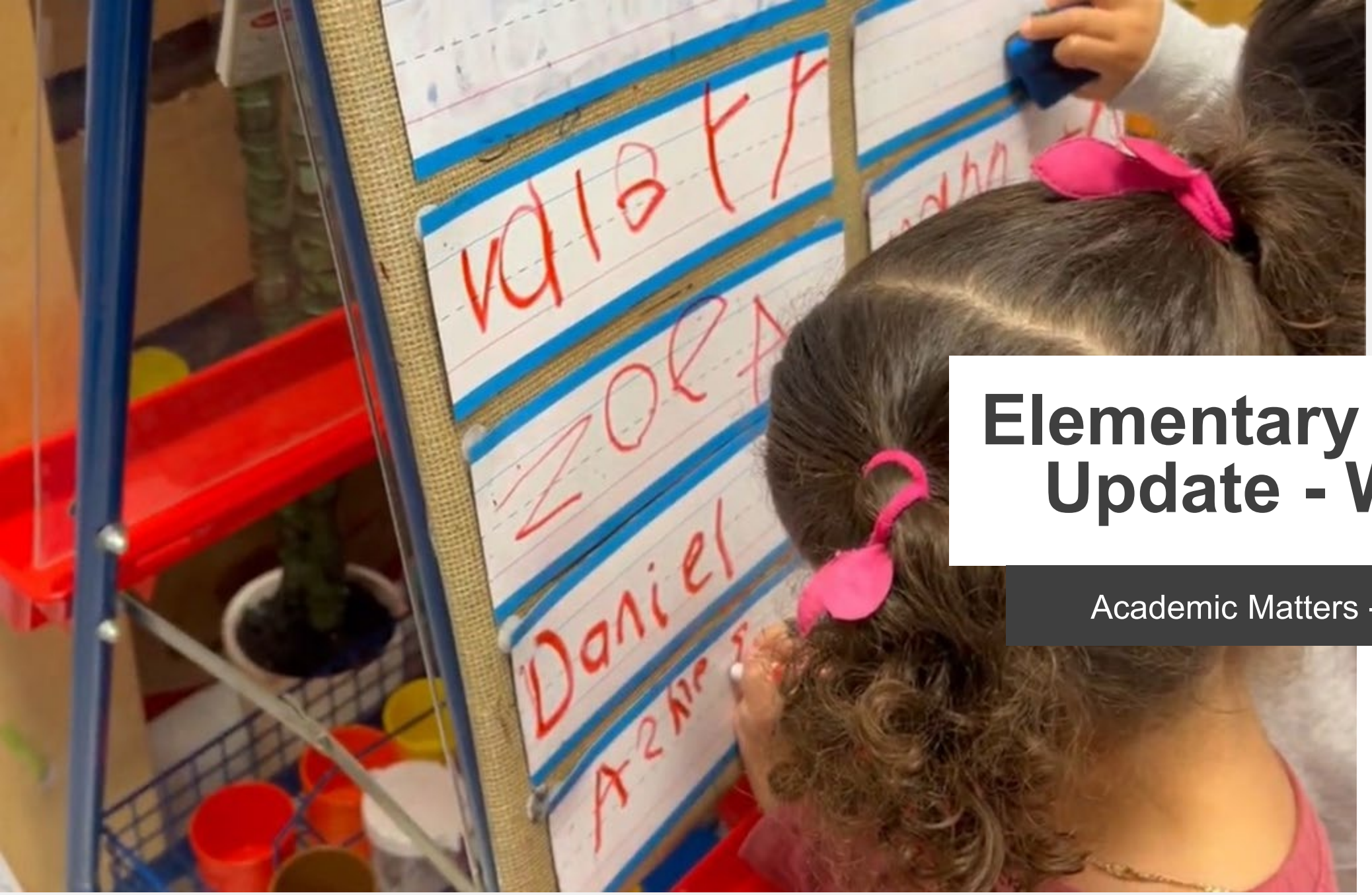


Elementary Literacy Update - Writing

Academic Matters - February 2026

Fairfax County PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ENGAGE • INSPIRE • THRIVE

Benchmark Advance: K-6 Writing Curriculum

3 KEY COMPONENTS

Explicit Foundational Instruction

- Handwriting:
  - Manuscript (K-1)
  - Cursive (2-6)
- Spelling
- Grammar

Rigorous Composition Instruction across Genres

- Narrative
- Information/ Expository
- Opinion

Integration with Reading Instruction

- Annotating texts
- Analyzing text structures
- Using text evidence in compositions

