

Front Street Writers

A National Writers Series Project at the Traverse Bay Intermediate School District

Teacher Guidelines and Application

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Closing Dates: June 3, 2016

The National Writers Series of Traverse City, Michigan, and the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District have formed an innovative partnership dedicated to teaching students the power of story telling. This collaboration has been created through a rare instance of a public agency and a non-profit organization coming together to serve the high public purpose of helping young people learn the art of expressing themselves in writing in all of its forms, such as fiction, narrative non-fiction, essays, poetry, business and technical.

The writing workshop is open to high school juniors and seniors in the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District (TBAISD). Students are admitted through an application process. The program enrolls 52 students in a yearlong class. The course is held at the Career Tech Center (CTC) in Traverse City. The writing workshop is jointly managed by the National Writers Series and a CTC Advisory Board. Students are taught by a visiting writer-in-residence (WIR) and a teacher hired by CTC. The WIR is a practicing and publishing writer, and leads the creative enterprise of teaching writing to the students. The teacher, also a publishing writer, manages logistics and works with the

WIR in teaching students to:

- A) Identify and master the craft of writing.
- B) Learn the discipline and critical rigor required to submit their work for peer and teacher review.
- C) Respond in a helpful and thoughtful manner in discussions about classmates' writing.

The NWS-TBAISD program has been named Front Street Writers Workshop (FSW). It is based on a well-established creative writing program for high school students in the Traverse City area known as Front Street Writers. The FSW method embraces three elements: craft lessons involving the entire class, cohort writing workshops and master classes with visiting professional writers. The purpose of teaching students how to bring people, scenes and ideas to life on the page is designed to inspire young people to pursue

a living and a creative life as writers.

Responsibilities

While students receive high school credit for FSW, the program differs from the traditional high school academic course, both in structure and rigor. FSW is a workshop-centered writing program. Both the teacher and the WIR strive to instill in students the desire and the means for their development as writers. FSW rigorously challenges emerging authors to write across genres, and to become adept, sensitive, critics of their own and others' work. Each student is expected to spend 10 hours per week either in a morning or evening session. Along with the workshop training, students spend an equal amount of time engaging with nationally published writers and studying their work. Writers of national standing are available to Front Street Writers Workshop students because they travel to Traverse City as featured authors in the National Writers Series programs each fall and spring. They present craft lessons and participate in Q & A sessions with FSW students. Both the teacher and the WIR have critical roles in bringing leading writers to the students. The teacher ensures that the events are planned and executed in fulfilling the mission of the program. The WIR coordinates each visit and guides the discussion to insure that the authors support and reinforce student work in the craft classroom.

Outside the classroom, the teacher and the WIR have distinctive, but collaborative, roles in administering the program. They collaborate in the design and execution of the writing class; instruction is comprised of both craft lessons and peer workshops. The teacher facilitates public readings, coordinates with NWS, and participates with NWS to recruit students and the writer-in-residence for the following year. The teacher coordinates work experience, co-op, or internship opportunities, develops and administers the program budget, coordinates student club participation, and other duties of a full-time CTC instructor.

The teacher acts as the liaison between the National Writers Series and its advisory board. It is a responsibility of the teacher to identify and invite advisory board members, oversee student scheduling, maintain grades, track attendance, provide oversight, and with the WIR, also teach craft lessons and lead cohorts of student workshops.

Because of the close working relationship between the WIR and teacher, it is essential that the teacher embrace the collaborative spirit of teaching established by the National Writers Series through its Front Street Writers workshops.

Collaboration with the FSW affords the teacher the special opportunity to design a writing curriculum that addresses the required Michigan's Career and Technical Education 12 segments of instruction. Writing instruction, as practiced by FSW and executed by the WIR, includes a multitude of writing forms around which to target career-applicable instruction: technical and trade; business and marketing; social media and digital media platforms, and journalism and broadcasting. In addition, instruction around producing and publishing is also required. Because this is a two-year program, the model for each of these segments considers returning students.

Moreover, the curriculum builds on the existing skills of second-year writers while remaining accessible to first-time entrants.

Teacher Application

The Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District invites applications for a full-time instructor position in an innovative new collaborative program between a public school system and a non-profit organization dedicated to teaching students the power of story telling.

TBAISD and the National Writers Series of Traverse City have formed an innovative partnership to serve the important purpose of helping young people learn the art of expressing themselves in writing in all of its forms: fiction, narrative non-fiction, essays, poetry.

The ideal candidate for the instructor position will have a national profile as a published writer in one or more fields and a minimum of five years experience of demonstrated success as a classroom teacher. Candidates should have a record of proven excellence as an instructor in writing workshops. The desired candidate is flexible and open minded. She/he is invigorated by teaching, excited to work with high school students, energized by the prospect of leading the development and execution of a new, emerging program, and is self-motivated.

This innovative program requires an instructor with demonstrated abilities as a collaborator who would work effectively as a team teacher with a professional writer-in-residence. The writer-in-residence will be selected annually to lead the creative enterprise of teaching writing to the students.

