



# *Do the Write Thing*

*Lima*

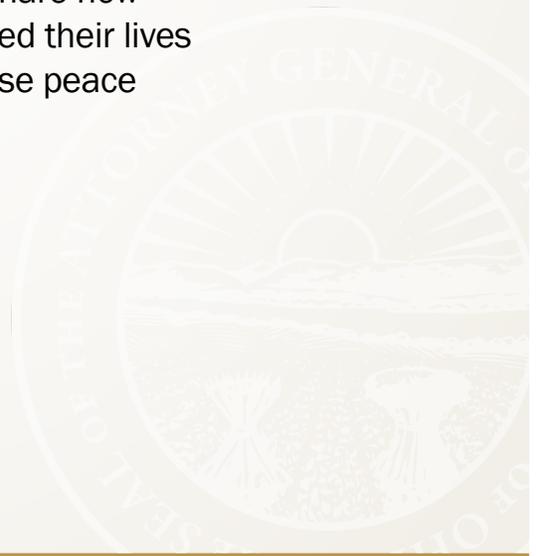


## 2022

**Lima City School District**  
middle-schoolers share how  
violence has touched their lives  
and how they choose peace



**DAVE YOST**  
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL



# FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

As Ohio's Attorney General, I am so pleased to have partnered with the Lima City School District for the *Do the Write Thing* program. In the district's first year to participate in the program, Lima students hit it out of the park!

I am amazed by the passion, thoughtfulness and self-awareness these middle-school students brought to their writings. Their words are powerful, and their commitment to making this world a better place is inspiring.

Talking about violence isn't easy. But shining light on the uncomfortable reality in many of our homes, schools and communities is critical to turning the tide and creating a brighter tomorrow. These students are our future, and we need to listen to their voices. In Lima, we hear you loud and clear!

I encourage everyone to take time to read the essays in this book. You may be surprised by what you learn, but I know the students' work will leave you proud and optimistic about the generations to come.



Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Yost". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**DAVE YOST**  
Ohio Attorney General

# FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

When the Ohio Attorney General's Office approached us to become the next school district to participate in the Do the Write Thing program, we were quick to want our students involved. But even then, I don't think we fully understood just how important it would become and the way it could positively affect our students and community.

I could not be prouder of our seventh- and eighth-grade students who participated in this program. Writing and putting thoughts on paper isn't an easy thing to do no matter the topic, let alone one as difficult and personal as this one.

It took courage for our students to open up and put their personal experiences, worries and fears on paper. I hope this experience was a positive one for them, helping them both heal and understand that their experiences and opinions matter. I also pray that it moves us all to act.

Unfortunately violence plagues every community, including our own here in Lima. We see it on the news. We hear stories from our students, many who experience it in their homes and neighborhoods.

It can sometimes feel like an insurmountable problem but deep down we know that it is not true. These essays are an important step in better understanding how our youth perceive their community, and the issues around violence they face sometimes daily.

These essays should be the beginning of important dialogues in our schools and community; a launching point to begin to dig deep and recognize, understand and then address the real factors that lead to violence.

Students, thank you for providing the means for us to do this. We want you to know we are listening and we are here for you. Know you can always come to us for support.

Your words are powerful and will make a difference, we promise you that. And let this be a lesson that you do have the ability to make real change as you move forward in your lives.

Thank you to our local judges who spent hours reading our students' essays. I know it was an emotional journey for you as well. I hope this experience will guide you to also be part of the solution.

I thank Attorney General Dave Yost and his staff for reaching out to us and giving our students this outlet to express themselves, and our community a needed push to take action. We can't wait for our two essay winners to experience our nation's capital this summer, and for future students to have this same opportunity in years to come.

Sincerely,

**JILL ACKERMAN**

Superintendent

Lima City School District



# ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This book contains a compilation of writings by Lima City School District middle-school students who were selected as the top 10 finalists of the 2022 Lima *Do the Write Thing* program. This book will be shared across the community in recognition of all the students who accepted the challenge to share their voices and help create a safer, more peaceful society.

## Overview of Do the Write Thing

*Do the Write Thing* is a unique national program designed to give middle-school students an outlet to communicate in classroom discussions and then in writing how violence impacts their daily lives. In addition to exposing the causes and effects of violence, students are asked to share their ideas for how to reduce violence in their community.

The program asks students to express in stories, poems and songs, or any other written forms the violence they've faced, with an emphasis on exploring key questions:

- How does violence affect your daily life?
- What are some of the causes of youth violence in your community?
- What can you as an individual do to reduce youth violence in your community?

The benefits of the challenge are many. Students gain a greater empathy and understanding for victims of violence and realize that their positive actions can make a difference in their own home, schools and neighborhoods. Teachers gain a better awareness of what is happening in their students' lives and in the school culture. Community leaders benefit from greater understanding of the impact that violence has on youth and learn from the students' stories and ideas for reducing violence.

