Middle School Sample Assessment

OVERVIEW

CWRA+ for Middle Schools comprises a Performance Task (PT) and a Selected-Response Question (SRQ) section. There are three types of questions in the SRQ section: Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning (SQR), Critical Reading and Evaluation (CRE), and Critique-an-Argument (CA). CWRA+ for Middle Schools is administered online. The PT contains an open-ended prompt that requires written responses. The SRQs ask the student to choose the best response based on the Document Library provided.

CWRA+ tasks are designed to assess students’ general critical-thinking and written-communication skills, regardless of their academic concentrations. These skills include scientific and quantitative reasoning, analytic reasoning and evaluation of information, problem solving, writing effectiveness, and writing mechanics. These skills are necessary, not only for success in high school and college; they are important for success in the workplace and other aspects of life outside the classroom. No prior knowledge of any particular field is necessary in order to perform well.

What is presented in the practice example is an abbreviated version of a PT and SRQs. Nevertheless, please familiarize yourself with how the assessment includes real-world scenarios and a series of documents that reflect an authentic situation.

This example is also intended to demonstrate what is expected in a high-quality response. The sample response demonstrates the student’s critical-thinking and written-communication skills.

Table of Contents

1 Overview
2 Performance Task
3 Document 1 | Lexington Middle School Environmental Club Earth Day Committee Mission & Goals
4 Document 2 | Announcement from the National Environmental Organization
5 Document 3 | Lexington Gazette Article
6 Document 4 | Recycling Stars Guide to School Recycling Programs
7 Document 5 | Lexington Middle School Environmental Club Survey Results
8 Answer Sheet
9 Sample Response 1
10 Sample Response 2
11 Sample Response 3
12 CWRA+ Scoring Rubric
13 SQR Document
14 SQR Questions
15 CRE Document 1
16 CRE Document 2
17 CRE Questions
18 CA Document
18 CA Questions

Additional Information

The CWRA+ is an online assessment. For more information about the CWRA+, please visit cae.org/cwra.

You may also email the CWRA+ Team at clateam@cae.org
SCENARIO
As a member of the Lexington Middle School Environmental Club, you have volunteered to head the “Earth Day Committee” for your school and are tasked with choosing an activity for all students to participate in on Earth Day. You are presented with three possible options:

1. a school-wide recycling drive
2. a local beach and park clean-up
3. a fundraiser for a national environmental organization

TASK
Your task is to review five documents and then write a letter to the committee giving your recommendation for the activity that will best comply with the Earth Day Committee’s Mission & Goals and be most valuable to students and the environment. Use information from the documents to support your reasoning. Be sure to discuss the pros and cons of each option and cite evidence from the documents.

DOCUMENT LIBRARY
1. Lexington Middle School Environmental Club Earth Day Committee Mission & Goals
2. Announcement from the National Environmental Organization
3. Lexington Gazette Article
4. Recycling Stars Guide to School Recycling Programs
5. Lexington Middle School Environmental Club Survey Results
Earth Day Committee

Environmental Club Mission
Our mission is to raise awareness of environmental issues, inspire our school community to take positive action, and promote a healthier and more livable planet.

Earth Day Committee Goals

- Give students the opportunity to learn about environmental issues and positive actions they can take in their daily lives
- Support existing local and global environmental efforts
- Build good environmental practices within our school community
- Engage the entire Lexington Middle School (LMS) student body in a group activity that will have a positive impact on the environment

Possible Activities for Consideration by the Earth Day Committee

1. School-Wide Recycling Effort
   Students work together to bring LMS’s recycling program to the top of its game! Students will work in teams to install better recycling bins, create educational posters, and volunteer in the school sorting center -- using the “Recycling Stars” guidelines as a model.

2. Local Beach and Park Clean-Up
   Students team up with a local environmental action group to clean up Lexington’s beaches and parks. Each group of students will be assigned to a different location in town, where they’ll engage in activities such as picking up litter, planting new trees, and learning about the plants and animals that live in local habitats.

