abt Global, under the Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (REL Pacific), on the efficacy of their Toolkit to support teaching secondary students to write effectively. **Will you consider being a part of this important work?**

We are inviting [School Name] to participate in this important work because the toolkit appears to fit your school's priorities. The choice to participate in this study is yours to make, but we do hope you will accept. Schools will receive the toolkit and professional development supports in the spring of 2025. Teachers will be asked to participate in a professional learning community spanning 4 to 5 months (each PLC will last about 1 hour). Schools will be asked to participate in study data collection, including teacher instructional logs and an administrator survey. Teachers will also be asked to complete a professional learning tracker and to participate in a focus group at the end of the year. To show our appreciation for and help offset the costs of participation, we have budgeted incentives for participating schools and educators.

We have attached a list of Frequently Asked Questions and a Memorandum of Understanding with more detail. Could we set up a time to discuss the Toolkit study further and answer any other questions you may have? If we don't hear from you by [date], we'll give you a call to follow up.

<Contact Name>

<Contact Role and information>

Teacher Recruitment Follow-Up Email [forwarding initial email]

Subject: Reminder: Invitation to participate in REL Pacific toolkit evaluation study

Dear [Teacher],

Recently you received an email asking you to be a part of a study under the Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific (REL Pacific) Toolkit to support teaching secondary students to write effectively. As a reminder participants will incentives for participating in data collection activities.

The Abt Global researchers conducting this study will not share any individual-level data. The study will not be used to evaluate you or your school. Your school administrator has already agreed to allow us to contact you.

We hope that you will join your colleagues in using the toolkit and sharing your experiences in the study.

We have attached a list of Frequently Asked Questions. Again, please let us know if you have any issues either by emailing the study team at WritingStudy@abtglobal.com or by calling me at the number below.

<Contact Name>

<Contact Role and information>

Talking Points for School Administrator Recruitment Call

- Introduction.
 - Detailed description of toolkit.
 - Clarify Abt's role in toolkit evaluation.
- Review intervention and study.
 - Length of study.
 - Breakdown of benefits for school, teachers, and students.
- Questions?
- Request to participate.
 - Overview of activities (professional learning tracker, instructional log, focus groups, administrator survey).
 - Incentives.
- Next steps.
 - Follow-up calls, if needed.
 - Ask for help in reaching out to teachers—send letter to teachers and convene information session, at which we'll speak.
 - Other.

Cross-School Informational Webinar Agenda (if needed)

- Introduction by [District Administrator].
- Toolkit demonstration.
- Overview of study.
- Next step: school-level meetings.

School Staff Q&A Meeting Agenda (if needed)

- Introduction by school principal.
- Overview of toolkit.
- Overview of study.
- Benefits and responsibilities of participation.
- Timeline.
- Q&A.
- Next steps.

Appendix A4 – Text for Emails to Notify of Study Change

Follow up emails to announce change in study design to school or district leaders who had previously been interested but did not end up signing up.

[forwarding last communication, attaching FAQs and MOU; may be edited lightly to align to audience, context]

Subject: Important Updates to Writing Toolkit Study

Dear [contact],

You may recall our earlier conversations about a study conducted by Abt Global and funded by the US Department of Education about evidence-based practices in writing. As I recall, [short summary of prior conversation, including reasons to be interested and any barriers to participation].

I'm pleased to report that we've brought your (and other school and district leaders') concerns about study participation to the Department of Education. They've allowed us to make important changes to the research design to facilitate your participation.

What's changed?

The study will no longer be a randomized controlled trial, where some study schools will not have immediate access to the Toolkit. Instead, all participating schools will now have access to the Toolkit and peer facilitator professional learning in spring 2025. Additionally, we're now pleased to be able to provide all participating schools with \$5,500 to express appreciation and defray any costs associated with participation. We have also adjusted incentive amounts for educators participating in data collection (see attached FAQs with more detail). The resulting study will focus on the implementation of the Toolkit: we will use the data we collect in your school to improve the Toolkit and provide guidance on how to implement it in schools across the country.

What's the same?

Schools participating in the study will still have early access to the Secondary Writing Toolkit, which has been developed to help educators implement the evidence-based practices outlined in the Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively Practice Guide (<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/practiceguide/22>). The Toolkit itself has not changed: it includes resources to support teachers' Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and use of evidence-based instructional strategies in their own classrooms. As part of this advance access, the study will provide professional learning to coaches or teachers, allowing them to serve as peer facilitators who lead the PLCs within [district]'s schools. Educators will also still participate in data collection.

Will you consider being a part of this important work?