## Do the Write Thing in Lima, Ohio

During the 2021-22 school year, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost partnered with the Lima City School District for the *Do the Write Thing* program. The program, in its second year in Ohio, was well received, with 535 seventh- and eighth-grade students submitting essays.

Lima community and business leaders volunteered their time to read each essay and choose the 10 submissions most responsive to the key questions. From the top 10, two students were selected to become Ohio ambassadors to the national *Do the Write Thing* conference in Washington, D.C.

A special thank you to all of the community volunteers, teachers, principals and school administrators who helped make *Do the Write Thing* such a great success in Lima.



*Do the Write Thing is the flagship program of the National Campaign to Stop Violence and has been in existence for 27 years. It operates programs in 28 cities in 17 states. Over the past 27 years, more than 1.2 million middle school students have participated in the program.*

*National sponsors include the Kuwait-America Foundation, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science, the Marriott Foundation and Southwest Airlines.*

## ESSAY 1

# DESTIN CURRY

Liberty Arts Magnet



*photo unavailable*

Youth violence is a serious problem all over the world. Youth violence is when someone uses physical force or power to threaten or harm a young person. It can come in many forms including bullying, making threats, using weapons to harm someone, fighting physically, and gang related violence. Youth violence affects many lives and it has affected mine also. There are many causes of youth violence and things that we can do to help stop violence from happening.

Violence has affected my life and caused me to go through many emotions I didn't understand. I would get angry and just act out. I have had times where I was depressed and just gave up and had no desire or motivation to do anything. I have been bullied a lot in school and it makes me so sad, depressed, and I don't want to be there or do my work.

There are many things that can cause youth violence. The media can influence violence by what they are saying and what they are showing. An environment can have an effect on youth violence. They may live where there is violence around them every day and they have to do acts of violence to survive. Some kids may live in homes where there is domestic violence and then since they grow up seeing it or being abused they do the same thing. Peer pressure is another thing that causes youth violence. When a kid is with a group and they are pressuring them to be violent it makes it easier. They may be scared that if they

don't they will be bullied or not accepted no more. They may also be violent to gain respect. There are mental illnesses that can cause youth violence such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorder, and oppositional defiant disorder. They can cause someone to get angry or have aggressive behaviors. Sometimes things like grief from losing a loved one or when a kid feels like they have been abandoned or forgotten or unwanted can cause a kid to be violent.

Some things I can do about youth violence is tell someone in authority, be a good example by doing the right thing and not using violence, don't use alcohol or drugs, don't use weapons or physically fight when arguing, pick friends that are against violence and don't do drugs or drink alcohol, stay away from unsafe places, and don't go anywhere with a stranger or accept anything they have, get involved in community efforts to stop crime, hold anti-drug rallies, get create or involved in school activities to make school safer, be friends with everyone and treat everyone as equals, and make posters to bring awareness of the effects of violence with youth.

Violence can do a lot of damage not only to someone physically but also emotionally. Kids can help stop violence by encouraging other kids to be friendly towards each other, to stay away from drugs and alcohol, and to go to someone in authority if they are being bullied or threatened or harmed in any way.



## ESSAY 2

# JAY HANKINS

West Middle School

Violence is very common and everywhere nowadays.  
The type of behavior that causes such cruelty gets way  
too much praise.

On Posters, Advertisements, and even cartoons.  
I'd like to go one day without seeing someone act  
like a buffoon.

In the streets there is much more,so much violence  
to witness such as squabbles and fights.  
Oh how I wish to feel much safer on especially  
dark nights.

Pushed against counters, bodies painted black and blue.

Sometimes our parents are monsters.  
If no one is told they won't have a clue.

It's sad to see it normalized.  
The younger ones see it.  
But what is meant to be said is instead internalized.

They say money is the key thing that makes our  
planet orbit.  
What use is it if everyone is fighting for it?

The rich's hearts are filled with money and greed.  
If only they were able to see the ones with need.

Race.

Sexuality.

Class.

And many more excuses might be claimed for  
the violence

So why are the people suffering kept in silence?

A figure pushed down, scream muffled.

It was very hard to be told as a child it was my fault

Maybe it was indeed though ... if only that small child  
crying was to be freed.

Sinner! They yell because that's what I am and will  
always be.

The cruel reality of which is life of one seems  
much grimmer.

We must speak out for the planet and equality.  
If not for that then at least for you and me.



ESSAY 3

A'NAJIAH HARRIS

West Middle School



My acquaintance  
Violence and I  
Are well acquainted.  
So acquainted in fact,  
You could call us friends.

My friend Violence is brothers with Hate  
And best friends with Hostility  
They've been with me my whole life  
And there's no possibility,  
That they're far out of reach.  
Always waiting with open  
Arms after I push them away.

They stay together, and never stray.  
They caused people I know to turn to  
Drugs and alcohol,  
Because their parents weren't there  
The way parents are supposed to be.  
Only being 14 to 15 and never seeing Anything different.