3. Fundraiser for the National Environmental Organization
   Students will participate in an all-day fundraiser selling natural crafts and healthy foods to raise money for the National Environmental Organization. They’ll learn more about how the NEO is helping the environment and how they can be a part of this worldwide organization.
Celebrate Earth Day by holding a fundraiser to benefit the National Environmental Organization (NEO) at your school or local community center.

NEO is a national organization that has been protecting the environment for over 75 years. We are one of the largest environmental organizations in the world. Our projects range from saving endangered wildlife in South America to encouraging global businesses to use less packaging. We have a record of success that you can read about on our website. We were endorsed as “one of Earth’s most effective advocates” at a 2015 Earth Day summit meeting.

This year on Earth Day, we are inviting you to join our fight! Team up with your local school, environmental group, or community organization to raise funds to support our work. Our goal is to raise $5 million by midnight on April 22. Our highly skilled, professional workforce will then use these funds in the most efficient, effective way possible.

The Earth Day fundraiser will contribute to these NEO initiatives:

- The Wildlife Protection Initiative
- Cleaner Oceans Initiative
- Wind and Solar Power Sustainability Initiative
- Initiative for Sustainable American Agriculture

Click [here](http://www.neo.org/events/earthday) to register your group for our Earth Day fundraising effort. We’ll send you educational materials about environmental issues and explain how NEO is working to solve problems. We’ll also give you some tips on getting involved in environmental activism and creating an effective fundraiser. Then you can create a fundraising event that is tailored to your community. You can even specify which of our initiatives your funds will support.
Lexington Environmental League Heads Clean-up Effort For Suffering Beaches and Parks

by Nikita Johnson

The Lexington Environmental League (LEL) has released a spring community clean-up plan, which details the organization’s efforts for this coming season. It is urging community members to join a special Earth Day effort to restore our town’s beaches and parks, which the league says are suffering from erosion, litter, and years of neglect.

“These natural environments are resources for everyone in our community,” urged Bradley Chun, LEL’s Chairperson. “They are calling out for our help.”

Chun told the Gazette that the LEL has turned its focus to local environmental concerns in recent years. Chun and others believe that small volunteer organizations can have a greater impact by addressing local issues than by trying to tackle complex global concerns.

In preparation for Earth Day, the LEL released a memo describing the problems threatening Lexington’s three major parks and two lakeside beaches. The list included litter-filled spaces, fewer nesting spaces for birds, overgrown paths, and decaying public structures. Among the Earth Day projects the LEL has planned are trash pick-up, trail clearing, tree planting, and the creation of a butterfly garden. Heavy-duty trash and recycling containers have already been purchased. They will need to be transported and installed.

The LEL is looking for volunteers to join its Earth Day clean-up effort. Some tasks will require special skills and knowledge. Others require only the willingness to work hard. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own tools. For more information or to sign up, visit www.lexingtonenvironmentalleague.com. Those who want to support the effort but are unable to participate physically are encouraged to donate funds or supplies.
What is a Recycling Star school? A Recycling Star school cares about the Earth and makes recycling a top priority every day! Recycling Star schools have effective recycling programs that reduce the waste produced by students and staff. It takes knowledge, hard work, and commitment from all students and teachers to keep the program running smoothly and sustainably.

Why is it important to be a Recycling Star school? Recycling is the number one action any community can take to improve the environment. Recycling prevents garbage from overcrowding our landfills and damaging our oceans. Recycling prevents harmful gases from polluting our air and conserves our fresh drinking water. Don’t you want to do your part?

How can my school become a Recycling Star school? It’s easy! All it requires is a little bit of effort and enthusiasm. The effort can be led by a school club, a class, or any group of teachers and students; but it requires participation from everybody in the school in order to succeed.

