

March 12, 2009

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Dr. Joni Swanson
RE: K-5 Reading Audit

Enclosed you will find the preliminary document created to evaluate the Geneseo Schools' present reading and writing program in grades K-5. Classroom observations and teacher surveys were completed during the time period October 2008 to January 2009. The executive summary lists our accomplishments from the initial scan of our reading instruction in the fall of 2006, to our current status, and recommended course of action for the school year 2009-2010.

Ms. Nikki Kubiak completed the sections of the audit regarding progress in literacy at the third through fifth grade levels. I wrote the sections of the audit documenting progress for teachers of Kindergarten through 2nd grade.

If you have questions about any of the data or documentation associated with this report or comments regarding the recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Elementary Reading Audit –
Kindergarten Through 5th Grade

October through December 2008

Geneseo CUSD #228
Geneseo, IL

Conducted by:

Nikki Kubiak, Consultant, Bureau Henry Stark Regional Office of Education

Dr. Joni Swanson, Assistant Superintendent, Geneseo CUSD #228

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction:	
Purpose for the Audit	9
Organization of the Results.....	10
Guiding Questions and Methodology.....	12
Reading Instructional Delivery and Content	15
2006 Fall Classroom Scan	
Survey Results	
Classroom Observation/Interview Data	
Recommendations: Reading Instructional Delivery System	
Reading Assessment	38
2006 Fall Classroom Scan	
Survey Results	
Classroom Observation/Interview Data	
Recommendations: Reading Assessment	
Reading Instruction Assistance	49
Survey Results	
Classroom Observation/Interview Data	
Recommendations: Reading Instruction Assistance	
Writing Instruction and Activity	59
Survey Results	
Classroom Observation/Interview Data	
Recommendations: Writing Instruction and Activity	
Writing Instruction Assistance	67
Survey Results	
Recommendations: Writing Instruction and Activity	
Overall recommendations for Reading Program K-5 for 2009-2012	71
Instructional Methodology.....	71
Staff Development.....	75
Curriculum and Materials.....	78
Conclusion.....	80
Appendix A: DRA2 Results - 2007-09	81
Appendix B: Survey Instruments	82
1) K, 1,2,3,4,5 Individual Surveys	82
2) Teacher Survey Results.....	100
3) Interview Questions and Observation Focus for Grades K-5.....	104
4) 2006 Initial Scan Questions and Results	106

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 5TH GRADES
GENESEO CUSD #228
GENESEO, IL

Nikki Kubiak, ROE Consultant
Dr. Joni Swanson, Assist. Supt.

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

Following the curriculum/adoption cycle of the Geneseo CUSD #228, teachers will investigate new instructional materials for reading and language arts in the school year 2009-2010. Since the last adoption in Reading at the elementary level, the district has procured the services of a Literacy Coach, Diane Harvey. This present year, 2008-09, marks the third year of Ms. Harvey's employment. At the beginning of her tenure, an informal census of reading instructional methods and assessment practices were made. Based upon those findings, the district has embarked upon a staff development program to attempt to impact the following aspects of reading in the elementary grades:

- 1) Improve and align reading assessment processes and practices in the district from grades Kindergarten through 5th grade
- 2) Increase the authentic use of Guided Reading and Literacy Circles in grades K-5
- 3) Establish a 50/50 balance in the use of fiction and non-fiction books to teach reading
- 4) Increase literacy learning for emergent readers, especially in grades K and 1 by use of Interactive Writing
- 5) Improve students' use of comprehension strategies, as well as the use of decoding and fluency to affect reading skill and knowledge in grades K-5
- 6) Encourage teachers to learn from each other and share information through book clubs, after school meetings and inservice times.
- 7) Utilize writing as a tool for reading comprehension and content area concept acquisition.
- 8) Provide additional assistance to classroom teachers by increasing reading aides in the elementary levels

After eight years of utilizing the current materials and making modifications during that time, including inservicing new and current teachers on the use of guided reading for students in grades K-5, increasing the numbers of leveled books, infusing the use of the Fountas and Pinnell professional books, and implementing the use of the DRA2 assessment, this audit was undertaken to attempt to ascertain the degree to which these professional initiatives in the area of reading are being actively utilized in the classrooms. The results of the audit may be used to help guide decisions about new instructional materials and additional staff development in the use of instructional methodologies. The information gathered in the audit may increase an understanding of the actual practice of teachers in the district, and thereby promote discussions about instructional methodologies and the consistency of those methodologies between teachers in the same or consecutive grade levels.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There were five research questions that formed the basis for all data collection in the elementary literacy audit:

- 1) To what extent are elementary teachers utilizing instructional techniques that reinforce basic elements of successful reading: **fluency, decoding and comprehension?**
- 2) To what extent are elementary teachers utilizing data based decision making to **assess students' growth in reading?**
- 3) To what extent are elementary teachers requesting additional assistance in improving their instructional **and classroom management techniques for teaching reading?**
- 4) To what extent are elementary teachers teaching **writing** to students?
- 5) To what extent are elementary teachers requesting additional assistance in **improving their instructional techniques** for teaching writing?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to answer these questions, data were collected from staff members. Data for the current audit were collected from the following sources:

Teacher on-line surveys Teacher interviews Teacher observations

The following categories guided the creation of survey and interviews questions, and classroom observations:

Reading Instructional Delivery and Content Reading Assessment Reading Instruction Assistance Writing Instruction and Activity Writing Instruction Assistance
--

Data was codified and combined to show trends from the on-line surveys, interview answers and classroom observations. Teachers were observed during reading instruction for a minimum of 30 minutes to a maximum of 90 minutes of time on one day. All teachers in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade participated in all parts of the audit. Technical difficulties with the on-line survey prevented a few teachers from answer the questions.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 2ND GRADES

Overall improvements in grades K-2 reading since the 2006 scan

Increased use of assessment data to place students in appropriate materials

Increased use of guided reading and small group instruction

Increased use of interactive writing technique with K-1 students

Increased use of writing in the K-1 classrooms

Movement toward use of comprehension as a teaching strategy in the K-1 classrooms

Increased use of non-fiction text with students during instruction

Question #1: To what extent are elementary teachers utilizing instructional techniques that reinforce basic elements of successful reading: fluency, decoding and comprehension?

Teachers in the Kindergarten through 2nd grades have modified their instructional techniques to include more comprehension type questions. Fluency and decoding, staples of lower primary reading instruction, remain the primary focus with teachers spending more time on decoding of words than fluency of reading.

Recommendations for continuous improvement:

- Increase use of **comprehension** questions and strategies in the **1-2** levels
- Increase use of **fluency** as a means to determine comprehension of text.
- Increase use of word attack skills, especially word families and word parts in addition to decoding (phonemic) skills
- Increase explicit teaching and use of academic **vocabulary**- especially as it relates to content learning in Social Studies, Science and Mathematics
- Increase use of instructional technology tools to improve students' literacy in the use of computers and software as well as their literacy learning of alphabetic principles and reading processes.
- Increase use **of non-fiction text** and content area learning within the school day to the point of a 50/50 balance between narrative/novel and non-fiction content driven text.

Question #2: To what extent are elementary teachers utilizing data based decision making to assess students' growth in reading?

The majority of teachers in Kindergarten through 2nd grades are now utilizing the DRA2, Running Records, anecdotal records, literacy guidelines and/or other types of planning aides to guide decision making for classroom instruction or to place students into appropriate materials for their competency levels. There are teachers, however, who remain reluctant to use objective data to assist in making decisions about student placement or to help determine instructional focus.

Recommendations for continuous improvement:

- Use **assessment** tools to place students into appropriate materials throughout the school year.
- Improve **record keeping techniques** for periodic assessment of students' progress in reading skills and processes (decoding, fluency and comprehension)

Question #3: To what extent are elementary teachers requesting additional assistance in improving their instructional and classroom management techniques for teaching reading?

The majority of Kindergarten through 2nd grade teachers requested **additional staff development** time to share ideas with their colleagues, especially in the area of teaching strategies and record keeping ideas. Others asked for assistance in the area of classroom management. Teachers have adapted their room schedules to accommodate guide reading as the primary technique for teaching reading. **Reading aides** assist classroom teachers by working with small groups of students and rotating these groups with the classroom teacher.

Recommendation for continuous improvement:

- **Re-arrange the school day** to allow for content area learning to be used as a focus for instruction for reading strategies and skills.
- Allot time, especially at the beginning of the school year, to teach students the **habits and behaviors** expected during center or non-teacher contact time. Reading groups or small group mini-lessons should be started while students are leaning classroom routines.
- Reading aides should be given more direction and conferencing, as possible, in order to direct instruction to the skills students needs. Reading aides will need **additional professional development** in the area of reading instruction.

Question #4: To what extent are elementary teachers teaching writing to students?

The overwhelming majority of teachers in Kindergarten and 1st grade have embraced and are seeing the benefit of using **writing, including interactive writing**, as a tool to improve overall literacy of students. Use of 6 + 1 Traits vocabulary, the district's writing curricular focus, was generally absent from observed classrooms. Writing time and purpose in all classrooms, especially in the 2nd grade, is a concern area.

Recommendation for continuous improvement:

- Increase **writing for learning**, especially in the 2nd grade
- Consistent and regular use of the **6 + 1 Traits Vocabulary** to describe good writing when teaching with interactive writing, when reading texts aloud, when writing as a class or for response to literature or content area text.