A young boy, at a party my neighbor threw,  
Shot because there was a fight between  
Another two.

Kids I see everyday,  
Threatening someone cause they said  
Something to them in some kind of way.

Violence has a way of staying by my side.  
Only giving me a little room to breathe,  
Before they come right back.  
But why?  
Why did they?  
Why them?  
Why him?  
So many questions  
With so many answers.

Perhaps they never realized  
How deep they are in this thing called Depression.

After all, the word is foreign to so many,  
Never being taught anything different,  
There are plenty.  
Never told it's okay to be sad,  
Mad,  
And so much more.

Maybe there's no one around to teach  
Them anything different.  
To teach them right from wrong.  
What can we do to stop others from doing Wrong?

We can try, put in the effort,  
That's what we can do.  
Try to emphasize rather than  
Sympathize,  
There is a difference between the two.

Listen,  
Although it might be new to you.  
Be a friend, be there.  
Be someone who they can go to  
When they want to  
When they need to,  
Be there.

This eternal pattern will never completely Disappear.  
It's simply impossible, and that's okay.  
We have a long way to go to even get near Possible.  
But that doesn't mean we shouldn't try.

I've always watched violence outside my Bubble  
I try to stay safe in.  
Like a friend,  
My friend Violence.  
Never too far away to show me the damage  
Violence can cause to me,  
And everything I see.



## ESSAY 4 | AMBASSADOR

# MA'KYLEE LOTT

Liberty Arts Magnet

I think we all probably know what youth violence is or maybe we have experienced it at some point in our lives. Or are experiencing it now. Hello, my name is Ma'Kylee Lott. I am a 13 year old girl and in the 8th grade. I have experienced youth violence and from that I am still recovering from the causes of it.

Youth violence has affected me because I used to be bullied. I used to get body shamed at school everyday and from my family. In my home life they used to tell me that I should stop eating as much and that I would get too fat and die. That really messed me up and after that I had thoughts of taking my own life. I would hardly eat. I would tell my parents that I ate even though I didn't. I thought that if I didn't eat that I would become skinnier and people would like me better but that never happened all it did was make me sick. So take it from me, don't do that. You are amazing just the way you are. People used to talk about the hair on my arms and how it was dark and that no one was going to like me if I looked like that and I believed them. Everyday I wear long sleeve shirts or sweaters so no one can see my arms. Even the little things that people say can make a big difference in people's lives like it did in mine.

A lot of people don't realize that the things that they say and do in the past can affect the future of not only there's but others around them. A really big cause of youth violence can be alcohol use. Just like when my cousins parents were alcoholics and still are they never realized what kind of effect that had on their kids. I would go get my little cousin everyday from her moms house to "hang out" because she would never want to be around her mom cause she would insult her for the way that she looked and dressed. She would try to talk to her about the stuff that was happening at school and how she was being treated but she would just tell her that she's fine and that she was overreacting. She even tried to tell her mom that she was a part of the LGBTQ community. Something that was very important to her and she told her that she wasn't and that she will grow out of it. My cousin was never treated the way that she deserved to be treated. Her mom was never there for her and I know that she really needed her at times. Especially when she was getting bullied at school by other kids. And what even made it harder was that she was suicidal and

was self-harming herself because of the things that she was going through and being told by her mom and peers. And her mom never knew since she was always drinking and never could comprehend what her own daughter was going through. Or even remember the things that she had said to her daughter. That also made my cousin suffer from depression and anger issues. So when my cousins parents found out about her cutting and burning herself they said that she was slow and stupid for doing that and that she was just doing it for attention. But the sad thing is that the only reason that they found out was because the school had realized that she was acting weird then saw the cutting marks on her arms. So they had to call her parents and tell them. Her parents also weren't going to get her help but the school made them take her to a therapist.

More effects/consequences of youth violence can be the increase of the risk for behavioral and mental health difficulties, that may include future violence, smoking, substance use, obesity, high-risk of sexual behavior, depression, anxiety, academic difficulties, smoking, and school dropouts.

There are some things that not only I can do but you can do to help reduce youth violence. For example we can try to look out for signs of youth violence. Sometimes if you just pay attention to the things around you, you may see signs of youth violence. Like when my cousin's school noticed her and got her help before it was too late. We can also set a good example of how to treat people so others could see how to act and not contribute to youth violence. And one last example of what we can do is if you see someone suffering from youth violence you can just talk to them about what's happening. Something that simple can make a big difference. By just letting that person know that you're there for them can help them not feel alone and could help them to not hurt themselves. Even the smallest little things count.

In conclusion, that is my story of how youth violence had affected me and my loved ones. Now that you know what you can do to reduce youth violence will you do what is right to help people? I hope this story helped you see how important youth violence really is. I encourage you to always Do the Right Thing!