Here’s what your school needs to be a Recycling Star school:

★ Easily available bins. You need bins in every classroom and hallway to ensure that it’s easy and convenient to choose recycling over trash. Lunchrooms should have two to five bin sections depending on the number of students who use the cafeteria.
★ Bins should be separated by material. It’s important that there are separate, clearly labeled bins for paper, plastic, glass, and aluminum. This ensures that the materials are sorted correctly and helps guarantee that recycling centers will accept them.
★ A school sorting center. Recycling Star schools make sure that materials are properly sorted before sending them off to recycling centers. This step ensures that your school will correctly recycle everything possible.
★ Recycling Star volunteers. You need student volunteers to make sure that bins are maintained and accessible, recyclables are correctly separated and delivered to recycling centers, and community members understand the importance of recycling.
★ Educational posters. You need to educate people about why recycling matters and how to correctly separate materials. If people are not motivated to recycle, or if they fail to place recyclables in the correct bins, your program will fail.
★ Get started! Order one of our free videos for a point-by-point explanation of how to set up a program. Then order our attractive, low-cost bins. We can also provide sample posters and signs for putting your program into effect.
Survey Results

Total number of students surveyed: 426

Question 1: How well informed are you about environmental issues?
   - Extremely: 27%
   - Very: 38%
   - A little: 22%
   - Not at all: 12%
   - No response: 1%

Question 2: Which of the following environmental issues is most important to you?
   - Local green spaces: 30%
   - Cleaner oceans: 18%
   - Sustainable energy: 15%
   - Animals and wildlife: 32%
   - No response: 5%

Question 3: How often do you recycle at school?
   - Always: 10%
   - Often: 40%
   - Rarely: 36%
   - Never: 13%
   - No response: 1%

Question 4: How likely would you be to volunteer for an environmental action organization?
   - Extremely: 8%
   - Very: 20%
   - A little: 53%
   - Not at all: 18%
   - No response: 1%
Please use the space below to answer the question from the previous page. If necessary, additional paper can be used.
Dear Earth Day Committee,

I strongly urge you to vote for the Local Beach and Park Clean-up as the Lexington Middle School Earth Day activity this year. This option best aligns with our club’s mission and the goals of the Earth Day celebration. Not only will this activity engage students in important environmental work, it will also help to connect them to our community and environment. Additionally, students will have fun and use teamwork. While the other options would have a positive impact on students and the environment, they do not fit our club’s mission and goals as well as the Local Beach and Park Clean-up, making that option the clear winner.

As described in Document 3, the local beaches and parks need serious help. If we, the local school’s environmental club won’t step up, then who will? Students will connect with the local environment and will understand the issues facing our local environment better if they volunteer with the LEL to help cleanup these local green spaces.

Additionally, the LEL is asking the community for help, which is a great opportunity for our club to get involved with a local group. It supports our mission to “raise awareness about environmental issues within our local and global communities” much better than either of the other two options. The school-wide recycling program does not connect to our global or local partners. The NEO fundraiser would help the global environment, but it does not connect to our local community. The option of working directly with the beaches and park in our towns is clearly the best way to fulfill our mission.

Some committee members might argue that this option does not do as good a job at creating sustainability as the other options because it is only a one time clean-up. Sustainability is one of our goals for Earth Day, and it is true that a recycling program would directly create sustainability in our school, but students can learn some of the same important lessons about sustainability during the beach and park clean-up. The NEO does support sustainability, especially their Initiative for Sustainable American Agriculture (Document 2), but a fundraiser for a national organization would not create sustainability in our school.

The clean-up would actually help students understand the importance of sustainability and how it works better than either of the other options. In Document 3, LEL describes the Earth Day tasks as “trash pick-up, trail clearing, tree re-planting, and facility repairs, which will include an improvement of the public trash and recycling systems currently in place.” These are all important issues and skills that will help students live more sustainably in our local environment.

The Local Park and Beach Clean-up would be a fun way for students to learn about the environment, help our local community, and create more sustainability in the place they live. It is clearly the strongest option for our Earth Day activity.
After reviewing carefully, I have a strong idea about what the Earth Day Committee should do to have the entire school celebrate Earth Day.

Our recycling program is not at the level it could be. We could be helping the Earth a lot more. Looking at the survey, we can even see that only 10% of our students always recycle. Recycling stops harmful gases from polluting the environment. The recycling program also connects to the Earth Day Committee’s mission. This program would inspire the school community to take action. This would be done with the guidelines from the Star Recycling document.