Question #5: To what extent are elementary teachers requesting additional assistance in improving their instructional techniques for teaching writing?

Nearly all of the Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers requested assistance with writing instruction. These teachers are **using writing as a tool** to help students understand underlying principles of literacy, but feel that they need added assistance to teach lessons to children who should be encouraged to write creatively and freely. Second grade teachers also asked for assistance, but are looking now at helping students learn to write ISAT type written responses.

Recommendation for continuous improvement:

- Utilize grade level meeting or professional development time to plan time to revisit the 6 Traits writing vocabulary and ideas for teaching writing as suggested in the NWREL “Wee Write” book or “Word Matters” by Fountas and Pinnell.
- Attend ROE inservices on ISAT writing (2nd grade teachers), and volunteer to share or teach colleagues.
- Re-arrange the school day to allow for Writer’s Workshop time.
- Learn more about **using instructional technology** as a teaching tool for writing. Share ideas with each other about how to introduce writing as a center or a focus for instruction with the Promethean systems.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
3RD THROUGH 5TH GRADES

Overall improvements in grades 3-5 reading since the 2006 scan

Increased use of assessment data to place students in appropriate materials

Increased use of a variety of configurations for reading instruction

Increased use of instructional tools for planning the teaching of literacy

Increased use of comprehension strategies during reading instruction, as well as during content area instruction

Increased use of non-fiction text with students during instruction

Increased use of written responses to fiction and nonfiction texts

Question #1: To what extent are elementary teachers utilizing instructional techniques that reinforce basic elements of successful reading: fluency, decoding and comprehension?

Teachers in the 3rd through 5th grades have modified their organization techniques to include more variety during reading instruction. More teachers are using small groups to teach literacy skills. Teachers are continuing to increase the amount of direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.

Recommendation for continuous improvement:

- Increase and improve the use, variety, and quality of **comprehension questions** and **activities** done before, during, and after reading.
- Increase the amount of time students are reading text that is at their **instructional level**, and with guided teacher instruction
- Enhance **critical thinking skills** through critical inquiry, analysis, and interpretation
- Increase explicit teaching and use of academic **vocabulary**- especially as it relates to content learning in Social Studies, Science and Mathematics

- Increase use of instructional technology tools to reinforce students' reading and writing knowledge through the use of computers and software.
- Increase use of **non-fiction text** and content area learning within the school day to the point of a 50/50 balance between narrative/novel and non-fiction content driven text

Question #2: To what extent are elementary teachers utilizing data based decision making to assess students' growth in reading?

The majority of teachers in 3rd through 5th are now utilizing the DRA2, Running Records, anecdotal records, literacy guidelines and/or other types of planning aides to guide decision making for classroom instruction or to place students into appropriate materials for their competency levels. There are teachers, however, who remain reluctant to use objective data to assist in making decisions about student placement or to help determine instructional focus.

Recommendation for continuous improvement:

- Increase use of **checklists, Literacy Guidelines, and Focus for Instruction sheets** to plan guided, shared, and whole group reading lessons.
- Use **assessment** tools to place students into appropriate materials throughout the school year.
- Improve **record keeping techniques** for periodic assessment of students' progress in reading skills and processes

Question #3: To what extent are elementary teachers requesting additional assistance in improving their instructional and classroom management techniques for teaching reading?

The majority of 3rd through 5th grade teachers requested **additional staff development** time to improve knowledge of comprehension strategies and instructional techniques. Others asked for assistance with implementing guided reading while managing the large number of students in their classrooms. They would like to work on ways to keep all students engaged and accountable while completing independent work. **Reading aides** assist classroom teachers by working with individuals and/or small groups of students with reading as well as other subject areas.

Recommendation for continuous improvement:

- Allow time for content area learning to be used as a focus for instruction for reading strategies and skills.
- Use the **professional learning communities** model to allow teachers to work and learn collaboratively, discuss shared professional books, and brainstorm instructional ideas.
- Allot time, especially at the beginning of the school year, to teach students the **habits and behaviors** expected during non-teacher contact time. Reading groups or small group mini-lessons should be started while students are learning classroom routines.

- Reading aides should be given more direction and conferencing, as possible, in order to align instruction to the skills students needs. Reading aides will need **additional professional development** in the area of reading instruction.

Question #4: To what extent are elementary teachers teaching writing to students?

The teachers in 3rd through 5th grade understand that reading and writing go hand in hand. Their students frequently participate in written responses to literature. The type and frequency of other writing genres varies greatly between the classrooms in 3rd through 5th grades. Use of 6 + 1 Traits vocabulary, the district’s writing curricular focus, was generally absent from observed lessons. Writing time and purpose in all classrooms is a concern area.

Recommendation for continuous improvement:

- Increase **writing for learning**
- Organize the classroom schedule to allow for writing on an **everyday basis**. Writing activities could include: response to literature, response to content knowledge, free writing, and learning logs.
- Consistent and regular use of the **6 + 1 Traits Vocabulary** to describe good writing when teaching writing, when reading texts aloud, when writing as a class or for response to literature or content area text.

Question #5: To what extent are elementary teachers requesting additional assistance in improving their instructional techniques for teaching writing?

Teachers in the 4th and 5th grade have not formed a consensus regarding the need for additional staff development in Writing. Five of the fourteen teachers in these two grade levels are **either retiring this year or next year** from service in the District. For those teachers who did request assistance, these centered on renewed interest in 6 Traits writing, ISAT extended responses and help for students who have IEPs.

Recommendation for continuous improvement:

- Request to attend workshops on ISAT extended response writing or to plan to share ideas at grade level or inservice programs.
- Utilize the 6 + 1 Traits Kit for grades 3-5, wherein additional teaching ideas and a DVD on the traits will supply new information. Share as a whole group or in grade level pairings in buildings.

The above recommendations are summaries of those proposed for each research question, as well as those offered in the “Overall Recommendations” section of the document. In the final section of the report are suggestions for reading, writing and assessment in the areas of instructional methodology, staff development and curriculum and materials. It is intended by the authors of this audit that these recommendations will form the **basis of staff development** in the area of Reading and Writing Instruction and Assessment for the Kindergarten through 5th grade teachers in the 2009-2012 school year.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Nikki Kubiak and Joni Swanson wish to thank the teachers in the Geneseo Schools for their cooperation and honesty in conducting this audit. We hope that this information will be useful and will generate both debate and collegial conversation as teachers establish staff development and professional growth targets for the coming years.

PURPOSE FOR THE K-5 LITERACY AUDIT

In the fall of 2008, the Geneseo School began a comprehensive audit of the reading and overall literacy instructional practice in grades K-12. At the Middle and High School levels, Gretchen Courtney Associates were contracted to conduct an audit. The overlying purpose for the audit in the middle and high school grades was to do an initial scan of the literacy program, in order to pinpoint areas of improvement for staff development, and for RtI program plans and implementation. Randomly selected teachers at Geneseo Middle School and Geneseo High School were personally interviewed, entertained classroom observations, as well as completed individual teacher surveys.

The purpose of the audit at the elementary level was two fold. First, an initial scan of all classrooms was conducted in the fall 2006 by district Literacy Coach, Diane Harvey. At that time, Mrs. Harvey interviewed each classroom teacher in grades K-5 regarding the types of configurations used in teaching reading and the methods used for assessing students' progress and growth in reading knowledge and skill. This current audit, fall 2008, is a follow-up on progress made or growth areas still needing attention at the K-5 level. Additionally, the district's curriculum adoption cycle is on schedule to consider new materials in the 2009-2010 school year, with implementation of new texts or materials in the 2010-2012 school years. The results of this audit hopes to ascertain whether new materials are needed.

Many changes have been presented to staff and adopted to varying degrees in the two years following the initial scan. Therefore, an opportunity to revisit classrooms and learn about what initiatives have been embraced and which rejected by the majority of teachers was in order. Likewise, the opportunity to reflect upon progress and to envision the future for reading instructional processes will be utilized by our Professional Improvement Committee and District Administrative Team to assist in assigning staff development funds to specific inservice programs and accompanying materials in the area of elementary reading.

ORGANIZATION OF THE RESULTS

Topics reported in the fall 2008 audit include the following:

- Reading Instructional Delivery and Content
- Reading Assessment
- Reading Instruction Assistance
- Writing Instruction and Activity
- Writing Instruction Assistance
- Overall recommendations for Reading Program K-5 for 2009-2012

Data obtained in the initial fall 2006 scan, completed by the Geneseo Schools' Literacy Coach, were listed by individual teacher and grade level. For reporting purposes, this initial data was combined into trends describing teachers in each grade level by Dr. Swanson. Data from the fall 2006 scan were reported in the following topics:

- Reading Instructional Delivery and Content
- Reading Assessment.

The final report document for the K-5 Reading audit uses the following outline for each audited topic area as stated above:

- Scan of Classrooms- Fall 2006
- On-Line Survey Responses – Fall 2008
- Classroom Interviews and Observations – Fall 2008
- Recommendations

There were 8 Kindergarten teachers and 8 First grade teachers involved in the Fall 2008 audit. Results from the K and 1st grade teacher surveys were combined for this report. Instructional trends observed in Kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms were reported separately by grade level and as an overall finding for the combined grade levels, K-1. The same routine was utilized for responses from teacher interviews. Teacher surveys, observations and interviews were compiled and reported as a grade level group for the 7 teachers in 2nd and for the 7 teachers in 3rd grade. Data collected from 14 teachers in the 4th and 5th grades were analyzed and reported in a similar fashion to procedures followed for the Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers and their classrooms.