We have attached an FAQs document and a Memorandum of Understanding with more detail on the study. *[Optional: We have also attached a sample of the Toolkit materials, so you can get a sense of whether they would be useful to your teachers.]*

[Closing drawn from another approved email to match respondent, appropriate next steps]

<Contact Name>

<Contact Role and information>

Appendix A5 – Frequently Asked Questions

How was my school selected for this study? The study team selected the state of [site] because the toolkit and evaluation activities directly address a need in [site] to increase English Language Arts (ELA) achievement, which includes a significant focus on writing.

Does the [District] know about the study? Yes. [District] supports this study and has approved the research plan. You can view the approval letter and learn more about the study at [REL Pacific website].

What information is being collected from participants as part of this study? Teachers and school administrators will participate in the study in the following ways:

Participants	Activity	Duration	Timing
All participating teachers	Instructional log	15 minutes per day for 5 days	1 week in spring 2025
Teachers (excluding peer facilitators)	Professional Learning Tracker (Survey)	10–12 minutes 8 times	After each professional learning session
Peer facilitators	Professional Learning Tracker (Survey)	25 minutes 8 times	After each professional learning session
Teachers and peer facilitators	Focus group	60 minutes	Late spring 2025
Administrators	Survey	10 minutes	Late spring 2025

How will privacy and confidentiality of all data be ensured? Information collected for this project comes under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). The research team will store your completed surveys and interview records in locked filing cabinets and electronic files will be stored on password protected computers. The study team will replace personally identifiable information (PII) with study-specific identifiers immediately after receiving all data and all PII will then be destroyed. Abt will never include your name or your individual information in any report. Responses to this data collection will be used for statistical purposes only and responses will not be associated with a specific school or individual. Abt will report findings only at the district level and will name [District] as the district. Abt will not use your information for any other purpose than this study. Abt will destroy all data stored at Abt in 2031, five years after the end of the study, as required by the US Department of Education.

How will REL Pacific express appreciation for and defray costs of my schools' participation in the study? Participating schools will receive \$5,500 to express appreciation for schools' willingness to participate and defray any costs associated with study participation.

How will REL Pacific express appreciation for my participation in the study? Teachers, peer facilitators,

and administrators will each receive an incentive for participation in data collection activities. In total:

- Teachers who are not serving as peer facilitators may receive up to \$350.
- Peer facilitators who are not teachers may receive up to \$450.
- Teachers serving as peer facilitators may receive up to \$550.

Incentive amounts will be distributed as detailed in the table below.

Participants	Activity	Duration	Incentives Up To
All participating teachers	Instructional log	15 minutes per day for 5 days	\$100 ¹
Teachers (excluding peer facilitators)	Professional Learning Tracker (Survey)	10–12 minutes 8 times	\$100 ¹
Peer facilitators	Professional Learning Tracker (Survey)	25 minutes 8 times	\$300 ¹
Teachers and peer facilitators	Focus group	60 minutes	\$150
Administrators	Survey	10 minutes	\$75

¹Incentives for the instructional log and professional learning tracker will be prorated evenly on the number of days completed. Prorated incentive awards will be rounded up to the nearest \$5.

Your incentive may come in the form of a gift card or, depending on district policy, another form. We may provide respondents with higher compensation values (over \$200) with an option to receive compensation in the form of a check.

What is the purpose of the study, and how will the results be used? As you may appreciate, there is often a gap between knowing an education practice works for students and being able to use that practice in the complex, demanding world of schools. This toolkit is designed to make it easier for teachers to internalize evidence-based practices, and the study is designed to determine how well the toolkit works to change instruction and learning. We will use study findings to help other districts and schools—including but not limited to study schools—use these resources effectively.

Who is conducting the study? REL Pacific, a federally funded research and technical assistance organization, is developing and studying the toolkit. Our partners at WestEd developed the toolkit, and another organization (Abt Global) will study implementation.

Who will get the study results? The study results will be summarized across all study participants, and REL Pacific will develop a report of results for the federal Department of Education. These aggregated results will also be shared with participants and education leaders in your school and district. The report will be peer-reviewed and will be made publicly available through the Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES). The study findings will also be shared with the toolkit development

partners, and the toolkit will be made publicly available on the IES website.

Who can I contact if I have more questions or concerns about the study? If you have general questions, you can contact Nicole Arshan. She is available by email (writingstudy@abtglobal.com) or by phone (301-347-5641). If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant, contact Abt's Human Subjects Protection Committee (which is responsible for the protection of project participants) at 877-520-6835.

Who can I contact if I have questions about the toolkit? If you have questions about the toolkit, its content, or components, please contact Sheila Arens at REL Pacific by email at sarens@mcrel.org.