The other options are not strong options because they do not provide the same opportunity for students. Doing a fundraiser for a big environmental organization does not have a positive impact on our school. The beach clean-up is also not as important as recycling, because it’s not as sustainable. Also, there is already a local group cleaning up the beaches and parks, so it is not necessary for Lexington Middle School to also plan that as our Earth Day activity.

The recycling program could make a real difference in our school. It’s what we should do to make the Earth Day activity important and great for all students.
The Recycling Program does not connect to local or global environment. It’s not the best option, even if not all of the students reported that they always recycle. Some people still do. It’s also clear that the Parks and Beach Clean-up is not a good idea for our school.

The best idea is to have a fundraiser for the NEO. The NEO sounds like a really important organization for the environment. So many options are possible to put the money towards. It could help sustainability, but also wildlife and cleaner oceans. These seem a lot more important to the environment than anything else, like the recycling program or the beach clean-up. These other options are not as important for the mission.

I would definitely say that the Earth Day Committee should organize a fundraiser. All students could be involved and the money could make a difference in the environment. They could even sell crafts and healthy foods.

Analysis and Problem Solving
Subscore: 3

• States or implies a decision/conclusion/position
• Provides some valid support, but omits or misrepresents critical information, suggesting only superficial analysis and partial comprehension of the documents
• May not account for contradictory information (if applicable)

Writing Effectiveness
Subscore: 3

• Provides limited or somewhat unclear arguments. Presents relevant information in each response, but that information is not woven into arguments
• Provides elaboration on facts or ideas a few times, some of which is valid; sources of information are sometimes unclear

Writing Mechanics
Subscore: 3

• Demonstrates fair control of grammatical conventions with frequent minor errors
• Writes sentences that read naturally but tend to have similar structure and length
• Uses vocabulary that communicates ideas adequately but lacks variety