Dr. Swanson collected and tabulated all survey data in the audited grade levels. Dr. Swanson and Mrs. Kubiak shared responsibilities for the classroom observations and interviews with teachers. Likewise, reports detailing Kindergarten through 2nd grade classroom interviews and observations were written by Dr. Swanson, while Mrs. Kubiak wrote the reports for 3rd through 5th grade classroom observations and teacher interviews.

Recommendations relating to Reading and Writing instruction were listed at the end of the corresponding section by grade level. Overall recommendations were

grouped by K-2 and 3-5 grade levels and described suggestions relating to the following three areas: instructional methodology, staff development, and curriculum and materials.

GUIDING QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Guiding Questions:

There were five questions that formed the basis for all data collection in the elementary literacy audit:

- 1) To what extent are elementary teachers utilizing instructional techniques that reinforce basic elements of successful reading: fluency, decoding and comprehension?
- 2) To what extent are elementary teachers utilizing data based decision making to assess students' growth in reading?
- 3) To what extent are elementary teachers requesting additional assistance in improving their instructional and classroom management techniques for teaching reading?
- 4) To what extent are elementary teachers teaching writing to students?
- 5) To what extent are elementary teachers requesting additional assistance in improving their instructional techniques for teaching writing?

Methodology:

The elementary audit was organized to observe all K-5 classroom teachers during a portion of their day devoted to reading and/or language arts instruction. All K-5 classroom teachers were interviewed using a set of common questions. Additionally, all teachers were surveyed anonymously regarding reading and writing instruction as well as assessment practices using a set of question designed for that grade level.

Personnel involved in the gathering data for the K-5 audit were Nikki Kubiak, Regional Office of Education Consultant, and Dr. Joni Swanson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in the Geneseo Schools. Nikki Kubiak had served the Geneseo Schools as a third grade teacher until the fall of 2007, and therefore had participated in the original scan of the Geneseo School's K-5 reading instruction as conducted by Diane Harvey, Literacy Coach.

The initial exercise for K-5 classroom teachers for this audit was the completion of individual on-line surveys, submitted through the Survey Monkey website. Mrs. Kubiak and Dr. Swanson created surveys for each grade level. Copies of the questions for each grade level are found in Appendix B. Surveys were opened to the staff for completion during the last week of September 2008. All surveys were collected by October 10, 2008 – before classroom observations and interviews began. On-line surveys were completed and registered by the Survey Monkey

website for all but the following teachers: 3 – Kindergarten teachers, 1 – 1st grade teacher, 1-4th grade teacher. Looking at the entire group of K-5 teachers in the Geneseo Schools, these data represent a return rate of 88.6%.

All classrooms were observed for at least 30 minutes and no more than 90 minutes of time during one of the literacy learning segments of the school day.

Ms. Kubiak observed and interviewed all teachers in grades 3-5. Dr. Swanson observed and interviewed all teachers in grades K-2. Observations and interviews were conducted starting the week of October 13, 2008 and concluded the week of December 19, 2008.

Mrs. Kubiak and Dr. Swanson received copies of all teachers' weekly schedules, supplied by building principals. Schedules were reviewed and times noted where literacy instruction was planned. On teacher schedules, reading/language arts/literacy instruction was indicated by a variety of different designations including:

- Language Arts
- Reading
- Guided Reading
- Word Study/Phonics
- Shared Reading
- Reading Workshop

Specific instructional observation times were negotiated with classroom teachers via I-Cal appointments, personal phone calls, in-person conversations, or via email correspondence. Generally, interviews were conducted immediately before or immediately after classroom observations. Teacher interviews ranged in length from 30-45 minutes; classroom observations ranged in length from 30 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on the amount of time allotted in the schedule on the particular day chosen for the observation.

Mrs. Kubiak and Dr. Swanson jointly developed questions for the teacher interviews. Copies of the questions used for individual interviews are found in Appendix B. Questions were of an open-ended nature, allowing for follow up and teacher expanded explanations. All teachers were asked question #1 (regarding assessment) and question #2 (regarding reading instructional techniques that have changed or remained the same over the last two years). If teachers were observed after the personal interview, question #3 was asked as written. If teachers were observed before the person interview, question #3 was altered to allow teachers to explain or clarify anything that was observed in the classroom during the observation.

Mrs. Kubiak and Dr. Swanson jointly developed a set of observation focus areas. Copies of the documents used for the classroom observations are found in Appendix B. Classroom observations concentrated on classroom configurations,

especially groupings of student, instruction, and assessment techniques demonstrated in the classroom. Student engagement in activities was noted, as were classroom management techniques observed. Mrs. Kubiak and Dr. Swanson were allowed to roam freely throughout the classroom, talking to students, and listening to instructional conversations as a part of the normal routine of learning about literacy and language. Students' written work was observed, both that which was being created during the classroom observation and that which had been created in prior classes and was on display within the room.

READING INSTRUCTION AND DELIVERY

Question #1: To what extent are elementary teachers utilizing instructional techniques that reinforce basic elements of successful reading: fluency, decoding and comprehension?

Results for Grades K-1

2006 Fall Classroom Scan

Whole group reading configurations were the most common classroom organization found in Geneseo Kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms. This was especially true of the Kindergarten classrooms, where all respondents indicated using whole group to teach literacy. Only two of these six teachers had tried using guided reading groups with their students by the fall 2006. However literacy instruction was not provided by the classroom teachers, but rather was delivered by the reading aides. Six of our current Kindergarten teachers were on staff in Geneseo at that time. In the first grade, all teachers surveyed indicated using both whole group and guided reading groups to teach literacy. Five of our current 1st grade teachers were employed in the Geneseo Schools at that time.

Kindergarten and 1st Grade Teacher Survey Results

As in 2006, whole group instruction was used most frequently as an organizational technique in Kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms. All teachers surveyed indicated using whole group classroom configurations for reading instruction every day. A major change in delivery of literacy instruction, as indicated by the teachers, was the use of guided reading and small groupings. Ten of the twelve respondents to the survey reported using guided reading groups for reading instruction on a daily basis. Three Kindergarten teachers' survey results and one 1st grade teacher's results were not registered by the Survey Monkey system. Therefore, a complete scan of these grade levels can only be inferred by these results. Nevertheless, teachers in 1st grade and Kindergarten reported the continuation of utilizing whole group lessons to the same extent as seen in 2006. Four of the five Kindergarten teachers responding cited "daily Use" of guided reading group instruction. Teachers also indicated that small group lessons are now a part of literacy instruction at the K and 1st grade levels. This type of grouping was new to the staff, and may be related to greater use of guided reading groups and as a hybrid model to conduct mini lessons on literacy topics.

Teachers were asked to describe the extent to which four different types of information are being used to plan instruction in the classroom. Of these four types, Literacy Guidelines, which were developed from the Illinois Standards and the DRA2 Assessment, were reported as most widely and most frequently used. Seven teachers reported using Literacy Guidelines on a daily basis, whereas the other three types of planning tools (Running Records, DRA2 test results and Focus for Instruction forms) provided information for planning in Kindergarten and 1st grade on a once a week basis. Three teachers reported never using the Focus for Instruction forms. These results are not surprising, considering that the district

administration has made the use of the Literacy Guidelines a focus for staff development in the early part of this school year.

Teachers were asked to give specific evidence of the use of these particular planning documents. Three of five Kindergarten teachers who responded stated that Literacy Guidelines are written into daily lesson plans. Four teachers noted that Guided Reading Groups don't start in Kindergarten until January. One teacher mentioned using DRA word analysis as a guide for whole, individual, and small group instruction. All projected use of running records when students begin small group work on literacy. Two of the 1st grade teachers who responded to the survey indicated using the Literacy Guidelines for weekly planning, while three 1st grade teachers reported using the Literacy Guidelines on a daily basis for planning classroom instruction. One 1st grade teacher mentioned using these tools as a means to reconfigure reading groups on a weekly basis. Two of the 1st grade teachers acknowledged the need for the guidelines, but were not specific frequency of use or implementation of the Literacy Guidelines as instructional planning tools. Generally, the DRA2 results at 1st grade are being used only for initial or mid-year leveling of students, or for long range planning.

The surveys asked Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers to describe the frequency by which they currently employ comprehension strategies during literacy instruction time. Eleven out of twelve teachers reported using "Background Knowledge" on a daily basis, which was the highest level of response for the eight options available on the survey. The next highest frequency of response was generated for "Asking Questions", followed by "Retelling of Text/Story" and "Making Connections" –closely related to the number one choice, "Background Knowledge". Building background knowledge and making connections have been shown to be essential to students' abilities to make meaning with text. The fact that teachers of emergent and beginning readers are aware of the need to activate prior knowledge bodes well for our students. One of the primary tasks required of students in the DRA2 assessment is the skill of retelling the story with details from the text. Eight of 12 respondents to the teacher survey reported using retelling as a teaching strategy on a daily basis; four teachers said that the strategy was used three to four times a week. From the survey results, it appears that the DRA2 assessment has influenced to some degree the use of this retelling strategy in the K and 1st grade classrooms. The use of charts and graphs and the senses in conjuring images ("Sensory Imaging") for comprehension were the least frequently used skills as reported by the Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers. Interpretation of data reflects on students' abilities to deduce information from non-fiction materials. This skill has been stressed during district inservice programs as necessary for student understanding of text in math, science and social studies content areas, for processing information provided by more advanced technological improvements on the internet, and for processing generated reports across all spectrums of business and industry. Sensory imaging relates to students' abilities to visualize the action occurring in story plots and to more deeply relate to situations described by providing kinesthetic and sensual connections to characters and situations in the text. According to the teacher surveys, the use of sensory images and non-

fiction/non-narrative based charts and graphs are not being taught with any regularity in the Kindergarten or 1st grade classrooms.