## ESSAY 5

# TRA'VEN MILLIRANS

West Middle School

Youth violence has been a problem in the United States for some time. I remember hearing gunshots outside my house and watching stabbings on the news and social media as a child. There was once a shooting 2 houses down the street from my house. A little kid shot himself in the arm with his dad's gun because it wasn't locked up. Fortunately he was okay. My friend was afraid to go to school because he was getting bullied. I have loved ones in JDCs or prisons. Because of drug abuse or selling drugs, Violence in youth can affect how you become as an adult. When I was younger I was bullied because of my height and my teeth. But it didn't bother me because I didn't care what people thought about me. But then I started to care about what people thought about me and it led to me having social anxiety and being scared every year for the first day of school.

Youth violence, depression, anxiety, and suicide are all linked to youth violence. Violence doesn't solve anything; it doesn't fix anything. It only makes matters worse. Youth violence can lead to school shootings and threats. Violence can lead to many harmful activities. When you're young, causing or doing violence could make you angry or negatively affect others. Bullying or youth violence most of the time occurs because the bully or the person who has caused the harm got bullied and they are taking out their vengeance on someone else. Peer pressure leads to kids doing drugs, fighting, gang violence,

and bullying. Violence in youth can affect how you become as an adult. Most of the causes of death are from youth violence from an altercation. Most altercations lead to fights and shootings. The causes of violence is so bad where kids talk about it all the time. There are kids trying to be in gangs and make music about things my age shouldn't even know about Violence can be in music, Tv, and movies.

What we can do to stop youth violence is make sure that kids aren't bullying or making fun of each other online or in school? That is how fights break out. People shouldn't be bullying each other anyways everyones not equal and if we were, life would be bland. We need to educate kids about bullying and have better role models and people for kids to look up to. The people that kids look up to depend on the way they act when they are older. The more kids that learn the causes of bullying the easier it will be to slow down or even stop! Also another thing to stop youth violence is to make sure that you search peoples lockers for hate notes, weapons, make commercials about Anti bullying and on different types of apps.

Therefore youth violence is a very bad and disappointing thing in the United States and in other countries. I can stop youth violence if I actually try. Thank you for the amazing opportunity DTWT.

ESSAY 6 | AMBASSADOR

JAHNATHON MYERS

West Middle School



Growing up I never really liked people outside of my family and the violence I've seen and or been in honestly just made me feel like people, especially kids couldn't be helped without violence. I've seen people get shot, stabbed, abused, and I've even seen some take their own lives. This world is full of violence, drugs and weapons but the sad part about it is that kids have easy access to all of these and get hurt by them everyday. When I was in fourth grade I got off my bus and started to walk home when I saw somebody get pushed to the ground and beaten unconscious. I will occasionally get sent videos by my friends of people getting beat up or hurting themselves. I've been in a couple situations where I'm getting hit and pushed around but I've never done much about it because I've never really cared because it happened a lot. I've heard stories about people's family members ending up in the hospital due to drug related incidents like getting high and harming themselves. Another thing I've heard and seen on the news is school shootings. I talk to a couple people online who witnessed a shooting at their schools. Sometimes it seems like humanity won't make it to 2022 and that isn't at all a good thing.

There are many reasons these things happen, the use of drugs is very severe along with fighting and abuse. A lot of kids have access to drugs and are allowed to use them, sometimes that leads to self harm along with harming

others and drug overdoses. So many kids die each year in drug related problems but there are also a lot of deaths from teen violence each year as well. Everyday when I go to school or even just on a walk I see other teens fighting verbally and physically. I remember seeing somebody get jumped and beat to the ground. A couple of my online friends have told me that they know where to find weapons and drugs which worries me so much because I care for them a lot and I don't want them to do something dumb.

I think that we could stop or at least slow the rate of teen deaths by attempting to make drugs less accessible and by doing this there would be less drug related suicide or crimes committed. I think that another thing we could do is make weapons such as guns and knives harder to access. By making weapons harder to access, less kids would bring them to schools, stores, workplaces, etcetera there would be less suicides and murders committed by teenagers. Things we could do to make drugs harder to access is start investigating sketchy places such as abandoned houses, buildings or alley ways. The things we could do to stop fights are monitor kids around Neighborhoods, schools, restaurants and in parks. The one thing I don't believe most people understand is violence only breeds more violence.



**ESSAY 7**

**TERRANCE ROBERTSON**

**West Middle School**

Youth violence is everywhere. A lot of people have been through a lot of violence as a kid. I haven't been through a lot of violence myself but I see it all around me. I see people getting bullied at school and I see kids getting bullied on social media. I see a lot of violence on social media. People post videos of kids fighting and of kids getting injured. There's also videos of kids shooting other kids. And then when people post the video it just keeps getting passed along until thousands of people get the video. Then the video could influence other kids to start doing bad behavior like the video they saw. Videos aren't the only thing that could influence kids to do this behavior. For example I've seen someone buy a gun because they saw it in a magazine. And any kid could do bad things because all it takes is someone to say something and it could cause a suicide or a shoot out you never know what could happen so you have to watch what you say to people.