The above scores, pulled from the CWRA+ rubric, illustrate how a student’s response might be graded. However, a common question we receive from formative-minded educators is: “How might we use this information to improve?” The simplest action to take is to refer back to the rubric (provided on page 12) and review the characteristics of a response you would expect students to achieve.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis and Problem Solving</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making a logical decision or conclusion (or taking a position) and supporting it by utilizing appropriate information (facts, ideas, computed values, or salient features) from the Document Library</td>
<td>May state or imply a decision/conclusion/position</td>
<td>States or implies a decision/conclusion/position</td>
<td>States or implies a decision/conclusion/position</td>
<td>States or implies a decision/conclusion/position</td>
<td>States or implies a decision/conclusion/position</td>
<td>States or implies a decision/conclusion/position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides minimal analysis as support (e.g., briefly addresses only one idea from one document) or analysis is entirely inaccurate, illogical, unreliable, or unconnected to the decision/conclusion/position</td>
<td>Provides analysis that addresses a few ideas as support, some of which is inaccurate, illogical, unreliable, or unconnected to the decision/conclusion/position</td>
<td>Provides valid support that addresses multiple pieces of relevant and credible information in a manner that demonstrates adequate analysis and comprehension of the documents; some information is omitted</td>
<td>Provides strong support that addresses much of the relevant and credible information, in a manner that demonstrates very good analysis and comprehension of the documents</td>
<td>Refutes contradictory information or alternative decisions/conclusions/positions (if applicable)</td>
<td>States an explicit decision/conclusion/position</td>
<td>Provides comprehensive support, including nearly all of the relevant and credible information, in a manner that demonstrates outstanding analysis and comprehension of the documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Effectiveness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing organized and logically cohesive arguments. Strengthening the writer's position by providing elaboration on facts or ideas (e.g., explaining how evidence bears on the problem, providing examples, and emphasizing especially convincing evidence)</td>
<td>Does not develop convincing arguments; writing may be disorganized and confusing</td>
<td>Provides limited, invalid, over-stated, or very unclear arguments; may present information in a disorganized fashion or undermine own points</td>
<td>Provides limited or somewhat unclear arguments. Presents relevant information in each response, but that information is not woven into arguments</td>
<td>Provides elaboration on facts or ideas a few times, some of which is valid; sources of information are sometimes unclear</td>
<td>Organizes response in a way that makes the writer's arguments logical and those arguments apparent but not obvious</td>
<td>Organizes response in a logically cohesive way that makes it fairly easy to follow the writer's arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not provide elaboration on facts or ideas</td>
<td>Any elaboration on facts or ideas tends to be vague, irrelevant, inaccurate, or unreliable (e.g., based entirely on writer's opinion); sources of information are often unclear</td>
<td>Provides elaboration on facts or ideas few times, some of which is valid</td>
<td>Provides valid elaboration on facts or ideas several times and cites sources of information</td>
<td>Provides strong support that addresses multiple pieces of relevant and credible information in a manner that demonstrates adequate analysis and comprehension of the documents; some information is omitted</td>
<td>States an explicit decision/conclusion/position</td>
<td>Provides comprehensive support, including nearly all of the relevant and credible information, in a manner that demonstrates outstanding analysis and comprehension of the documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Mechanics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating facility with the conventions of standard written English (agreement, tense, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling) and control of the English language, including syntax (sentence structure) and diction (word choice and usage)</td>
<td>Demonstrates minimal control of grammatical conventions with many errors that make the response difficult to read or provides insufficient evidence to judge</td>
<td>Demonstrates fair control of grammatical conventions with frequent minor errors and some severe errors</td>
<td>Demonstrates good control of grammatical conventions with few errors</td>
<td>Demonstrates very good control of grammatical conventions</td>
<td>Demonstrates outstanding control of grammatical conventions</td>
<td>Consistently writes well-constructed sentences with varied structure and length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistently writes sentences with similar structure and length, and some may be difficult to understand</td>
<td>Consistently writes sentences that read naturally but tend to have similar structure and length</td>
<td>Consistently writes sentences with varied structure and length</td>
<td>Consistently writes well-constructed sentences with varied structure and length</td>
<td>Consistently writes well-constructed complex sentences with varied structure and length</td>
<td>Consistently writes well-constructed sentences with varied structure and length</td>
<td>Displays adept use of vocabulary that is precise, advanced, and varied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simply uses vocabulary, and some vocabulary may be used inaccurately or in a way that makes meaning unclear</td>
<td>Uses simple vocabulary, and some vocabulary may be used inaccurately or in a way that makes meaning unclear</td>
<td>Uses vocabulary that clearly communicates ideas adequately but lacks variety</td>
<td>Uses vocabulary that clearly communicates ideas but lacks variety</td>
<td>Uses vocabulary that clearly communicates ideas</td>
<td>Uses vocabulary that clearly communicates ideas</td>
<td>Displays adept use of vocabulary that is precise, advanced, and varied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAE</td>
<td>215 Lexington Avenue, Floor 16, New York, NY 10016</td>
<td>(212) 217-0700</td>
<td><a href="mailto:clateam@cae.org">clateam@cae.org</a></td>
<td>cae.org</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
New Forms, Less Profit

Just as technology is responsible for the increase in music listening, it may also be responsible for the music industry’s struggles to make money from its listeners. When people started using the Internet to listen to music, the traditional way for record companies to make money—selling CDs and records—quickly disappeared and companies were scrambling for new ways to profit. The Internet introduced the world to the music download. Online services like iTunes sell music downloads for a base price per song, providing a way for the music industry to make money from digital music listening. This method of making profit, however, has been repeatedly challenged by illegally pirated music downloads and free music streaming sites. Extensive legal battles and public campaigns have gradually limited the amount of illegal downloading options available to the average Internet user. However, streaming sites have figured out how to generate money from their services through advertising or subscription-based fees. The bar graph depicts a look at how changes in music listening formats have affected profits over a seven-year timeframe.

Streaming and downloading do not provide the same profit that CD and record sales previously did. Despite the efforts to profit from new forms of music distribution, record companies—not to mention recording artists—are still earning less than in the pre-Internet days. According to one industry trade group, recording earnings fell below $7 billion in 2013 for the first time since they began tracking these rates in 1973. Growth in the technology industry is good for listeners, but less so for the music industry that seeks to make a profit from music listeners.
QUESTIONS: SCIENTIFIC AND QUANTITATIVE REASONING

1. Which of the following data sets would be most relevant to the author’s claim?

   A. data showing the amount of money spent on advertising by record companies
   B. data showing what percentage of listeners use new technology to listen to music
   C. data showing the relationship of music-listening hours to time spent on the Internet
   D. data showing the average amount of music-listening hours for different age groups

2. If someone wants to claim that streaming music has the potential to generate greater profits in future years, which statement would best support this claim?