When asked about specific evidence of utilizing comprehension strategies, two of the five Kindergarten teachers offered detailed descriptions and examples of how comprehension skills were taught. The remaining three teachers shared that most comprehension strategies are presented in a verbal fashion in a whole group setting. First grade teachers shared that comprehension strategies are taught during shared reading time, as well as in guided reading groups. One teacher outlined specific ways of teaching predictions, connections and inferences. No K or 1st grade teachers mentioned using non-fiction texts to teach comprehension skills.

Teachers were also questioned about the types or genres of books used to teach literacy and the frequency of use for each type of book. Responses indicate that all K-1 teachers who answered the survey use fiction text daily. Poetry was the next most frequently used genre. Non-fiction books are the third ranked type of text utilized with students in grades K and 1. Books without text – those whose story line would be deduced from pictures in the book by either the teacher or the student – was the least utilized genre of text in this survey of K and 1st grade teachers.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

Describe something that has changed in your reading instruction over the past year – something that you do differently or an area in which you believe you have improved upon former practice.

Kindergarten teachers offered these reflections:

- Literacy Guidelines are used to plan daily lessons – 6 of 8 teachers
- Centers in the classroom are organized for literacy learning - 5 of 8 teachers
- Word walls used to emphasize sight words, names of students, newly introduced words- 4 of 8 teachers
- Leveled books sent home and taught in classroom – 3 of 8 teachers
- Visualization activities including Visual Phonics – 2 of 8 teachers
- Fewer worksheets and more student-created work – 2 of 8 teachers

1st grade teachers offered these reflections:

- Re-organized centers around literacy themes and activities – 7 of 8 teachers
- Literacy Guidelines used to plan daily lessons - 6 of 8 classrooms
- Fountas & Pinnell’s Phonics program materials- 6 of 8 teachers
- Teaching reading comprehension strategies - 4 of 8 teachers
- Word Walls, sight words, and name charts – 3 of 8 teachers
- Increased awareness of student progress or need for interventions – 3 of 8 teachers
- Increased skills in providing guided reading lessons – 3 of 8 teachers
- Use of instructional technology – 2 of 8 teachers

Observation of Kindergarten classrooms:

Whole Group activities were observed in seven of eight Kindergarten classrooms. During whole group reading instruction, students participated in

morning calendar activities, shared reading, poems or songs, visual phonics review of letter sounds and letter identification activities. All teachers observed used visual phonics and letter/sound ID activities. In six classrooms, teachers used poems or songs and shared books. Five classrooms used worksheets or prepared paper/pencil activities, completed in whole group settings at tables in the classroom. The observed use of whole group activities coincides with teacher survey results, which suggested the daily use of this configuration by all Kindergarten teachers.

Literacy Center work was observed in two classrooms. Centers allowed students to interact with books, recorded books, letter activities, rhyming words. Students were assigned a center and moved on the command of a bell. Teachers were seen interacting with students at each center area. One teacher used a work board to show students which center to attend, and used the time between each rotation to discuss center activities and let students summarize their learning.

Student engagement was generally high, with students participating through the following means: answering questions, singing songs, showing visual phonics hand gestures and letter sounds, repeating phrases to stories, or finding words/letters in poems. Students working at their seats on worksheets were generally attentive and engaged in age appropriate tasks. Students involved in centers in one classroom seemed more engaged and on task than the other classroom. These observed behaviors may be related to students' accountability for recalling what was learned in a class meeting between each center activity.

Reading comprehension instruction was specifically observed in five of the eight classrooms during the observations. The comprehension skill "Predicting" was used by three teachers, and "Sequence of a Story" was observed in two classrooms. In addition, making inferences and problem solving strategies were used by one of the Kindergarten teachers. Teacher surveys indicated that activating "Background Knowledge" and "Asking Questions" were the most frequently used comprehension skills used in literacy instruction. Classroom observations confirmed that teachers are using these comprehension strategies.

Kindergarten teachers used a mixture of fiction, non-fiction and poetry with students in the large group setting and in literacy centers. One teacher used both fiction and non-fiction texts in one class period. All others kept to one type of genre throughout the lesson. Three teachers used only poetry, three used only fiction, and two used only non-fiction.

Observations of 1st grade classrooms:

Two teachers used whole group teaching time at the beginning of the classroom activities observed for the audit. During whole group lessons, students participated in morning calendar activities, word study, choral reading of poems, a word study activity, and preparation for individual word study work at their desks. The two teachers observed used whole group instructional time to reinforce word endings and rhyming.

Guided Reading groups were observed in all eight 1st grade classrooms observed. Teachers met with an average of 3 reading groups during each observation session. Two strategies were observed in six of the classrooms: word

study and oral reading. Teachers listened to students' reading individually, and using "popcorn" or "round-robin" type techniques. Four teachers specifically worked with students on decoding strategies when meeting unfamiliar words. Decoding skills were reinforced by visual phonics techniques in two classrooms. Students were assisted to read words using sight word cards, word families, re-reading text until it "sounds right", read around the unknown word, and asking "what makes sense". Three teachers asked students to retell stories in sequence. "Text to self-connections" were requested by three teachers. Two teachers worked one-on-one with struggling students. Non-fiction texts were utilized by five of the eight teachers observed. Four teachers asked students to identify specific facts in non-fiction books. Two of these teachers directly instructed students about particular parts of a non-fiction text.

If students were not working directly with the classroom teacher, they were assigned either to their desks or to centers in the classroom. Students working at their desks were assigned projects or activities including reading self-selected books, word study worksheets (in 5 classrooms), coloring activities, poems, or completing an assignment begun in the reading group. Some students started at their desks, and when done with the assigned activities, were released to participate in centers. Students participating in centers during guided reading time interacted primarily with literacy-based activities. These included a variety of word studies, reading books, listening centers, and use of the Promethean interactive whiteboards. Students were also observed in centers focused upon writing, math, computers, and art activities.

Four teachers who used centers also utilized work boards to help students' transition from one activity to the next with a pre-determined purpose. Timers, bells or whistles are used in five 1st grade classrooms to signal the movement to a new center. Classroom management during center time continues to be a "work in progress" with student interrupting guided reading lessons in three observed classrooms. Teachers debriefed students in between each move to the next center activity in four 1st grade classrooms.

Students demonstrated a general high level of engagement in classroom activities. Students stayed on task at their stations or at their desks with a few exceptions. Upon direction, students moved quickly to their next center. Students at work at their desks were observed reading texts and completing assignments. Most activities observed were directly related to increasing literacy competency in reading and writing. A few activities were more directly related to the Halloween or Thanksgiving holidays, which occurred during the observation cycle. These were kept to a minimum.

Four 1st grade teachers had stated that using comprehension as a strategy in reading instruction was newly implemented in the past year. 1st grade teachers were observed asking some type of reading comprehension question to students in seven of eight classrooms observed. The predominant type of comprehension instruction involved general questions about the story or non-fiction text being read. Five teachers were observed using prediction and sequencing in their direct reading instruction. "Making Connections" and using "Background Knowledge" were each observed twice during the observations. In the teacher surveys,

“Background Knowledge” and “Asking Questions” were noted by Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers as the most frequently used comprehension strategies. However, the observations suggested these strategies were being used less frequently than “Retelling a Story” in sequence. “Summarizing” information and utilizing “Sensory Imaging” were each used as comprehension strategies in only one 1st grade classroom. “Inferences”, “Problem Solving”, “Sensory Imaging” and the use of “Charts and Graphs” were not observed during classroom visits, although 1st grade teachers noted through the on-line surveys that these strategies were used on a daily basis.

Poetry, non-fiction and fiction texts were used for instruction in the 1st grade classrooms during the observation period. Four teachers used both fiction and non-fiction in one class period. Two teachers used all three genres. One used only non-fiction and one used non-fiction and poetry. Poetry was utilized less during the observation period than was projected as a result of the teacher surveys. Although fiction texts were the most common and reported as a daily use text by 1st grade teachers, two teachers did not use fiction as a vehicle to teach reading during the observed lessons. Non-fiction texts, on the other hand, seemed to be selected for instructional purposes with greater frequency during the observed lessons than suggested by the teacher survey responses.

Recommendations: Reading Instructional Delivery System

Kindergarten:

Shared reading was used as an activity in six of the eight classrooms. Reading a book to children should provide teachers the opportunity to ask questions that would lead to comprehension of the text being heard. Only one of the Kindergarten teachers observed while conducting shared reading went beyond using one type of comprehension activity with a shared reading story.. That teacher included four types of questions, including whether or not the story was fact or fiction. The use of “why” type questions should be incorporated into teacher talk in order to promote vocabulary and language acquisition, and to increase thinking skills, especially with divergent thinking.

Student accountability for center work is recommended, along with continuing to use literacy oriented activities. Organizing the centers, as well as teaching students how to use them and how to be self-starting, is a very important pre-cursor to being able to take small groups of students for introductory reading instruction. Teachers are encouraged to practice routines required by the literacy centers and to go slowing with introducing new centers. Refer to “Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for all Children” pages 53-65 for assistance with introducing and using centers. Although all teachers said in the survey that they engage in small group instruction, none was noted in the observed classes. Even if Kindergarten teachers don’t start official guided reading groups until January, small groups of students could be pulled aside during center time to work on emergent literacy skills with the teacher in addition to similar activities in centers.

