Theory of Change

THE NEED

Equal access to quality writing education has been a longstanding challenge in the United States. Students with access to quality writing education benefit social-emotionally, cognitively, and creatively, leading to lifelong success academically and professionally. However, due to inequity, only 10% of Black and Hispanic students are writing at grade-level proficiency, which affects the trajectory of their lives, communities and the nation. We work to level the playing field and invest in the writing education of students who have long been underheard and underrepresented, so that they access the power and joy of writing and can write their own path forward.

826 NATIONAL

www.826national.org

THE MISSION

Every student has access to the power and joy of quality writing education.
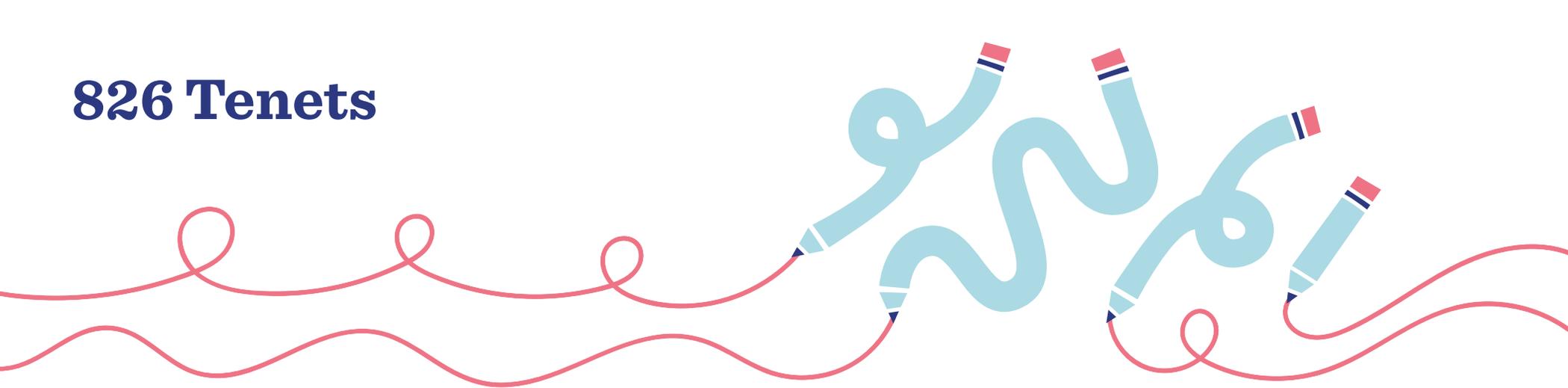
826 TENETS

- Culture of Creativity
- Welcoming & Brave Space
- Collaborative Community
- Diverse Core Programs
- Celebrating & Amplifying Student Voice
- Student-Driven
- Individualized Support
- Students as Leaders

THROUGH OUR CHANNELS

- Chapters
- 826 Digital
- 826-Inspired Organizations
- Partnerships
- Dissemination of Best Practices

LIFELONG SUCCESS

- Academic & Professional Achievement
- Advocate for Better World
- Build Empathy & Community
- Channel Creativity

IMPACT

- Access
- Student Outcomes: *Voice, Writing Skills, Social-Emotional Learning*
- Teacher Support

826 Tenets

ENVIRONMENT

Culture of Creativity: We create an environment where students are valued as creators and are encouraged to try new ideas and experiment with their work.

Welcoming & Brave Space: We provide a space students can call their own where they feel safe to reflect and brave to share their experiences. We strive to ensure that our programs and practices are inclusive and encourage learning from one another.

Collaborative Community: We build and connect communities through partnerships with local schools and teachers, nonprofits, and teaching artists. We strive to support our students with a diverse community including parents, volunteers, and peer mentors.

CONTENT

Diverse Core Programs & Innovative Curricula: Through a range of programs designed to fit the needs of our students, teachers, and community, we provide students with dedicated time to be creative and to express their voices through the writing process. Our curricula is standards-aligned, culturally relevant, and thought-provoking.

Celebrating & Amplifying Student Voice: Our students build confidence and take pride in their work as we amplify their writing in professional publications and honor students' voices at community events. Through this process we encourage students to see themselves as authors and changemakers who take the lead in our national dialogue.

PEDAGOGY

Student-Driven: Through approaches such as project and inquiry-based learning, students have agency over their work as they are encouraged to explore their interests, ideas, and personal stories through writing.

Individualized Support: Our volunteers are trained to provide individualized support to students as they express, communicate, and reflect on ideas through writing, whether in a small group or whole-class setting.

Students as Leaders: We activate the skills and agency students build through the writing and publication process and continue to support them as they grow into leaders through youth-leadership roles and as stewards of 826.

Channels

826 National is the hub of the 826 Network, facilitating collaboration and alignment among our chapters and bringing the 826 Network model and approach to new communities. We spread our work through the following channels:

WITHIN THE 826 NETWORK

Chapters: Our chapters provide students a creative space to engage in writing. We currently have nine chapters, 826 Boston, 826CHI, 826DC, 826LA, 826michigan, 826 MSP, 826 New Orleans, 826NYC, and 826 Valencia, with 826 Dallas in development and more to come.