Some people think it's fun but others get peer pressured into it. If people don't have money or enough money they may try to steal or rob a store. If someone is in a gang it could influence kids to do bad things. Some kids don't get treated well at home so that could also influence kids to do the wrong thing. Parents have a big impact on kids because if they see their mom or dad doing something they are going to want to do it. So parents should watch what they do at home because what they say and do affect their kids. Some parents treat their kids horrible. It's sad to see a good kid go home to a bad family. Other kids have great parents and they

have bad friends. That's why you have to watch who you make friends with because you never know what they like to do or what they get into.

When you see violence on social media there's not a lot you can do. If you see it in person you can stand up for those getting bullied. A lot of people just sit back and watch everybody getting bullied. Some people are scared they'll get bullied themselves. Some bullies only bully people because they used to get bullied or get bullied at home. You can't judge someone on what you see because you don't know what they're going through at home. They could have family problems that you don't know about. At my school if you're getting bullied we have a website called BRIM. You can report bullies on the website. I feel like every school should have an app or website like BRIM. BRIM has its flaws because you don't know if anybody is getting the message and you could be sending your bully report to no one. That's why I feel like everyone should have someone to talk to about a bully situation. Even if it's not a bully situation you should talk about everything. That's why you need someone to talk to.

All this youth violence doesn't affect me much but when I see it it makes me very upset. Because no one should have to go through anything like that. I feel like everyone should have a good life as an adult and a kid so no type of violence should affect anybody. When I see violence around me I try to stop it or help the people doing it. And if I cant help it I go to somebody who can.



## ESSAY 8

# JADA SMITH

Liberty Arts Magnet

I am a 13 year old middle school girl that has been through so much in my life and I can finally express myself and tell my story. The world has made me think a lot of bad things about myself. How has youth violence affected my life? What are some causes of youth violence? What can I do about youth violence? These questions need to be answered now and are very important in the world today. I really hope to help others that went through or are going through the same problems that I went through.

I was going through depression for a very long time. I never had anybody I could count on or lean to when I needed help. I was very pessimistic. At first I really didn't know how to express myself to others either. So many people made me think i wasn't good enough and that I wasn't pretty if I didn't have this or wear that, and they mentally drained me which caused me to have really bad thoughts about myself and anxiety. There were so many nights where I just cried because I wasn't happy with myself and wanted to end my life. It was not easy for me. During my really bad depression stage I started to get bad grades in school, didn't eat as much as I needed to and overall I was not happy at all. I was over my life at that moment. When I tried to tell people around me that I was going through depression no one wanted to hear about what I was going through and couldn't understand where I was coming from. I was told "Nothing's wrong with you," "Idc," "You are not depressed." I wanted to harm myself every single day. I had many people that I thought were my friends telling me to kill my self and didn't even care about me. But I told myself that I can't let these people control my life and my feelings because that is not who I am and want to be. I started to love myself even more after my depression and I came to the point where I didn't care about what people thought about me anymore. I'm turning into a better me and that is what's important.

There are so many causes of youth violence in this world. What are some causes of youth violence? Some causes are depression, anxiety, suicide, and cyberbullying. Young teens are heavily influenced on social media to do things that they shouldn't do. Also Words can hurt people more than you think, you should always watch what you say to people it can really hurt them. Teenagers are more prone to suicide because they mistakenly believe their troubles are their fault. When I see someone getting bullied I try to help the person who's getting bullied as much as I can because I know how much it hurts to have somebody constantly mess with you and say brutal things to you. There are a lot of teenagers getting intoxicated. I was verbally abused so anytime I see those around me going through that I instantly help others and show my compassion and it makes me very irate when people are being treated that way especially young kids because people shouldn't be treated that way.

If you are getting bullied, tell an adult that you trust and tell them how you feel. You might think that it won't help but it really helps and you should always be optimistic. And there is also alcoholism that goes on so much ruining kids body and mental state. When I wasn't eating I lost over 5 pounds and I was not myself. I never want to go through that again and I would like to go help others one day that are struggling in life and try to help them as much as I can to better themselves.

I am Jada Smith and that is my story about youth violence and how it affected my life and also what I can do to stop it. I sincerely hope I helped many people and encouraged others to speak out.