Over the past two years, the district has purchased tens of thousands of dollars of leveled books for teachers in order to increase availability of books. Of special interest to staff were purchases of titles at the lower levels of reading ability,

and the infusion of more non-fiction text into the elementary school book rooms. It is recommended that teachers strive to utilize a variety of genres in their instructional planning on a daily basis, in order to provide a balanced exposure to books of all types, including picture books without words. These texts can help immensely to increase verbalization, language learning and vocabulary.

1st Grade:

Teachers in 1st grade have made progress toward incorporating comprehension strategies into their reading instruction, as well as continuing to work on decoding and word attack strategies. Teachers' surveys indicated a much broader and more frequent use of comprehension strategies than was observed in 1st grade classrooms. Generally teachers met with at least two and up to four reading groups during the observation. Comprehension questions were generally lacking when teachers used non-fiction text. More work was done on vocabulary and text structure than finding main ideas, details and promoting background knowledge or making a personal connection to the text. Using the senses to promote connections is an excellent way to help students remember the action or information in a text. 1st grade teachers need to remind themselves to build into the planning for guided reading lessons a series of questions or quick activities that would promote more than a basic knowledge or comprehension level of understanding of the texts read or assigned. Of course when students are beginning to read the simplicity of a story or text may not be conducive to comprehension questions. Extension activities and discussions may provide that avenue, however. Helping students answer the "why" questions, as was suggested for Kindergarten teachers, will help develop students ability to think more than on a surface level about various topics. 1st grade teachers need additional help to craft appropriate comprehension questions for students. Generating a set of questions to accompany guided reading book instructional plans would be advantageous to teachers and students.

Quite often in the classroom observation it was noted that students were unable to read words. Although the conductor of this audit was not also doing running records to determine percentage of words correct in a 100-word passage, it appeared that unknown vocabulary was interfering with students' abilities to read sentences or answer knowledge level questions about the text. When questioned about text being too difficult for students, staff members raised a concern that if students weren't being given text that appeared more difficult these same students would shut down, get bored, or not attend. Several students have shown themselves to be excellent word callers, but exhibit poor comprehension of text. These students are routinely being given more difficult text in order that the child not perceive that they need lower level texts to read and think about. Unfortunately, this situation is exactly what the reading assessment program was designed to thwart. Other teachers have stated that they are going slower with students and therefore not pushing them ahead into texts that they cannot understand but can read beautifully. The latter philosophy is recommended for adoption by the staff. Teachers are encouraged to engage students in more word attack skill work before reading. Students need to see what can be learned from more sophisticated activities to

challenge their thinking. Students and parents have to be confronted with and educated about the level of thinking demonstrated by their children in the area of reading. Reading without comprehension is only reader's theater – a performance for others but not an active engagement for the reader. Continued work to educate staff, parents and children about the purposes for learning to read is an evident need in the Geneseo Schools.

Although the observation sessions demonstrated that 1st grade students have been exposed to non-fiction/non-narrative text, teachers' surveys indicate that the balance between use of different genres has not yet been established in classroom practice.

Results for Grade 2

2006 Fall Classroom Scan

All 2nd grade teachers interviewed in the fall 2006 stated that both whole group and guided reading groups were being utilized to teach literacy. Six of our current 2nd grade teachers were employed in the Geneseo Schools at the time of the initial scan.

2nd Grade Teacher Survey Results

Teacher responses to the question concerning classroom organization configurations suggest that guided reading groups are being utilized with a much greater frequency than are whole group teaching strategies. Four of seven 2nd grade teachers reported using guided reading groups on a daily basis, versus only one teacher marking the use of whole groups on a daily basis. The overall rating of the "guided reading groups" item was .6 higher than whole group teaching. This result suggests a possible significant change in the use of whole group instruction, which was listed as an equally utilized strategy in the fall 2006 scan. Additionally, 2nd grade teachers have reportedly added small group teaching opportunities to their planning for instruction. The surveys indicated that small groups of students are being organized for literacy instruction about 3 times per week. None of these classroom configurations are reportedly being utilized on a daily basis. It appears from the responses that 2nd grade teachers are alternating their groupings for literacy instruction.

In the area of instructional planning, 2nd grade teachers report using some type of assistance to make decisions about literacy instruction at least 3-4 times a week. Literacy Guidelines were chosen as the daily planning tool for two teachers; running records were used daily by one 2nd grade teacher. Running records or DRA2 results were listed as "never used" for at least one 2nd grade teacher. Focus for Instruction sheets are not being utilized at this time by nearly one-half of the 2nd grade staff.

When asked for specific evidence to verify the use of planning tools for instruction, teachers described a variety of uses for the literacy guidelines, including weekly and daily planning, and as checklists for individual students. Running records were mentioned in four of the seven respondents' answers, but not in the context of instructional planning but rather as data kept in student folders. DRA 2 results are being utilized to place students into leveled reading groups, as stated by

three teachers. One 2nd grade teacher reported using DRA2 to place only students new to the class.

Ten different types of comprehension skills were offered in the teacher survey. “Asking Questions” received by far the highest frequency of response by 2nd grade teachers (3.7 on a 4.0 scale). Five of the seven respondents used questioning as a technique on a daily basis. The next highest categories were “Retelling a Story” and “Background Knowledge”, which were used on a daily basis by one 2nd grade teacher and three to four times per week by four 2nd grade teachers. “Drawing Inferences” received the rating (2.8 on a 4 point scale), however teacher responses suggested that this skill was not used on a daily basis by any of the 2nd grade teachers. The lowest rating was generated by the category, “Charts and Graphs”. Two teachers reported never utilizing this as a comprehension technique. The remainder of the comprehension skills generated scores of between 2.3 and 2.6. In general, comprehension skills were used at least 1-2 times a week by nearly all 2nd grade teachers.

When asked to cite evidence of direct instruction of comprehension skills, 2nd grade teachers’ responses were parsimonious. One teacher offered examples from lessons developed from the basal text and the tasks required in DRA2 tests. One 2nd grade teacher reported using activating “Background Knowledge” while introducing guided reading books.

Use of specific text genres was the next question in the teacher survey. Teachers were to indicate the frequency of use of the following five types of texts: fiction, poetry, non-fiction, biography and historical fiction. Texts were to be identified as those used for instructional purposes. The lowest frequencies of use were indicated by responses for biography and historical fiction. These genres were reportedly never used in classroom instruction by at least 2 of the seven 2nd grade teachers. Fiction texts were the most frequently used, according to the survey. However, this statistic refers to only three teachers using fiction on a daily basis. Four teachers reported using non-fiction texts three to four times a week. Poetry is used daily in at least one classroom. The distribution of use of these different text genres shows that students are receiving exposure to a variety of text rather than a steady diet of any one particular type.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

Describe something that has changed in your reading instruction over the past year – something that you do differently or an area in which you believe you have improved upon former practice.

2nd grade teachers offered these reflections:

Literacy guidelines are used to plan daily lessons – 6 of 7 teachers

Re-organized daily routine to include more literacy oriented connections between activities – 5 of 7 teachers

Increased awareness of student progress – 4 of 7 teachers

Increased skills in providing guided reading lessons – 3 of 7 teachers

All classrooms were observed for at least 30 minutes and no more than 90 minutes of time during one of the literacy learning segments of the school day.

Observation of 2nd grade classrooms:

Three teachers used whole group instruction as either the main part of the lesson or as the initial instructional configuration. Teachers in these classrooms utilized either a basal reader or trade book as a whole class reading experience. Students had their own copy of the text to either read as an assignment or to follow along as the teacher read the text. In one classroom, the teacher read a book and posed questions to the students. Students were assigned written responses to the text and were expected to complete this assignment during the time that classmates participated in guided reading lessons. In two of the classrooms where whole group configurations were used, teachers assigned worksheets related to spelling or word study activities. In the other classrooms, where the whole group configuration was utilized, students were placed into pairs or trios of students to orally read sections of the text in response to a set of questions functioning as discussion starters. After answering these questions, students were called back into the whole group setting to answer teacher created questions upon demand. In all three classrooms, comprehension questions were asked of students. Questions posed were of a predictive nature, modeled metacognitive processes, or were general retellings of the plot but not in necessarily a sequential order.

Six of the 2nd grade classrooms used guided reading as a strategy for reading instruction. Five teachers used reading aloud as a teaching strategy in the guided reading group setting. Fluency was directly taught through emphasis on punctuation and meaning and through utilizing texts with longer sentences (those that require students to go to the next line of text to finish a sentence) during the time students read aloud in three 2nd grade classrooms. "Popcorn" or modified "Round-Robin" oral reading techniques were used in these classrooms. One teacher asked students to read silently and then be ready to answer questions. Specific word study and vocabulary strategies were taught in five classrooms. Decoding or word attack strategies were taught in four classrooms. Students were encouraged to use picture clues, say the word slowly, look for familiar word parts or base words. New words in non-fiction books were addressed by looking in a glossary, dictionary, or using picture clues. One teacher specifically taught students about the parts of a non-fiction text. Difficult words in fiction texts were attacked by using a variety of techniques, including reading around the word, using picture clues, and sound out strategies. One teacher utilized flash cards for a child who needed additional assistance and repetition with sight words. At least one teacher used "text to self" connections as a means to promote comprehension. Overall, teacher-talk outweighed student interaction or responses to questions posed in guided reading groups. Two non-fiction texts, two biographies, and four fiction texts were used in the six classrooms for guided reading instruction. Teachers met with an average of three groups during the observation periods.

