

Gravely Essay Contest + Multimedia Project for Workforce Development Pathways Rules & Guidelines

1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this opportunity is to expand the existing Gravely Essay Contest into a student experience that preserves the core essay competition while adding the option to create a multimedia project in lieu of an essay. Students should structure their essay or project on a workforce development pathway and describe the principles of education, motivation, and perseverance that can be encountered pursuing that pathway. We encourage students to interview or research a person in their workforce pathway of interest that encountered these principles similar to Admiral Gravely. Students should relate back challenges faced by the person they interviewed or researched back to Admiral Gravely's story and legacy. The program aims to strengthen student communication skills, encourage learning through authentic production work, and build a bridge to career pathways in maritime, STEM, and creative industry careers (writing, design, filmmaking, editing, audio, and communications).

2. Program Goals

1. Honor the contest's intent: student reflection on Vice Admiral Gravely's leadership values (education, motivation, and perseverance) through applied storytelling.
2. Build career-ready skills: communication, research, project planning, production, and revision.
3. Create authentic industry exposure through real-world mentorship and professional critique, judging, and showcases.
4. Student exploration of a career pathway in the maritime industries, STEM, and creative industries.
5. An authentic connection to RADM Gravely and the Battleship IOWA as an inspiration to students when overcoming challenges.

3. Submission Options and Guidelines

A. Student Submission Options

- Standard essay
- 2–3 minute video (MP4)
- 6–10 slide narrated deck (presentation + audio)
- One-page infographic/digital poster (PDF)
- A creative art project (any medium and write up)

B. Essay Submission Guidelines

- An original essay written by you, containing 450 words minimum to 700 words maximum in Times New Roman 12 pt. font, single-spaced, with citations and bibliography.
- Citations and bibliography are not included in the word count.
- Prompt: Students should structure their essay on a workforce development pathway and describe the principles of education, motivation, and perseverance that can be encountered pursuing that pathway.
- We encourage students to interview or research a person in their workforce pathway of interest that encountered these (education, motivation, and perseverance) principles similar to Admiral Gravely.
- Students should relate back challenges faced by the person they interviewed or researched back to Admiral Gravely's story and legacy
- Additional components:
 - A brief introduction of yourself, the school you attend, your teacher, and how you learned about this essay contest.
 - Please provide examples of how VADM Gravely applied the principles of EDUCATION, and MOTIVATION, and PERSEVERANCE during his life. Examples should include all three principles. Cite at least two sources for this element. Do not cite Wikipedia or this website. Please use original source material, such as Gravely's biography (by author Paul Stillwell). Other historical information can be found in books or online.
 - Provide one example of you interviewed, researched, or someone you personally know that has applied the principles of EDUCATION, MOTIVATION, and PERSEVERANCE in their life. This person could be a neighbor, relative, family friend, or member of your community who is living or deceased.
 - If you had the opportunity to meet Vice Admiral Gravely today, what would you say to him, or ask of him? Why?

C. Video Submission Guidelines

- Prompt: Students should structure their video on a workforce development pathway and describe the principles of education, motivation, and perseverance that can be encountered pursuing that pathway.

- The video can be informational like a documentary, or can be a creative work of fictitious story that embodies the prompt.
- Admiral Gravely should inspire a theme within the video or production.
- The video length should be 2-3 minutes.

D. Slide Deck Submission Guidelines

- Prompt: Students should structure their deck on a workforce development pathway and describe the principles of education, motivation, and perseverance that can be encountered pursuing that pathway.
- Presentation of a 6-10 slide deck, overlaid with audio for narration.
- The presentation should be 5-15 minutes in length.
- We encourage students to interview or research a person in their workforce pathway of interest that encountered these (education, motivation, and perseverance) principles similar to Admiral Gravely.
- Students should relate back challenges faced by the person they interviewed or researched back to Admiral Gravely's story and legacy
- Additional components:
 - A brief introduction of yourself, the school you attend, your teacher, and how you learned about this essay contest.
 - Please provide examples of how VADM Gravely applied the principles of EDUCATION, and MOTIVATION, and PERSEVERANCE during his life. Examples should include all three principles. Cite at least two sources for this element. Do not cite Wikipedia or this website. Please use original source material, such as Gravely's biography (by author Paul Stillwell). Other historical information can be found in books or online.
 - Provide one example of you interviewed, researched, or someone you personally know that has applied the principles of EDUCATION, MOTIVATION, and PERSEVERANCE in their life. This person could be a neighbor, relative, family friend, or member of your community who is living or deceased.
 - If you had the opportunity to meet Vice Admiral Gravely today, what would you say to him, or ask of him? Why?

E. Infographic Submission Guidelines

- Prompt: Students should structure their deck on a workforce development pathway and describe the principles of education, motivation, and perseverance that can be encountered pursuing that pathway.
- The infographic should be 1-2 pages in length.
- Students should outline their planned pathway to a career in the maritime, STEM, or creative industries and places along that journey that can be influenced by lessons learned from Admiral Gravely's story.

F. Art Submission Guidelines

- Prompt: Students should structure their creative art project on a workforce development pathway and embody the principles of education, motivation, and perseverance that can be encountered pursuing that pathway in their work.
- Industries of choice for the workforce development pathway they choose should be in one of the following sectors: maritime or STEM.
- Any medium is allowed (i.e paint, sculpture, photography, mixed media, etc).
- A written description should accompany the piece. The description should include:
 - The pathway and industry chosen by the student.
 - How education, motivation and perseverance are represented in the piece.
 - How the piece is connected to Admiral Gravely's story.
 - Word count should be at least 200 words.

4. Judging Structure (Multimedia Panel)

The judging panel will be made up of variety of filmmakers, educators, active military personnel, veterans, Pacific Battleship Center personnel, and administrators.

5. Scoring & Rubrics

A. Essay and Multimedia Companion Scoring (Proposed 100-point rubric)

- Storytelling Impact (25)
- Clarity & Structure (20)
- Technical Execution (20)
- Creativity & Originality (15)
- Alignment to Education/Motivation/Perseverance (20)

6. Finalist Mentorship and Feedback

Finalists will receive feedback from the judging panel and invited to take part in a 4 part workshop focused on different career pathways as well as an event at LA Fleet Week.

7. Showcase & Recognition

- “Student Spotlight” segment at LA Fleet Week (May 19-25)
- Awards and recognition ceremony at the Freedom of the Seas Gala (October 24)

Submissions are due April 16, 2026. Please send submissions to education@labattleship.com.