Elementary Writing: A proposal to establish a school-wide comprehensive plan

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Improvement Needs: Writing

Over the past four years very little improvement has been made in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding in the OSAT writing test. In addition, in the same four years, this school has also scored below the district average on the OSAT.

This graph shows the schools achievement in writing compared to the district average.

Options For Consideration To Achieve Goal

Potential Options

- Continue using current curriculum and provide professional development to align with State standards
- Provide writing coach to work with staff throughout the year in best practices in writing
- Purchase comprehensive writing curriculum across grade levels (i.e., Step Up Writing) to provide alignment for student learning
- Align curriculm and instruction across grade levels to State standards, school-wide scoring, and project performance (professional development), and purchase Lucy Caulkin’s writing instruction materials (K-2/3-5)

Decision

- Continued use of current curriculum and professional development to align with State standards
- Rejected: Current writing curriculum and professional development create gaps for students in writing strategies and process
- Rejected: Cost to hire coach is prohibitive and would still leave building without any alignment between grades or with State standards.
- Rejected: Comprehensive programs are expensive and there is no research supporting a skills-first approach to teaching writing.

Writing Implementation Plan

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strategy, Method, or Action</th>
<th>Who is Responsible</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Evaluation Methodology</th>
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<tr>
<td>Establish building agreements to align instruction with state standards in grades Kindergarten - 5th</td>
<td>Certified Staff and Building Administrator</td>
<td>Professional Development Days, Title 1 Coordinator, Staff Development Specialist</td>
<td>Document: Building Scope and Sequence of Writing Instruction with State Standards Referenced</td>
<td>Staff Survey and Observation by Building Administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a writing project map that will align writing projects and samples with standards and across grade levels</td>
<td>Certified Staff and Building Administrator</td>
<td>Professional Development Days, Title 1 Coordinator, Staff Development Specialist</td>
<td>Document: Building Scope and Sequence of Writing Instruction with State Standards Referenced**</td>
<td>Staff Survey and Observation by Building Administrator</td>
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<td>Establish building rubrics for scoring writing in all grades, and participate in building-wide scoring sessions at least twice a year</td>
<td>Certified Staff, Building Administrator, and District Staff Development Specialist</td>
<td>Professional Development Days, Title 1 Coordinator, Staff Development Specialist, ODE Website, Lucy Caulkin’s Program</td>
<td>Participate in Scoring Sessions, Staff Survey, Observations by Building Administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide professional development in the area of best practices in writing instruction and adopt one program for K-5</td>
<td>Certified Staff, Building Administrator, and District Staff Development Specialist</td>
<td>Professional Development Days, Title 1 Coordinator, Staff Development Specialist, Literacy Funds</td>
<td>Attendance at Professional Development Sessions, Purchase and Use of Writing Program</td>
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<td>Grade level teams will establish consistent and frequent opportunities for student work to be “published” both in and outside the classroom.</td>
<td>Certified Staff and Building Administrator</td>
<td>Grade Level Team Meetings, Parent Nights, Student Newsletters, Classroom Newsletter, Parent Volunteer, PTO, School Website</td>
<td>Displays of Student Work Throughout Building, Increased Student Participation, Parent Nights, Writing Samples in Newsletters, Website</td>
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** Draft of K-5 Aligned Project Map: All Projects Support State Standards At Specified Grade Level

Grades

- Kindergarten
- First Grade
- Second Grade
- Third Grade
- Fourth Grade
- Fifth Grade

Resources

- The budget for this particular goal consists of both time and funding; time being the largest portion. The estimated cost with materials and time is approximately $12,000.

Projected Outcomes

- The primary outcome that we would like to see after completing these action steps would be an increase in the number of students meeting or exceeding the OSAT writing benchmark.
- In addition, we believe the following will also be positive outcomes:
  - Significant change in writing instruction based on a unified staff vision and common understanding (Routman, 2005)
  - Students feeling more confident and more engaged in writing across all grade levels (Data from pilot of Lucy Caulkin’s Writing in first grade classrooms)
  - Increased teacher confidence in addressing writing standards and engaging students in the writing process
  - Shared responsibility for student success on OSAT writing assessment across grade levels (Danielson, 2002)

Sources

- McCombs, E. (2001). Writing Essentials: Reaching Expectations and Beyond While Simplifying Teaching, Chapter 1, Simplifying the Teaching of Writing (pp. 3-8). Heinemann.