Benchmark Advance Unit Assessments for Writing

Composition is assessed through student essays, scored on a 4-point rubric in relation to **end-of-year grade level expectations** for composition:

1. Does not meet
2. Approaching
3. Meeting
4. Exceeding

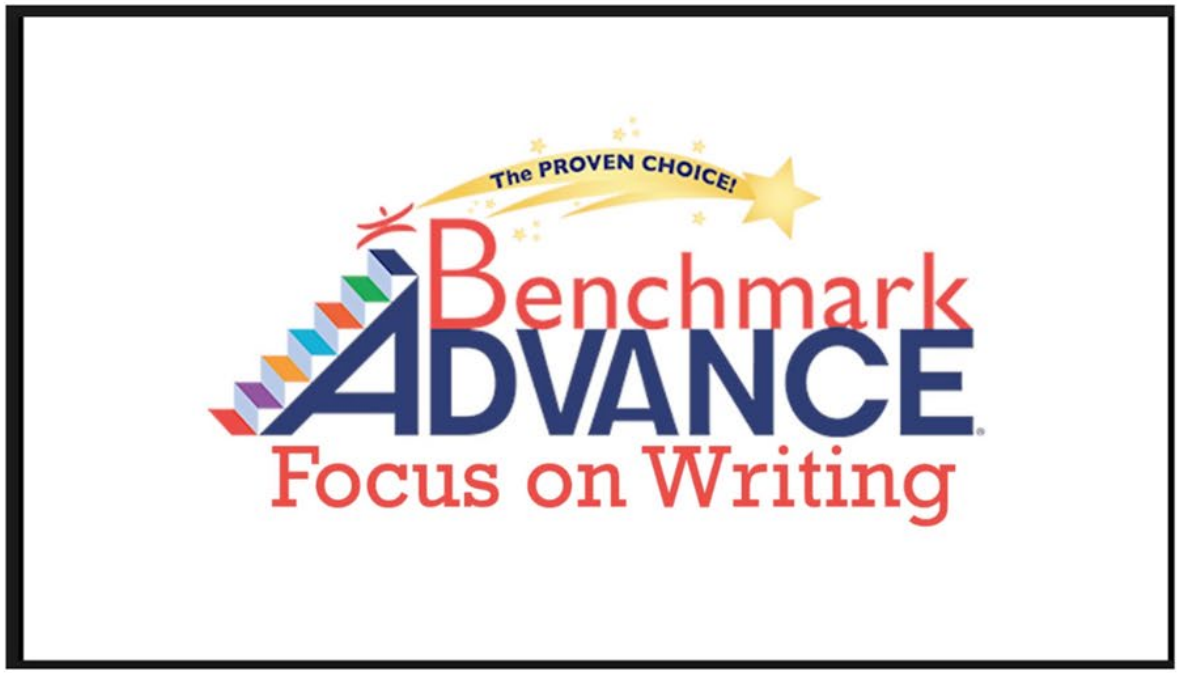
% Scoring 2, 3 or 4	Unit 2 (Nov. 2024)	Unit 2 (Nov. 2025)	Improvement for Rising Grade level
Grade 3	52%	62%	N/A
Grade 4	57%	69%	+17%
Grade 5	64%	78%	+21%
Grade 6	81%	87%	+23%

Lexia Strengthens Foundational Writing Skills

- **K-5:** Lexia Core5 Reading includes skills that support writing: phonics, spelling, vocabulary, sentence structure and text structure.
- **6-8:** Lexia Power Up Literacy includes word study (morphology and spelling) and grammar (parts of speech, clauses, sentence and text structures).

	Core 5 **Grades K-5**	**Power Up: Word Study** **Grades 6-8**	**Power Up: Grammar** **Grades 6-8**
August 2025 % of users at **Intermediate or Advanced Levels**	**60%**	**58%**	**58%**
December 2025 % of users at **Intermediate or Advanced Levels**	**83%**	**75%**	**67%**
Improvement	**+23%**	**+17%**	**+9%**

Video



Strong Writers are Future Ready

The National Commission on Writing refers to writing as the “The Neglected R.”

Key findings from the survey:

- **67%** of salaried employees have writing as a job requirement.
- **91%** of employers consider writing proficiency in the hiring process.
- Various forms (e.g., email and technical writing), are considered essential functions unlikely to be outsourced or replaced by AI.

