



# Writers in the Schools

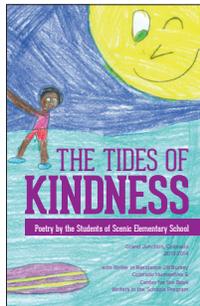
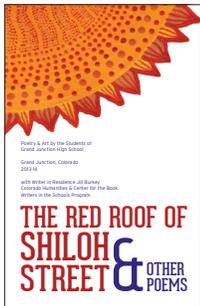
Writers in the Schools (WITS) brings professional, trained writers into Colorado classrooms to conduct a series of writing workshops that have proven to raise standardized CSAP/TCAP writing test scores. Each residency culminates in a published anthology and public reading of student work. Placing trained, active poets, playwrights, fiction and non-fiction writers in the classroom inspires students to make leaps of literary imagination, and this excitement and sense of autonomy impacts all other areas of language learning. Our goal for the program is to prepare students for future educational and creative endeavors. As we give students a sense of excitement and authority over their own written language, their ability to perform well on standardized tests increases.

“Having a writer in residence did wonders for our students’ interest in writing and how they viewed their own self-worth through expression. It was especially great to have a bilingual writer who could connect with our students on a cultural level, too.”

Dana Walker, Teacher, 9th-10th grade  
Boulder High School, Boulder

## WITS Helps Teachers Meet Goals

Writers meet with teachers in advance of their residency to plan together how they will meet the teacher’s curricular goals as they inspire student writing, help with revision of student work, and collaborate to produce an anthology and final reading to peers and public. The anthology (online or print) contains one piece of writing by every student involved in a residency.



Writers visit classrooms once a week (for a minimum of 10 workshops) for up to 75 minutes. Resident writers include master teachers and award-winning poets Eleni Sikileanos (Director of Creative Writing at University of Denver), Jack Collom (author of the nationally acclaimed *Poetry Everywhere*) and Jess Stoner (novelist and freelance journalist), who also guide other writers (such as performance artist SETH and published poet Jill Burkey) in their residencies.

## WITS Improves TCAP Scores!

In a 2012-2013 study conducted by the University of Denver’s Marisco Institute for Early Learning and Literacy in the Morgridge College of Education, 83% of the teachers responding noticed a change in their students in terms of reading and writing. Over 82% reported that the program inspired them to work differently with students when they write. **WITS students at Clara Metz Elementary School in Denver earned statistically significant higher 2012 TCAP writing scores than their peers who did not participate in the workshops.**

“Our Writer is amazing with our students! He teaches them difficult concepts in such a fun way. They are excited when he comes and then they want to continue writing when he leaves.”

Karen Jenks, Teacher, 5th grade  
Clara Metz Elementary School, Denver  
Elementary School Denver, Colorado

In addition, the greater the number of years students were involved in the program, the higher their 2012 reading and writing scores. As researcher Dr. Sheridan Green reported, “This finding confirms that **the WITS program truly aligns with state standards (tested by TCAP)** and it enhances student learning of writing art and skill. It also correlates with other WITS programs across the country; Dallas WITS reports a 10 to 15% increase in their standardized test scores.

For more information contact Assistant Coordinator Nick Johnson, at [njohnson@coloradohumanities.org](mailto:njohnson@coloradohumanities.org) or 303.894.7951 x 21.



# Writers in the Schools



## Colorado Humanities Will Match Half the Residency Cost

Connecting a student's experiences with his or her own writing makes writing relevant. Preparing their writing for publication and performance inspires revision. Seeing their work published in print or online anthologies that look like other books and media helps students realize that great writing is created by people very much like themselves.

Thanks to the generosity of the National Endowment of the Arts, Colorado Humanities has already raised funds to match the cost of the program. Colorado Humanities' staff is standing by to help you raise your school's remaining cost share in your community.

The total residency cost includes designing and printing a perfect-bound print anthology of the students' writing, with a color cover, and copies for each student, teacher, principal, and school library.

### Cost for 10 Week Residency

Number of Classrooms in the Same School District	3	6	9
Number of Students	75	150	225
Total Residency Cost	\$5,262	\$8,514	\$11,706
School Cost Per Student	\$70.16	\$56.76	\$52.03
School Cost Per Student Per Contact Hour	\$7.00	\$5.68	\$5.20

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