## ESSAY 9

# ALISANDRA VANMETER

South Science and Technology Magnet

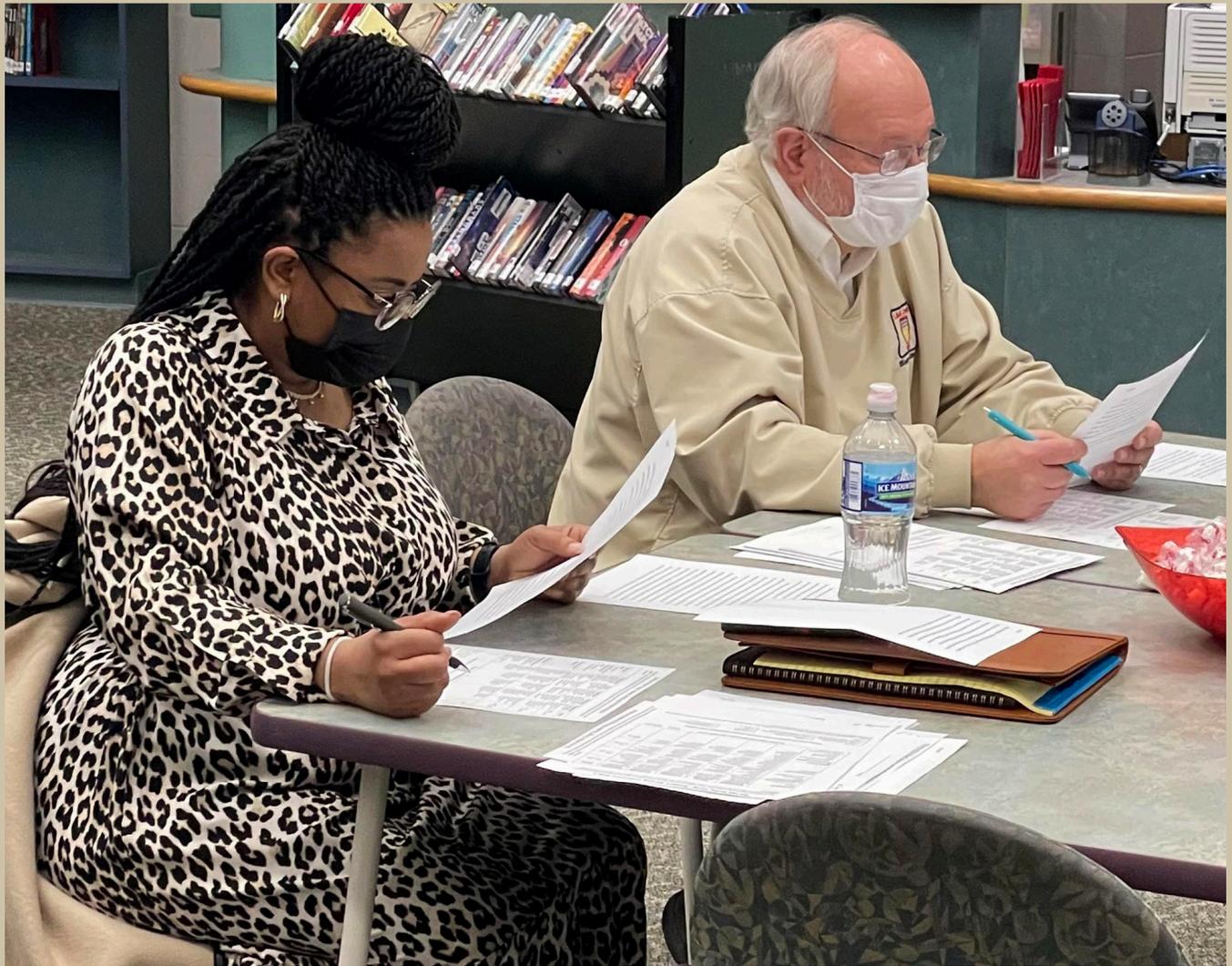
Did you know that 18% of youth report self-harming at least once? Do you know why? Well if you don't, I'm here to tell you. The answer is youth violence. Youth violence affects many people during their lifetime and youth violence probably took place around you whether you realized it or not. Bullying is one form of youth violence and many people do not take it seriously anymore but they should. Bullying can have many negative effects on youth, and these effects can then lead people to having depression, self-harming or even committing suicide. In person bullying is not the only form, there is also cyberbullying. 69.1% of youth say that cyberbullying had a negative impact on their self-esteem and feelings about themselves. Youth can become defeatist from any type of bullying whatsoever and accept failure when trying to stand up for themselves. Also did you know that 70.1% of LGBTQ students have been verbally bullied purely because of their sexual orientation? That percentage is outrageous and it should be 0%. POC youth are also targeted purely because of the color of their skin which is something they cannot change as well.

Youth violence does not just affect the person directly getting targeted. It can affect the people around the targeted victim of bullying. I've been a bystander before and I did not know what to do. Then I became anxious and scared for days because I feared I'd be the next target. Observing bullying can cause a phenomenon called Approach-Avoidance Conflict. This is when bystanders want to help the person but at the same time they also dread what would happen if they stepped in. This causes observers to be indecisive and develop high levels of anxiety and stress. People who witness bullying behavior report having feelings of helplessness and feel a less sense of support and connection to adults. That makes it less likely for people to report bullying behavior to responsible figures in their life and stop the problem in its tracks. Bullying is represented in shows, books, and movies. Every kid has heard about it one time in their life and knows that bullying could have devastating outcomes. We all have wondered why people choose to bully others, I know I've wondered. But I now know the

answer as to why people behave in such a cruel way.