When students were not working directly with their teachers, they participated in literacy center activities or were assigned tasks at their desks. Four of the seven 2nd grade teachers assigned their students seatwork ranging from word study activities, assignments related to guide reading activities, silent reading, or making birthday cards. Students participating in center activities were observed in

three classrooms. Activities included reading aloud, spelling and word work, listening centers and computers, poetry, math games and use of the Promethean system for literacy/word work. In one classroom, the reading aide monitored students as they worked at centers. Students switched stations on command from the teacher in two classrooms.

Observed classes in the 2nd grade exhibited varying degrees of engagement in literacy activities when not directly instructed by the classroom teacher. Students who worked on assignments at their desks were observed both working intently on spelling and word study activities and distractedly looking around at fellow students. Students in one classroom moved from one center to another without direction from the teacher, whereas students in two classrooms moved by teacher command. Students in two classrooms were disruptive to other students as they moved from one center to another and during their work time at any specific center. In one classroom, students were expected to engage in one particular activity throughout the duration of reading instruction time.

The most commonly used comprehension strategy used by 2nd grade teachers in the observation of classrooms was the use of general inquiry questions. Six of seven teachers utilized general questions in both large group and guided reading group configurations. This result resembles data collected by the on-line survey: five of the seven 2nd grade teachers used general questions every day. In fact, "Asking Questions" received the highest overall average for frequency of use. Next highest was a tie between "Retelling the Story", "Drawing Inferences" and using "Background Knowledge". The comprehension skill "Predictions" was utilized by three teachers, while "Making Connections" (in the form of text to self questions), "Sequencing", and "Problem Solving" comprehension strategies were employed by two teachers. None of the teachers used "Inferences" during the observation period. "Summarizing" was noted in the teacher on-line survey as used daily by one teacher, however, this comprehension strategy was not observed.

Like Kindergarten and 1st grade, 2nd grade teachers utilized poetry, fiction and non-fiction texts to teach students within classroom literacy instruction. In addition, two teachers used biography in the observation classes. Two teachers used exclusively fiction texts, one teacher used fiction and poetry, one used only non-fiction texts, and three teachers used a combination of biography, fiction and/or non-fiction texts. The results of the teacher surveys indicated that fiction was the most frequently used medium for teaching reading. These statistics were verified by classroom observations. Non-fiction texts and biographies were used more frequently in the observation sessions than were suggested by teacher survey answers.

Recommendations: Reading Instructional Delivery System

Teachers in the 2nd grade have made improvements in the amount of non-fiction books used for teaching reading. Greater exposure to non-fiction and biography in 2nd grade will bode well for students who need to adjust to greater demands of non-fiction reading in 3rd grade. Teachers are encouraged to continue to look for ways to balance non-fiction with fiction texts in the teaching of reading

skills and strategies as well as modeling opportunities such as shared reading and read aloud selections.

Teachers in 2nd grade are concentrating more on fluency by making a point of teaching punctuation, inflection and expression in oral reading. Fluency instruction reflects directly on students' ability to think about meaning in text and therefore provides teachers with good information about how much students understand. This would be especially true if followed up by meaningful comprehension questions.

Even if teachers are not consistently using the Focus for Instruction sheets in the DRA2 kit, it is recommended that 2nd grade teachers utilize the continuum sheets in the DRA2 to see where students are strong in their reading skills and which students need support.

Overall, the use of comprehension strategies during direct reading instruction is an area of great concern. Teachers in the 2nd grade seem to be relying too heavily on generic questions rather than asking students more specific questions about sequencing, connections, inferences and the use of summarizing or charts and graphs to explain situations in a non-fiction article. Promoting thinking skills and strategies in addition to learning how to decode text should be a focus for instruction. The 2nd grade teachers as a group need to remind themselves to build into guided reading lessons a series of questions that require higher order thinking. Of course students need to be able to recall the sequence of events in stories, but the all important question "Why" must be asked more often as a follow up and extension of thinking. These teaching opportunities afford students a way to learn from each other and to not merely strive for the "right" answer, but rather consider what else could occur based on the facts presented. Teachers are encouraged again to utilize both the Literacy Guidelines with the list of skills and strategies required at this grade level and the Focus for Instruction sheets which should allow teachers to pinpoint the types of skills and concepts students need to be specifically taught in order to improve their reading competency. Also recommended are the level specific recommendations found in the Fountas & Pinnell "Guided Reading" text. This professional book outlines skills and strategies that should be taught to students who are reading particular levels of text. Professional journals and books written about reading comprehension offer advice and ideas for creating comprehension based teaching strategies for the classroom. Blooms taxonomy is a reference point when considering how to frame questions, which are at higher cognitive levels than the recall of facts in a story.

Results for Grade 3

2006 Fall Classroom Scan

All seven of our current 3rd grade teachers were surveyed in the fall 2006. These teachers were found to all utilize whole group reading as a classroom organization structure. Four of the seven teachers were also using guided reading groups to teach students literacy skills and strategies.

3rd Grade Teacher Survey Results

Seven 3rd grade teachers responded to the on-line survey regarding literacy instruction. Responses to the specific question regarding classroom organization formats suggest that 3rd grade teachers use a variety of groupings. Whole Group and Guided Reading Groups were each selected as daily configurations by one teacher, however it is not know if that is the same teacher selecting both types of one teacher selecting Whole Group and another teacher selecting Guided Reading. Whole group teaching received the highest rating, with guided reading and small groups closely following. The fact that all teachers indicated using guided reading groups at least once a week suggests changes in instructional decision making from the fall 2006 scan. Furthermore, only one 3rd grade teacher in 2006 had been noted as utilizing small group settings for literacy instruction. The current scan shows that the seven 3rd grade teachers use all three types of groupings to teach literacy.

According to the survey, only one of the 3rd grade teachers utilized Literacy Guidelines on a daily basis to plan instruction. Whereas running records were commonly mentioned as a means to determine instructional planning in the 1st and 2nd grades, two 3rd grade teachers reported never using this tool for determining what to teach students in the classroom. Likewise, two 3rd grade teachers indicated never using the Focus for Instruction sheets with the DRA2 to make instructional decisions. Across the grade level, the majority of teachers seem to use all four instructional planning tools on an at least once a week basis. The overall ratings of each individual tool were much lower than results generated by Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers, but only slightly lower than those reported by 2nd grade teachers. These lower averages for each type of instructional tool suggest a decrease in the frequency of use of planning tools for daily teaching of literacy.

Six of the seven teachers who responded to the survey also cited evidence to support their use of instructional tools for planning the teaching of literacy. All but one respondent specifically stated using the DRA2 to place students into guided reading groups. Three teachers discussed using the Literacy Guidelines as a means to check each student's progress in reading- either daily or quarterly. Another teacher stated that the guidelines not only assisted with planning, but also helped to make sure that a wide variety of literacy skills were taught in the classroom. One teacher wrote about using the Focus for Instruction sheets to guide lesson planning. Two teachers noted using running records either frequently or 3-4 times a week.

Eleven comprehension skills were presented to 3rd grade teachers to respond with indicators of utilization. Like 2nd grade teachers, this grade level's responses suggest that "Asking Questions" is the most frequently used comprehension strategy (3.85 out of 4.0). Six of seven teachers reported using this strategy on a daily basis. The next highest strategy in terms of frequency of use was the process of using "Background Knowledge". Five of seven teachers reported using this comprehension strategy on a daily basis. Charts and Graphs" and "Fix up Strategies", according to the survey, were not used by at least one or two of the 3rd grade teachers and generated the lowest average ratings. However, looking at all comprehension strategies, the ratings for all but "Charts and Graphs" were generally higher than most all ratings produced by 2nd grade teachers' results. This analysis suggests that 3rd grade teachers are using more types of comprehension strategies with greater frequency than are 2nd grade teachers. Averages for comprehension

strategies in Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers are overall higher, however, than for 3rd grade teachers.

When asked to generate evidence for use of comprehension strategies in the classroom, all 3rd grade teachers submitted statements. One teacher said that she has mapped out the year to connect concepts taught across the curriculum with the comprehension or thinking strategies. That teacher is also using mini-lessons to teach questioning, inferences, sensory images, connections and synthesizing. Another teacher emphasized the use of prediction with new text in guided reading lessons. Two 3rd grade teachers also mentioned using comprehension strategies across the curriculum, in order to make connections in science, social studies and math. Graphs and charts were used to aid problem solving in mathematics. Although non-fiction text was not stated specifically, an indication of using comprehension strategies with text other than fiction is revealed in the evidence presented by 3rd grade teachers.

Use of non-fiction text seems nearly on par with fiction, according to results of the teacher survey. Four of the 3rd grade teachers reported using fiction text on a daily basis, whereas three teachers reported using non-fiction on a daily basis. The third most frequently used genre in 3rd grade seems to be poetry. Results entered for historical fiction and biography show more frequent use in 3rd grade classrooms than was suggested by results of the 2nd grade survey.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

Describe something that has changed in your reading instruction over the past year – something that you do differently or an area in which you believe you have improved upon former practice.

