

Districts Expand Use of Online Writing Tutor

- By Scott Aronowitz
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[Milwaukee Public Schools](#) of Milwaukee, WI and [Anchorage School District](#) of Anchorage, AK have each announced a substantial increase the numbers of students in their respective districts now using [Vantage Learning's](#) MY Access! online writing tutorial software.

MPS previously used the program to help students in grades 4 through 8 improve their writing skills. For the current school year, however, the district has expanded its use of the program by 11,000 students in grades 11 and 12, for a total 41,000 students throughout the district. The aim is to help the upperclassmen get a strong handle on their writing and comprehensive communication skills prior to graduating.

"Students thrive with feedback," said Patrice Ball, an English language arts curriculum specialist with MPS. "Teachers in a classroom of 25 or 30 kids simply are not able to get to everyone, certainly at the same rate of the program. MY Access! takes over as a copilot and allows students to get that instantaneous feedback and as a result you see kids constantly engaged. There's never an off switch while they're waiting for the teacher to get to them."

ASD has added 4,000 students in their primary and secondary schools, bringing the district total to 11,000. A spokesperson for the district said administrators decided to expand the number of users after receiving positive feedback from both teachers and students.