Bullying behavior forms in many ways, even some ways that people would think to be unlikely. It can stem from the child's home life and experiences. In-fact children with a poor home-life are actually more likely to bully their peers. Children whose parents are uninvolved in their children's life usually raise children that are unable to deal with negative emotions they have. Then they do not know what to do when these negative emotions come about. Children who experience violence at home also tend to bully. Bullying could also be the outcome of their own emotions. Youth that may have been bullied in the past or even currently have been shown to bully. They could also have low self-esteem and bully to feel as if they have power. Some don't have the skills to handle situations in positive ways either. Other situations could be that the school doesn't address bullying much. Holding children to the standard of being kind and positive towards each other is a standard that should always be applied. If it is not then of course they will not know any better. As you've read, bullying isn't just the result of children just being mean. That can be the case sometimes but most of the time children have reasons behind their actions.

There are ways that we can reduce bullying among youth. We could have activities that teach youth about the effects and causes of bullying. Then they could create poems or write a story that includes bullying and speaks out about it. They should be taught how to react when they see others bullying. Schools, teachers, and even just parental figures should be setting positive expectations about behind toward other children. They should also be reassured that bullying will be taken care of and they have plenty of support at school from trusted adults. Building a positive climate at school should be more focused on as well. Children should be encouraged to talk to children who they notice are being bullied, it may give them hope and could save bullied children from making rash decisions. We can create school safety committees and students can take roles of leadership to help develop policies, rules, and guidelines to help



prevent bullying. Also parents should be involved and informed about things at school. When parents are engaged and informed in bullying prevention it has a ton of benefits. Parents will worry less and students tend to feel safer and can focus more on learning. Also students should be exposed to people who have been targeted directly because of something they cannot change such as POC and LGBTQ+ people.

Bullying should never be tolerated in any circumstance. It affects many people and gives them trauma that can carry on with them throughout their life. Even people who only witnessed bullying can experience negative effects on their mental health. Some youth even come to the conclusion that the bullying they received is their fault and they deserved it. Targets of bullying can experience maladjustment and struggle to go through their everyday

life without worrying or feeling anxious. Although we have studies on the causes of bullying behavior in youth adults still do not do enough to stop this problem. There could be unlikely reasons that you cannot see on the surface. We need to pay attention to things that could hint at unhappy home life or self-esteem issues. Knowing the reason why a child is showing negative behavior towards their peers is a step closer to getting to the root of the problem. Exposing children to people seen as “different” will also get rid of children excluding people because they judge them for things that are unalterable. Doing things like paying more attention, exposing them to the problem with bullying behavior and having a secure support system for youth in need will help get rid of bullying. One out of every five students report bullying. That number needs to be zero out of every five students to report being bullied in their school environment.