Appendix A6 – Hawaii State Department of Education Research Approval Letter

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF STRATEGY, INNOVATION AND PERFORMANCE

May 26, 2023

Dr. Linda Caswell
Abt Associates, Inc.
10 Fawcett St.
Cambridge, MA 02138

Re: Research Application Decision

Dear Dr. Caswell,

I am pleased to approve your Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) research application for the study "Evaluation of Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively: A Toolkit for Supporting Effective Practice (Secondary Writing Toolkit Study)" (Application RES2023040).

This approval will expire May 31, 2027. If you require additional time to complete your study, you must submit a request for an extension or another application before this approval expires. If you intend to make changes to your project, you must submit the change request to the Data Governance and Analysis Branch prior to implementing the change. These changes include but are not limited to (1) any changes that require approval from your Institutional Review Board and (2) any changes that are in conflict with or not included in this approval letter. Significant changes may need to be reviewed by the Research Review Committee at their next scheduled meeting. If changes are approved, a modified approval letter will be issued to the researcher, the targeted schools, and affiliated state/district office staff.

As described in your application, the objective of your study is:

- To conduct an evaluation of the impact and implementation of the Secondary Writing Toolkit developed by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Pacific in Hawai'i to support access to high-quality writing instruction in HIDOE.

You have indicated that you will be inviting 116 schools to participate in your research (see attached "Targeted SchoolsOffices-forResearchApp_Secondary Writing Toolkit Evaluation").

AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Dr. Linda Caswell
May 26, 2023
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You must present this letter to the appropriate Department administrator(s) upon invitation to participate in your research.

You have also indicated that you will be inviting the following individuals at these targeted schools to participate in your study:

- Complex Area Superintendents
- Administrators
- Teachers/Peer Facilitators
- Data Governance and Analysis Branch (if school staff cannot provide)

The number of participants is contingent upon how many schools agree to participate in your project.

Complex Area Superintendents who participate in your study will be involved in the following activities:

- Support for recruitment emails and coordination of study team - 15 minutes.

Administrators who participate in your study will be involved in the following activities:

- Support for recruitment emails and coordination of study team - 15 minutes;
- Recruitment informational session of approximately 1 hour;
- Virtual training of approximately 1 hour;
- Diagnostic review of approximately 30 minutes;
- Cognitive testing of data instruments: 45-60 minutes each for a total of 12 hours; and
- Online surveys for evaluation data for approximately 10 minutes.

Teachers/Peer Facilitators who participate in your study will be involved in the following activities:

- Support for recruitment emails and coordination of study team: 15 minutes;
- Training sessions: 120 minutes;
- Monthly coaching for a total of approximately 420 minutes;
- Professional development participation of approximately 16-20 hours over a 4 to 5 month period;
- Cognitive testing of data instruments: 45-60 minutes each for a total of 12 hours;
- Online surveys for evaluation data of approximately 10 minutes;
- Instructional logs for evaluation data: 150 minutes; and
- Focus group interviews: 60 minutes.

Data Governance and Analysis Branch (if school staff cannot provide)

- Provide administrative school-level student data.

As you proceed with your study, please be aware of the following:

- Should you wish to use any non-public Department data beyond those described above, please submit a research application modification request to the Data Governance and Analysis Branch.

Dr. Linda Caswell
May 26, 2023
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- The participation of Department schools, offices, students, and personnel in your study is strictly voluntary. Participant consent is required.
- All study activities must take place at dates, times, and locations agreed upon by the administrators of the participating Department schools and offices.
- Any compensation provided to Department personnel for participation in your study must be for activities completed outside of instructional and work hours and must be in compliance with the Hawaii State Ethics Code. Any questions about this topic should be referred to the Data Governance and Analysis Branch.
- You are required to conduct your study in accordance with both the conditions of approval described in this letter and the document "Affirmation and Acknowledgement of the Processes, Procedures, and Conditions for Conducting Research in the Hawaii State Department of Education."
- You are responsible for ensuring that all individuals involved in this study - both those affiliated with your organization and those contracted by your organization and affiliated with external entities or vendors - adhere to all of the conditions of my approval, including those detailed in this letter and those stipulated by the Affirmation Form for Researchers.
- A final report of your findings must be submitted to the Department.

Should you have any questions, please contact Ke'ala Fukuda, Data Governance and Analysis Branch, via email at DOEresearch@k12.hi.us or by phone at (808) 784-6061.

Best wishes for a successful study. We look forward to receiving your findings and recommendations.

Sincerely,



Cara Tanimura
Interim Assistant Superintendent

CT:kf
Attachment: Targeted SchoolsOffices-forResearchApp_Secondary Writing Toolkit Evaluation

c: Data Governance and Analysis Branch