

## ELA Program Network Meeting

February 8, 1999 Minutes

### **Grade 4 ELA Shares on Test Administration and Scoring**

#### **Gorham**

- Teachers felt that they put too much emphasis on retelling. This may have confused children with writing fiction.
- Continue to emphasize compare and contrast
- Teachers felt their children were as prepared as possible
- Increase non-fiction reading
- Instruct children on how to pull out details from materials to use in their writing
- Modeled writing as an instructional strategy
- District's writing rubrics are generic. Considering whether they should have rubrics per written task
- Two to three minute conferencing time per child is not enough
- Need to identify short text for practice opportunities
- Teach students to justify answers from their text

#### **Bloomfield**

- Overall teachers felt good about the test. Kids performed well.
- Emphasize different ways to develop note-taking skills

#### **Canandaigua**

- Frog picture on the test (poor selection). Picture used was given in another context, which was misleading. Children asked, "Do we include information on frogs in Australia?"
- Need time to do all kinds of writing. i.e., creative writing with the process and on-demand writing with a planning page which is not a draft
- Pictures-directions need to be on the same page
- We prepared like a sprint versus approaching this test as a marathon. Practice materials alone won't do it. We need to develop deep thinking skills.
- What support will be given to failures?

**Naples**

- Teachers felt kids did well

**Geneva**

- Teachers did not like the timed aspect of the test
- Not enough note-taking space for some of the children in the test booklet
- Scoring was cumbersome. There were feelings of inaccuracy and subjectivity.

**Penn Yan**

- Teachers scored on one of their days off from school caused some problems
- Activities were shared on listening, note-taking and technical writing skills (see attachment)
- Penn Yan will share additional ideas from their building management team in the future.

All in all it was identified that note-taking skills are a weak area for children. Classroom structures in grades one through twelve do not emphasize note taking while reading or writing. Teachers have taken on the major responsibility by providing students with notes. Note-taking strategies should be part of the normal instructional routines through strategies such as lists, think, pair, share, a variety of visual organizers. Teachers have tried these strategies prior to the test and found that they have produced good notetakers. It is believed that "Every opportunity is a listening opportunity".

Additional discussion centered around Albany's Regents Scoring Training. Linda Kimble from Sodus attended the training. Teachers rated actual student papers and learned a ten-step process. The rubric is on a six-point scale. Three may be the writing passing score. The reading level of the passages appeared extremely difficult. Topics were adult oriented.

It is expected that the grade 4 ELA results will be back in April. The cut-off will be shared at that time based on student progress. BOCES was an audit site for the state to check for inter-rater reliability.

**OTHER**

We discussed the Rochester City School District's project over vacation to prep students for the grade 4 ELA. Would this prep time make a difference? It was felt that this intervention was too short to have any effect on student progress.

**OTHER continued**

It was mentioned that East Irondequoit created parallel ELA tests that were administered under the same conditions and time frames for grades 2, 3, 5 and 6. Each grade corrected the papers and used this information to improve instructional practices.

We found that out that our BOCES consortia also developed parallel tests. K. Taylor from Bloomfield shared that our consortia has also developed parallel tests. Members were wondering where they were and if they can be made available. K. Taylor heard that the March meeting of the consortia was cancelled and the consortia concept may be eliminated.

We would like Dr. Cooper to investigate two items:

1. Where are these parallel tests? Can we review them for possible use?
2. Will the consortia's work continue?

We are also interested in having Dr. Cooper find out what other network groups have accomplished and provide us with an update for our next meeting.

Renee Williams of Penn Yan made a plug for the National Boards for Teaching Standards. Renee has participated in this project which she highly endorses. Upon completion of the program participants would have national certification. If you are interested in this please contact Renee at Penn Yan Middle School.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

AGENDA Setting for March 29, 1999

Item # 1

Update by Dr. Cooper on accomplishments from other program network groups

Item # 2

Update by Dr. Cooper on BOCES Superintendent's Conference Day. How did it go?

Item # 3

Update by Dr. Cooper on status of consortia. Are parallel tasks available for review?  
Will the consortia continue?

Item # 4

Districts will share what they will do with the grade 4 ELA results when they are returned.

Item # 5

Discussion on handwriting. How is it taught in your district and when?

Item # 6

Continue to collect and share activities on note-taking and technical writing skills K – 12 with an emphasis at the Primary/Elementary level

Item # 7

Sodus member, Linda Kimble, will share a resource guide From School to Work for members to review. Linda felt that this document could be used to prepare for the Regents ELA Standard.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Salvia