Highly qualified candidates will be interviewed. In that setting, they will be expected to communicate ideas and a vision of how she/he would adapt them to this innovative program and lead its growth. Candidates are expected to have a working knowledge of the skills of journalism.

Qualifications

Bachelor's degree in English or the equivalent; MFA or comparable degree is preferred. Secondary certified ELA teacher. Teaching in online settings is an asset. Applicants must submit published writing samples. Applications should include a cover letter, current curriculum vitae, summary of teaching experience, including evidence of teaching effectiveness or potential, and supporting

materials. Contact information should be provided for three professional references, including one in the writing/journalism field.

Responsibilities

Collaborate with writer-in-residence to develop and execute new curriculum.

Recruit students each year.

Recruit candidates for writer-in-residence position.

Organize an advisory board and facilitate regular meetings.

Coordinate with National Writers Series to bring authors and other professional writers to CTC campus for master classes.

Oversee student scheduling, maintain grades, track attendance.

Facilitate public student readings.

Facilitate student-published literary magazine.

Facilitate student writing submissions to NWS scholarship competition and other scholarship opportunities.

Coordinate co-op, work experience and/or internship opportunities.

Develop, submit and monitor annual program budget.

Learn, understand and comply with all CTE regulations and deadlines.

Coordinate applicable student club participation.

Attend state-level professional development programs.

Participate in CTC professional development opportunities.

Attend local and regional writing events that may be relevant to the growth of the program.

Foster and encourage networking across the writing industry and encourage students to develop relationships in the industry that may offer opportunities.

Other duties as assigned by the supervisor.

Candidates for this position should apply online at www.tbaisd.org under “employment opportunities.” Applicants applying online can include as attachments the cover letter, resume and transcripts. Posting deadline: TBD.

Teacher Selection Process

Career Tech Center administrators and National Writers Series staff will review applications and CVs, with writing experience and teaching being given equal weight, and with industry knowledge being an important attribute. Applicant references may be contacted at any time during the selection process. Applicants who are invited to interview will be expected to teach a writing lesson during that process.

National Writers Series and Its Emerging Partnerships with Schools in Traverse City

Founded in 2010, the National Writers Series is considered by writers, publishers, and readers to be one of America’s premier literary events. NWS is based in Traverse City, Michigan, and has hosted conversations and classroom visits with 100 authors from around the world, including Pulitzer Prize winners/ National Book Award winners, McArthur Genius Award recipients, and Emmy and Golden Globe winners.

NWS strives to create moments with writers, in conversation and in classrooms, during which students and communities can lean in around the campfire of a great story well-told, and reflect on what it means to be alive today, in their neighborhood, in their city, in their state, in their world. NWS strives to make this kind of discussion, and the act of writing and reading, as natural for all as breathing itself: “A book in every hand on main street.” NWS seeks to grow and strengthen our community through the power of storytelling, and through the study of how stories are made.

NWS is deeply involved with numerous education projects in its home area, Traverse City. For instance, since 2011, the NWS Scholarship program has awarded 20 scholarships, totaling \$40,000, to enable area high school students who possess an interest in the craft and practice of writing to enroll in college.

When NWS co-founder Doug Stanton was a young student and aspiring author, a Traverse City benefactor offered to help fund his final year at Interlochen Arts Academy, where Stanton was a creative writing and theater major. “Having such an experience when I was a teenager,” says Stanton, “literally changed my life. I’ve never forgotten how fortunate I was to be taken seriously by practicing writers at such a young age.” He also never forgot the generous goodwill of the benefactor, Mrs. Helen Osterlin.

Inspired by that experience, and motivated by a belief that “we can pitch in and make our public education a richer experience for all,” in 2010 NWS co-founder Doug Stanton announced to a sold-out NWS audience that he wanted to create, on Front Street in downtown Traverse City, a creative writing program for high school students—like the

one he'd been fortunate enough to enjoy. It was to be called Front Street Writers, and students would attend it free of charge and earn credit toward their high school graduation. Front Street Writers is NWS's oldest educational program.

The name is chosen with the belief that rigorous instruction about the most basic and essential human skill of all—the ability to communicate clearly—should be practiced on life's main street, amid the joyous scrum and challenging hubbub of life. Since 2011, 99 students have graduated from the FSW program.

In 2011, early in the life of NWS, Kerrey Woughter came aboard as a major influence in developing the FSW style of working with writers in residence. From her full-time job as librarian with the Traverse City public schools, she committed additional hours to NWS, creating continuity among FSW students and contributed to the program's curricular growth. The devotion of Kerry, Doug Stanton and Mike Delp, creative writing instructor at Interlochen Center for the Arts, and a succession of writers in residence were critical in the development of FSW.

Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District Career-Tech Center was established in 1976 as a secondary career and technical education center that now serves more than 25 public and private high schools and approximately 1,100 students in the five-county Traverse Bay region. Students receive training and education in 21 occupational programs utilizing cutting-edge technology and state-of-the-art equipment. The CTC mission is to prepare students with skills and learning experiences for employment and life-long learning. CTC students are prepared for job placement or additional educational opportunities in colleges, universities, technical schools and the U.S. military.