3rd grade teachers offered these reflections:

More peer assisted learning where the students are helping students. 1 out of 7 teachers

Including more writing activities that are connected to what students are reading. 1 out of 7 teachers

Everything!!! 1 out of 7 teachers

Increased knowledge of guided reading and using leveled text. – 3 out of 7 teachers

Implementing QAR techniques. – 2 out of 7 teachers

Using “Thinking” or “Work” folders instead of center activities – 3 out of 7 teachers

Using the Literacy Guides as a framework for instruction. – 2 out of 7 teachers

Increased awareness of student data and progress. – 3 out of 7 teachers

Improved organization of reading instruction – 3 out of 7 teachers.

Increase in the amount of time specifically teaching reading strategies. 4 out of 7 teachers

Observations of 3rd grade classrooms:

One teacher used whole group instruction as the main part of the language arts lesson that was observed for the audit. Students completed the Daily Oral

Language activities that included: correcting and explaining sentences, and noting parts of speech. The teacher read a book and the students interacted. The teacher used a trade book as a whole class reading experience. The students each had their own copy of the text to either read as an assignment or follow along. During the observation the students discussed their predictions for the next chapter, their hopes for the characters, and a connection they had made in the previous chapter. Students were placed in pairs to orally read sections of the text. During that time, this teacher read with a small group of lower level readers. At the conclusion of the lesson the teacher read aloud from a nonfiction text that was connected to the trade book. Students were asked to listen and write two new pieces of information they learned. Four teachers used whole group instruction time at the beginning of the classroom activities observed for the audit. Two of these four teachers conducted a mini-lesson on the reading strategy of “visualization”. They both conducted a discussion with their students on how good readers use visualization to picture in their mind what is going on in the story. One teacher extended the lesson with an activity where the students listened to a piece of text read aloud and then were asked to record, through words or pictures, what they could see, hear, smell, feel, and taste. Another teacher reviewed a topic from a previous shared reading experience. The students were given time to discuss the topic with the whole group and then with a partner. The class was assigned a worksheet on this topic that they would complete during independent work time.

Six of the 3rd grade classrooms used guided reading as a strategy for reading instruction. In all six of the rooms students were placed in leveled groups and worked with texts at their level. While working with the groups all of the teachers held discussions with the students to allow for clarifications and questions. Specific word study and vocabulary strategies were taught in five of the classrooms. Two of the teachers discussed different genres with the students. Round Robin oral reading techniques were used in all six of the classrooms. Choral reading was used in one classroom. Two teachers asked one of their groups to read silently to themselves and then to be ready to discuss what they read. There were many instructional strategies specifically taught during the observations. Decoding or word attack strategies were discussed when needed in the six classrooms. At least one teacher took the time to activate her students’ background knowledge. Four of the teachers directed asked the students to make connections to what they had read. Four of the teachers asked their students to make predictions. One teacher worked on having her students draw inferences while reading. Two of the teacher reviewed the process of writing a summary and asked their students to summarize what they had read. One teacher had one of her groups work with KWL charts. At the completion of a group one teacher assigned the students to complete a comprehension quiz and a reflection sheet, this same teacher had another group write a response in their guided reading log. Another teacher had the students write down important facts they had learned from reading the text. Between the six classrooms, nine non-fiction and nine fiction texts were used for guided reading instruction. During the observation period, three of the teachers met with 3 groups and three of the teachers met with 2 groups.

When students were not working directly with their teachers, students participated in centers in their classroom or worked independently at their desks. One classroom was set up so that the students moved to different center activities during the guided reading block. Those centers included spelling, listening, read/write/think, writing, and word work. Five of the seven 3rd grade teachers assigned students seatwork ranging from independent reading, writing activities, DOL activities, worksheets, spelling activities, and working in their “Thinking” or “Reading Workshop” folders.

During the observation periods, students were engaged in activities while not being directly instructed by the teacher. In all of the classrooms the students were very aware of their responsibilities during this time. In the 3rd grade classrooms the students were on task at their center or desks with a minimal exceptions. Most of the activities observed were directly related to increasing literacy competency in reading and writing. A few activities were related to other subject areas.

3rd Grade teachers used equal amounts of fiction and non-fiction texts within their classroom literacy instruction. In two of the classrooms the teachers were observed using mysteries with their students. One teacher used a historical fiction text and matched it with an informational text on the same topic. Two additional teachers were observed using informational texts with their students.

Results for Grades 4-5

2006 Fall Classroom Scan

Whole group classroom configurations were found in nine of ten upper elementary classrooms in the fall 2006. Six of our currently employed 4th grade teachers were on staff in the elementary schools. All 4th grade teachers in the initial scan were found to utilize a whole group model for organizing reading instruction. Two of the 4th grade teachers indicated using small group literature circles and guided reading groups in addition to whole group settings. Only four of our current 5th grade teachers were in their present positions in the fall 2006. Three of the four respondents to that initial scan indicated using a whole group classroom organization for teaching literacy. One teacher used only literature circles, a small group approach, to teaching reading. None of the 5th grade teachers used guided reading as a classroom organizational tool for teaching.

4th and 5th Grade Teacher Survey Results

Teacher surveys were completed by thirteen of fourteen possible respondents in the 4th and 5th grades. One survey from a 4th grade teacher, which should have been received by the Survey Monkey website, was not included in the summary documentation obtained from the website. As compared to results from the fall 2006 scan, this current survey indicated that a greater variety of classroom organizational schemes were being utilized by teachers in grades 4 and 5 in the Geneseo Schools. While in 2006, only three of 14 upper grade teachers used small groups to teach literacy skills, in this current survey only one teacher reported not utilizing this classroom configuration. Likewise, in 2006 only 2 teachers in the 4th and 5th grades had tried using guided reading groups. This current survey reported

that three teachers (two- 4th grade and 1- 5th grade) are currently not utilizing guided reading as a classroom organization configuration. All in the upper grades teachers are using whole group formats for teaching literacy, as they were in 2006. Not only were more types of classroom configurations reported on the teacher survey, the frequency of use for each grouping shows that few classrooms are utilizing any particular classroom configuration on a daily basis. One teacher reported using whole group teaching on a daily basis. Likewise, one teacher stated using daily small groups for teaching literacy. The difference in these results fell in the frequencies of use. Whole group was reportedly used by 8 teachers three to four times a week, small groups were used by 9 teachers on a one to two times a week basis. All three types of classroom configurations were more likely to be used by 4th and 5th grade teachers on a one to two times a week basis than they were to be used on either a daily or a 3-4 times a week basis. Again, this points to the tendency of 4th and 5th grade teachers to report using a variety of configurations from day to day in the classroom.

Teachers were asked to report on their use of instructional planning tools. Upper elementary teachers responses indicate that most consistent and frequent use of Literacy Guidelines. Two teachers indicated a daily use of the Literacy Guidelines to plan their reading instruction. The majority of respondents stated that the guidelines were used 1-2 times weekly. Only one teacher (5th grade) reported not using this tool for instructional planning. DRA2 results produced the second highest frequency of use score. Again, one teacher (5th grade) reported not using this tool for instructional planning. "Running Records" as an instructional planning tool decreased again in the 4th and 5th grade results in frequency of use. In the case of the upper elementary teachers, "Running Records" were used by eight of the thirteen respondents to the survey. Although tied as an average rating in the results, "Focus for Instruction" forms were used slightly more than frequently than were "Running Records". Fifth grade teachers were found more than 4th grade teachers to not use either of these two instructional planning tools.

When asked for specific evidence of the use of planning tools for reading and literacy instruction, eleven of thirteen teachers offered responses. All fourth grade teacher responses suggest that Literacy Guidelines are used on a quarterly basis or as long term planning at the beginning of the year. One 4th grade teacher used the guidelines to assess students' progress and to move students to another reading group. DRA2 results are used after tests are given to place students into group. This is especially true at the beginning of the year. Running records were as a means to determine the fluency and comprehension levels of struggling readers by two 4th grade teachers and by three 5th grade teachers. Only one of the 5th grade teachers mentioned using Literacy Guidelines to ensure that inclusion designated skills. Half of the 5th grade teachers who responded offered no evidence of using any of the instructional planning tools on the survey or otherwise. Generally these tools were seen as assessments only and not as a means for deciding on the type of instruction students are requiring for growth.

Upper elementary teachers commented upon the frequency by which particular comprehension skills are taught during literacy instruction. As was found in the 2nd and 3rd grade surveys, the most frequently utilized comprehension

strategy in 4th and 5th grade classrooms was “Asking Questions” (3.8 on a 4.0 scale). Eleven of thirteen teachers stated that questions were asked of students on a daily basis. Only one teacher’s responses suggested that questions were asked once or twice weekly during reading instruction. The second highest in terms of frequency of use was “Summarizing Information”, used by six teachers on a daily basis. The fact that “Summarizing Information” was the second most frequently taught comprehension skill is a very positive statement. Summarizing is a skill that requires higher-level thinking. Rather than repeating or retelling text, summarizing asks students to condense thought and re-organize information into a new idea. Two closely related comprehension strategies, “Making Connections” and “Background Knowledge” achieved identical frequency scores, with the former used by one more teacher on a daily basis than the latter. “Making Connections” was also one of five strategies not used by at least one teacher in this grade level cluster. “Fix Up Strategies”, used to assist students with decoding problems that affect comprehension, produced the lowest frequency score. Seven teachers had never used this strategy and four used it only 1-2 times per week. “Charts and Graphs”, the skill with the lowest frequency scores on all other surveys in this audit, produced the third to the lowest scores on the upper elementary surveys. One teacher in the fifth grade was the only respondent to indicate never using “Charts and Graphs” as a comprehension strategy. Except for the “Fix Up Strategies”, all teachers who marked “never used” on a comprehension strategy were 5th grade teachers.