## ESSAY 10

# MYA WHITING

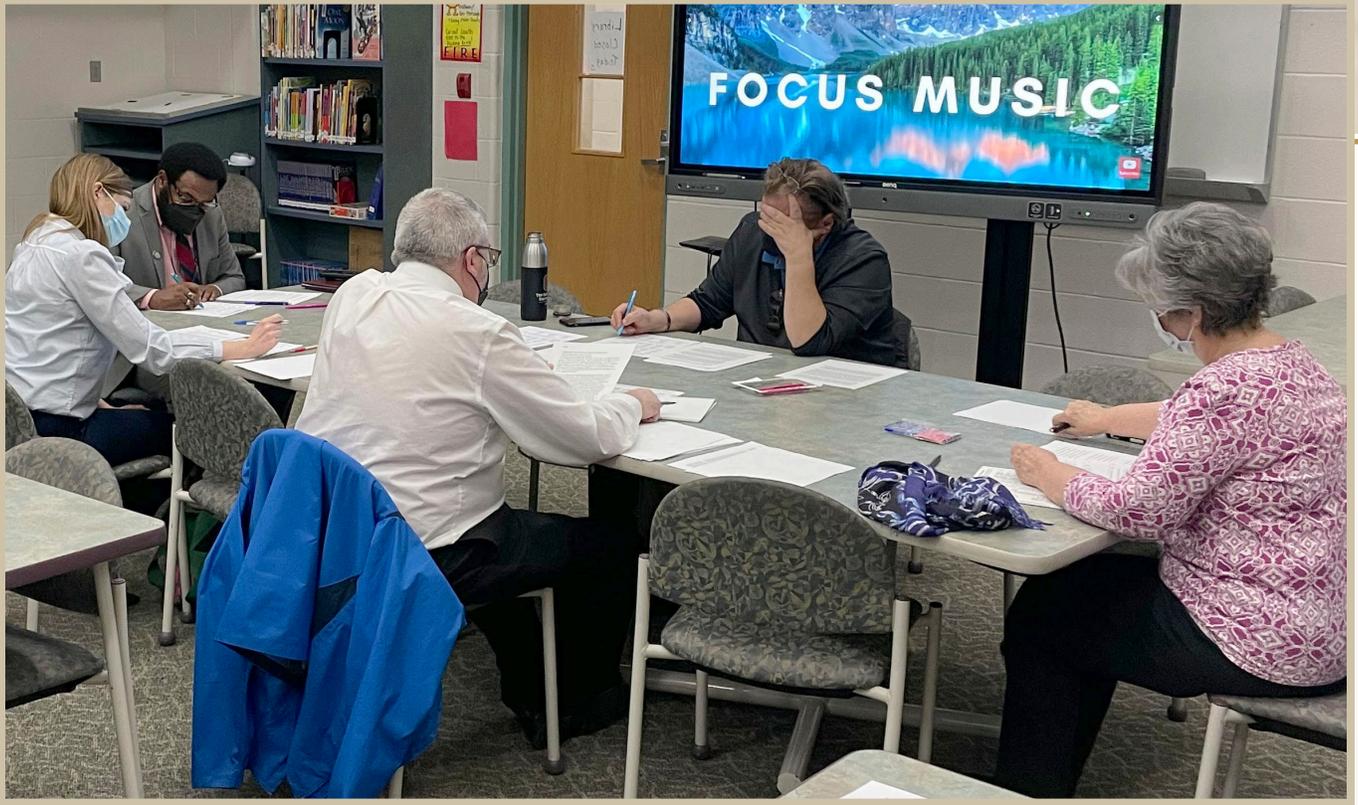
West Middle School

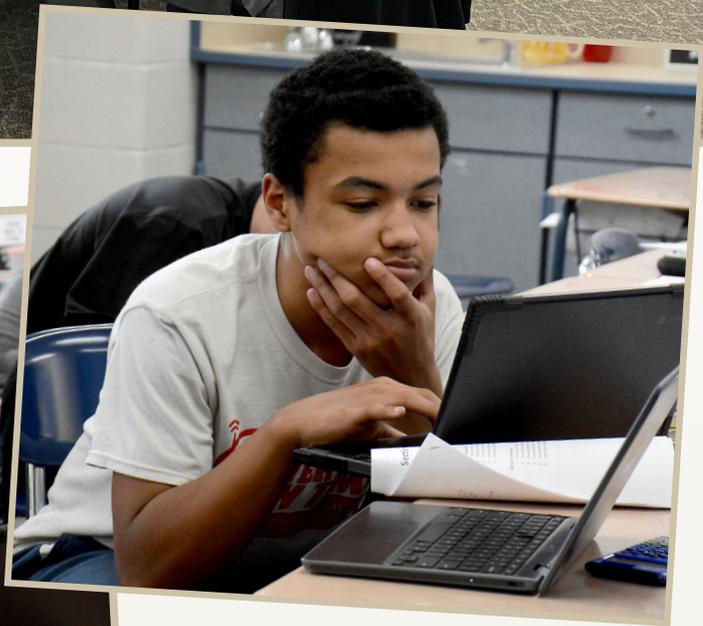
Violence has taken a toll on my life from a very young age. I lived in Cleveland and Cleveland is a very violent city. I mean gangs, school shooting, drugs, child abuse. There are so many more violent things that happen in Cleveland. And for example I was a victim of child abuse and I have ended up in 3 foster homes due to the violence that happened at home. When I say violence, I mean drug abuse and women abuse right in front of me and at a really young age. I thought violence was the way to go. I thought violence was okay, I thought violence was what everybody did. Now I think violence is not good for the mind set or the body violence drains the body of good energy.

So what causes violence? I think violence is caused by the influence at home, like when kids come home to see their mom getting beaten by their dad or even when there is no parent at home to take care of them. So we all know that violence comes in so many forms. According to the World Health Organization, "When it is not fatal, youth violence has a serious, often lifelong, impact on a person's physical, psychological and social functioning." This shows that violence can affect youth in a negative way. Violence can also be influenced by peer pressure. Young adults and kids want to impress their friends so they fall into the peer

pressure of violence. According to Verrywellfamily.com, other causes of youth violence are: "Research indicates that violence in the media influences teens and can cause them to act aggressively. Although it is difficult to determine whether or not violence in media leads directly to youth violence, studies have shown that playing violent video games increases aggressive thoughts and behaviors.

What can I do to help? I can tell a trusted adult or I can make someone feel safe around me. I can invite them to our lunch table or stand up for them. Another thing I could do is be aware of the warning signs of youth violence. According to Youth.gov, "To prevent and eliminate violence and improve youth well-being, communities should employ evidence-based, comprehensive approaches that address the multiple factors that impact violence, both factors that increase risk of violence and factors that buffer against risk and promote well-being." These are ways that myself and others can prevent youth violence. How can we help someone dealing with anger? Here are some steps; 1: stay calm when talking 2: listen to what they have to say 3: give some space to express themselves 4: respect them. And most importantly be kind to people. These are just some of the few ways that I can help with youth violence.







**DAVE YOST**

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

# Do the Write Thing 2022

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