   A. The amount of money earned from music downloads decreased between 2012 and 2014.
   B. The rise in music-listening hours is smaller than the decrease in money earned through CD sales.
   C. The rate of increase in profits for streaming music has risen steadily in recent years.
   D. The total money earned from music sales in 2014 is less than the total money earned from music sales in 2008.

3. Which of the following statements, if true, would best support the author’s claim?

   A. Most consumers said they would never pay for entertainment material that they know they can get for free on the Internet.
   B. Many advertisers say they would like to appeal to a music-listening audience.
   C. More music listeners purchased a CD or vinyl record in the past year than in the previous 10 years.
   D. Some recording artists represented by record companies have produced digital-only albums.

4. It can be inferred that the author of the passage would most likely agree with which of the following statements?

   A. Consumers will always choose the most familiar option, rather than the newest technology.
   B. There is always a way for companies to profit from people's habits.
   C. The success of the technology industry is challenging the way other industries make a profit.
   D. People's dislike for advertising will lead them to return to old forms of music listening.

5. What conclusion can be drawn from the information given in the passage?

   A. Changes in the way people listen to music have affected the way recording artists create their products.
   B. The high level of advertising has led to an increase in subscriptions to music-streaming sites.
   C. The decrease in profits from music sales has led to fewer recording artists in the industry.
   D. The ability to listen to music for free has led to more listening hours per person.
Dear Parents of Bayford County Students:

As we prepare to start a new school year, we are doing all we can to ensure that this year will be successful, inspiring, and safe. Last year, we saw several counts of petty theft and bullying in our middle and high schools. While we have been lucky that none of these incidents escalated to more serious violence, we are aware that our students are not free from crime and danger. We are committed to doing all that we can to make our schools safe for all of our students.

In order to carry out this commitment, I have made the decision to install security cameras in all of our public schools. Cameras will cover all school entrances and exits, hallways, and doorways to locker rooms and bathrooms, where thefts most often take place. The cameras will be connected to a direct live feed in both the principal’s office and the local police precinct. This is to ensure that if there were a serious incident in our school, we can work efficiently with the police department to keep our students safe. The security cameras will, of course, incur some expense, for which we will adjust our budget accordingly. I see this as more than a precaution; this is a necessity. It will help children feel safe when they come to school each day. In case a crime is committed, we will be ensured that the resources needed to solve the problem and prevent escalation are available.

Here’s to a safer year, full of learning!

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Lee
Superintendent of Schools
Dear Bayford County Parents, Teachers, and Students:

I am writing in response to a notice that was sent to the parents of all Bayford County school children from Jacqueline Lee, our superintendent of schools, announcing her decision to put security cameras in all of our public schools. This is cause for alarm among our entire community! I have written to the superintendent’s office several times to protest this action and I urge you to do the same.

Lee claims that the security cameras will protect our students from crime and danger. This is unnecessary and misguided. Lee goes on to mention a few counts of petty theft and bullying, then admits that the Bayford County School System has never had issues with more violent crime. Theft and bullying are issues that need to be addressed through discussion and information, not by putting our students and teachers under constant watch. These security cameras, which will send a direct feed to the police station, are a violation of privacy. Our children already live in a world with increasing security and decreasing privacy. Our schools should be a place where they trust and feel trusted by the adults around them. Security cameras send the message to our students and staff that they are dangerous criminals. I predict that these cameras will cause more crime than they will prevent.

Additionally, these cameras will cost thousands of dollars to purchase, install, and maintain! Our schools need more money for academic programming and higher teacher salaries. A strong learning environment is what will keep our students safe. These kinds of extreme measures are expensive and counterproductive. I urge you to take a stand and protest this abuse of our tax dollars and of our students!