826 Digital: Our online platform for educators, providing adaptable, standards-based resources. All content is developed and field-tested by educators, volunteers, and students affiliated with the 826 Network.
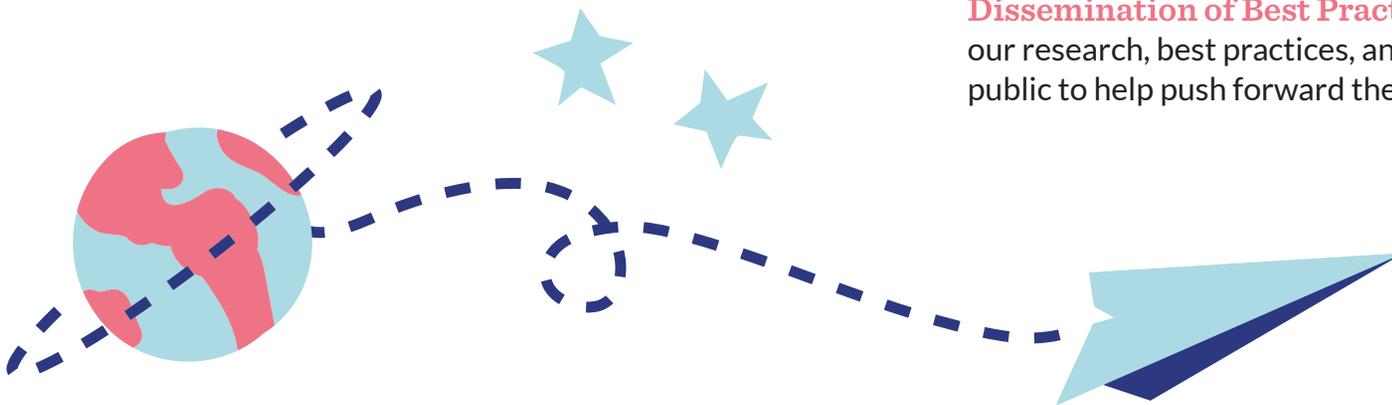
BEYOND THE 826 NETWORK

826 Digital: Because it is an online platform, it makes the 826 approach to teaching writing possible anywhere in the world.

826-Inspired Organizations: There are more than 50 organizations inspired by the 826 model around the world from Freetown, Sierra Leone to Sydney, Australia.

Partnerships: We partner with other organizations to implement specific 826 programs or elements of our programs outside of the 826 Network.

Dissemination of Best Practices: We publish and share our research, best practices, and lessons learned to the general public to help push forward the writing-education field.

Impact

ACCESS

Students from under-resourced communities receive access to quality, engaging, and free writing and publishing programs that they otherwise would not have.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Voice

EXPRESSION. Students think critically and develop and express their ideas clearly through writing.

COMMUNICATION. Student writing has perspective and effectively communicates to the intended audience.

CREATIVITY. Student writing demonstrates creativity through originality, elaboration, and task appropriateness.

Writing Skills

STRUCTURE. Student writing is structured in a way that's well-organized and purposeful.

MECHANICS. Students demonstrate mastery of language and writing conventions.

PLATFORMS. Students are able to use different writing platforms effectively for intended audiences.

Social-Emotional Learning

CONFIDENCE. Students believe in themselves.

SELF-FULFILLMENT. Students feel proud and a sense of accomplishment.

PERSISTENCE. Students do their best and stick with it even when it's hard.

COMMUNITY. Students feel a sense of belonging and responsibility.

REFLECTION. Students use their writing to reflect on their thoughts and experiences.
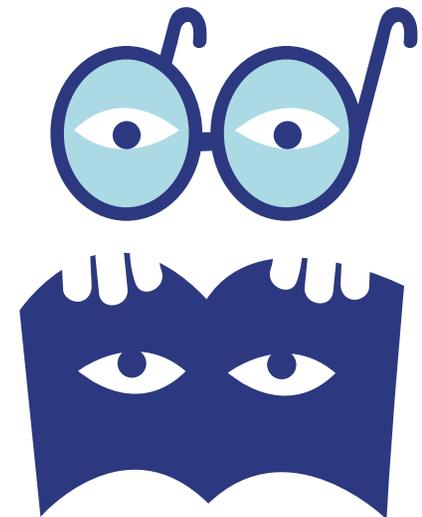
EMPATHY. Students are better able to understand the perspectives of others.

TEACHER SUPPORT

ACCESS. Teachers have access to quality writing resources.

SUPPORT LEARNING GOALS. Teachers feel the resources and programs provided by 826 help them achieve their learning goals for their students.

INSPIRATION. Teachers feel inspired by the resources and programs provided by 826 to share them and also to adapt and/or create new ones.

Lifelong Success

Our students build power through their writing to enact change in the following ways:

Academic & Professional Achievement. Strong writing skills help students to not only grow personally, but also to advance in school and career.

Advocate for Better World. Students use writing skills to speak up about their experiences and views on the world around them.

Build Empathy & Community. Students foster empathy through sharing stories, and create pathways to power by advocating for themselves and their communities.

Channel Creativity. Students use their writing to spark their creativity to innovate on ideas and new ways to improve their lives and communities.