Sincerely,
Sheila Rey
Bayford County parent and former teacher

Sources:
http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3751958
http://parade.com/352032/marilynvossavant/surveillance-cameras-in-schools/
QUESTIONS: CRITICAL READING & EVALUATION

1. Which of the following statements, if true, gives the strongest support to the views presented by Jacqueline Lee in her letter to parents?

A. Nearby counties have already installed security cameras in their schools.
B. Three out of four students surveyed reported feeling unsafe during the school day.
C. The school thefts all occurred in the boys’ or girls’ locker rooms.
D. A security guard has been employed by the school for the past five years.

2. It can be inferred that Sheila Rey, the author of the letter to the Bayford Press, would most likely agree with which statement?

A. People's privacy is not valued enough by society.
B. Parents, not the school, are responsible for a child's safety.
C. Education should focus solely on academic issues.
D. Theft is not a serious enough crime to cause any response from the school.

3. On which point do the two authors most likely agree?

A. Budget issues and large expenses should be decided democratically.
B. Teachers are responsible for teaching students ethical conduct.
C. Student behavior is unpredictable and possibly dangerous.
D. School is a place where students should feel safe.

4. Which of the following statements, if true, would most weaken the position presented by Jacqueline Lee?

A. The cost of maintaining security cameras can be more expensive than the cost of installing them.
B. Security cameras are more effective for solving thefts than for preventing violence.
C. Schools with high security measures tend to have more behavioral issues and worse student-teacher relationships.
D. Large schools tend to have higher crime rates than smaller schools.

5. Which of the following statements, if true, would reveal a possible bias in Sheila Rey’s argument?

A. Sheila Rey was formerly a teacher in a school in a different county that had a high crime rate.
B. Sheila Ray has two children in the Bayford County Elementary School.
C. Sheila Rey formerly ran in opposition to Jacqueline Lee for the position of Superintendent of Schools.
D. Sheila Rey worked as a school guidance counselor after being a teacher.
ARGUMENT
The language of computers and technology is the most useful language in today's world. That is why the foreign language requirement in schools should be replaced with a computer programming requirement. Learning computer coding would give students a skill set that will lead to success in their professional and academic careers.

Currently, most American schools begin a foreign language requirement in 6th or 7th grade. Students choose between French, Spanish, and, sometimes, Chinese. Some students continue to learn these languages for years, but the vast majority of students stop in high school and never use the language again. Foreign languages are only useful for students who choose to travel or work with a community that speaks the language. Computer programming, however, is a universal language and will aid students throughout their lives. It provides students with far more opportunities to succeed in technology and business than knowing a second language offers. Furthermore, it helps students understand how computers work, which is a central part of everyday life. Schools should keep with the times and replace the foreign language requirement with a computer programming requirement.

Sources:
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/24/world/europe/adding-coding-to-the-curriculum.html?_r=0

QUESTIONS: CRITIQUE-AN-ARGUMENT

1. The author states, “The language of computers and technology is the most useful language in today's world.” Which of the following statements, if true, would weaken that belief?

   A. It is hard to predict how important computer programming will be in the future, because computers are changing rapidly.
   B. If a student does not learn a particular technological skill in school, he or she often learns it on the job.
   C. Most Americans are more likely to speak Spanish on the job than to use a computer programming language.
   D. Students who are exposed to computer programming at a young age are more likely to take on technological challenges than those who are not.

2. Which of the following statements could be used as a counterargument to the author’s claim?

   A. Foreign language learning provides students with an important cultural awareness that an education in computer programming does not provide.
   B. Students interact with technology outside of the classroom so they have no need for learning programming in school.
   C. Because of the focus on literacy and mathematics in most school systems, all language requirements will likely be terminated.
   D. Computer programming is best taught as an extra-curricular activity, to students who are already passionate about computers.

3. Which of the following, if true, would reveal a bias in the author’s argument?

   A. The author comes from a multilingual background where foreign languages are spoken at home.
   B. The author works as a computer programmer and owns a small technology company.
   C. The author served on the board of education in his local town for many years.
   D. The author has children in the 6th and 7th grade, where the foreign language requirement begins.