When asked to document evidence for using comprehension strategies, two upper elementary teachers were unsure of the definition of “Fix up Strategies”. This lack of familiarity with the term may be the cause of why 7 teachers reported never using the strategy. Seven of the thirteen respondents indicated using comprehension strategies not only during reading instruction, but also throughout the day in Social Studies, Science and Math lessons. One teacher stated that three fourths of the day is devoted to teaching reading in the content areas. These responses were not unlike those given by 3rd grade teachers.

Six different genres were listed on the teacher survey. These included: Fiction, Poetry, Non-Fiction, Biography, Historical Fiction and Science Fiction. Comparing the surveys for 2nd through 5th grade teachers, the only additional genre on the upper elementary survey was Science Fiction. And, as was suggested by results on the Grade 2 and 3 surveys, Fiction was the genre most frequently utilized by 4th and 5th grade teachers for reading instruction, and was closely followed by Non-Fiction. Unlike all other grade level surveys, however, there was at least one teacher in the upper elementary grades whose answers indicated having never used non-fiction for reading instruction. In fact, at least one 5th grade teacher did not utilize Poetry, Non-Fiction and Science Fiction texts. Non-Fiction, however, yielded the greatest number of “daily” use marks on the survey. Taking into consideration teachers’ evidence for teaching comprehension skills that centered on use of content area material, it is not at all unlikely that six teachers would indicate a daily use of non-fiction and four others who marked “3-4 times weekly”.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

Describe something that has changed in your reading instruction over the past year – something that you do differently or an area in which you believe you have improved upon former practice.

4th grade teachers offered these reflections:

Literacy guidelines are used to plan daily lessons – 5 out of 7 teachers

Literacy guidelines are used as a resource – 2 out of 7 teachers

Literacy guidelines are used as a record keeping tool for each student – 1 out of 7 teachers

Using independent reading binders. – 2 out of 7 teachers

Increase in the amount of time spent on vocabulary instruction. – 2 out of 7 teachers

Including more writing activities that are connected to what students are reading. – 2 out of 7 teachers

Using common literacy terms school wide. – 1 out of 7 teachers

Student grouping techniques.- 1 out of 7 teachers

Improved classroom management during group time. - 1 out of 7 teachers

Working with the lower groups of readers with a better focus on the skills they lack. - 1 out of 7 teachers

Increased the amount of nonfiction materials being used. - 1 out of 7 teachers

Providing the students with more time for independent reading. – 2 out of 7 teachers

Improved reading strategy instruction. - 2 out of 7 teachers

5th grade teachers offered these reflections:

Open to a variety of techniques whole group, guided groups, or a combination.

Nothing has changed. 1 out of 7 Teachers

Incorporating skill focused mini lessons. 1 out of 7 teachers

Interactive read alouds. 1 out of 7 teachers

Increased awareness of student progress or need for interventions. 2 out of 7 teachers

Increased skills in providing guided reading lessons. 2 out of 7 teachers

Using running records. 1 out of 7 teachers

Uses Focus For Instruction forms to plan instruction. 1 out of 7 teachers

Uses a class checklist to determine individual and class areas for improvement. 1 out of 7 teachers

Formalized a unit specifically geared for nonfiction practice. 1 out of 7

More confident in administering the DRA. 1 out of 7 teachers

Using independent reading binders. 1 out of 7 teachers

Observations of 4th grade classrooms:

Four out of the seven 4th grade classrooms used whole group instruction as either the main part of the lesson or as the initial instruction. In one classroom the reading instruction focused on the skill lesson of categorizing and classifying vocabulary words from their current novel. The teacher and students in this class

held a rich discussion about the words. The students referred to the text in order to justify how the word was used in context. Another 4th grade classroom focused on the skill lesson of cause and effect during the observation. The teacher provided the initial mini-lesson. The students were involved in the lesson in various ways. There was whole group discussion and participation as well as partner work. The teacher assigned a worksheet at the conclusion of the lesson. In one classroom the teacher used an interactive read aloud to guide the students through a skill lesson on author's purpose. Students were asked to refer to their whole class novel to find an example where they learned something about a character. In one 4th grade classroom the teacher led a whole group lesson on writing a good quality paragraph. The teacher and students worked through the writing process together to create a paragraph. In three of the classrooms whole group instruction was not observed. In one of those three classrooms the students were reading independently during the entire observation period. During that time the teacher was observed holding individual reading conferences with individual students. The other two classrooms only used guided reading instruction during the observation period.

Four of the seven 4th grade classrooms used guided reading as a strategy for reading instruction. In three of the rooms students were placed in leveled groups and worked with texts at their level. All three of these teachers began their lessons by allowing the students the opportunity to summarize and review what they had previously read. Two teachers used the think aloud strategy to model reading and thinking to their students. Three teachers were observed asking their groups to write summaries for what they had read. Two teachers asked their students to make predictions. Round robin oral reading techniques were used in two of the classrooms. Two teachers asked their students to read independently and then respond to what they read. In one of the classrooms the guided reading groups were arranged differently. The students that met in the groups were all reading different books and were possibly at different reading levels. When the groups met they discussed the characters in each of their books. They also worked on character grid worksheets. While working with the groups, all of the teachers held discussions with the students to allow for questions and clarifications. Students in all four of those classrooms students used guided reading logs to complete activities related to their guided reading text.

When students were not working directly with their teachers, students participated in various activities. Four of the seven 4th grade teachers assigned students to read independently. The students were to provide responses to what they read in reading logs/binders. Two teachers had their students working with the weeks spelling words. In one of those classrooms the students were typing and printing spelling sentences on the mobile laptops. In one classroom students were given the opportunity to choose activities among work baskets. The topics included reading fiction and nonfiction books, content area activities, spelling, and cursive handwriting practice. Students in two of the classrooms were working on writing activities during the observation period. In one classroom students were given time to catch-up on work during the group rotations.

Observed classes in the 4th grade exhibited varying degrees of engagement in literacy activities while not directly instructed by the classroom teacher. Students who worked on activities independently were observed both staying on task and being distracted by other students or activities. In two of the classrooms students stayed on task and read independently for at least 30 minutes. In one classroom, students moved between activities of their choice. Movement and conversations were noticed, but they were related to learning.

The most commonly used comprehension strategy used by 4th grade teachers was asking questions. This closely resembles the data given on the survey. All seven of the 4th grade teachers were observed using different types of questioning during both large and guided reading group instruction. Other comprehension strategies observed being used by five teachers included “Making Connections”, “Drawing Inferences”, and “Activating Background Knowledge”. Making predictions and summarizing were used by four different teachers. Three teachers worked with the students on “Creating Sensory Images”. Two of the seven 4th grade teachers guided their students through the use of fix-up strategies. One teacher was observed having their students determine the importance of an event in the text. In three of the classrooms the teachers used a Think-Aloud strategy to show their students how they think while they are reading.

During the observations, 4th grade teachers used fiction texts exclusively for reading instruction. Novels, trade books, and the basal series were used.

Observations of 5th grade classrooms:

During the observation period five out of the seven 5th grade teachers used whole group instruction as either the main part of the lesson or as the initial instructional configuration. Teachers in these classrooms utilized novels as the whole class reading experience. Students had their own copy of the text to either read as an assignment or to follow along as the teacher read the text. In all five of the classrooms the teachers taught or reviewed a skill lesson. Two of the teachers taught lessons on similes and metaphors that were very similar. They both used the identical Promethan slide show to introduce their lesson. This is a great example of the collaboration between grade level teachers at different buildings. One additional teacher also taught a lesson on similes and metaphors and had students use their novel to find examples. One teacher used the whole group reading time to review the book and a previous assignment. They also conducted a minilesson on cause and effect. Worksheets were assigned in two classrooms as the culmination/assessment of the lesson. In the other classroom where the whole group configuration was utilized, students were placed into pairs or trios of students to use the QAR strategies to review the last chapter they read. After working in these small groups, students were called back into the whole group setting to discuss their answers.

Four out of the seven 5th grade teachers used guided reading or small group instruction during the observation. In one of the classrooms the students worked in larger groups of 8 to 10 students. They were reading a novel and met with the teacher to discuss the text. The teacher led most of the discussion and asked questions at various levels on Blooms Taxonomy. Teacher read aloud, round robin

and independent reading were used during the group meeting. In another classroom all of the student groups met at the same time. The students were reading from books at their instructional level. During this time the teacher moved around to the different groups to hold discussions and pose questions. One teacher met with a guided reading group that used the whole class novel. The teacher reviewed the strategies good readers use and they set a focus for reading. The students took turns reading aloud and the group would stop for a teacher led discussion. One 5th grade teacher implemented all aspects of a guided reading program.

When students were not working directly with their teachers, students participated in literacy activities at their desks. Four of the seven 5th grade teachers assigned students seatwork ranging from word study activities, assignments as a result of whole group activities, and silent reading. Two teachers had very structured plans for the small group setting. The students worked on activities directly related to their guided reading group books.

Observed classes in the 5th grade exhibited varying degrees of engagement in literacy activities while not directly instructed by the classroom teacher. Students who worked on assignments at their desks were observed both working intently and distractedly looking around at fellow students. In one classroom a student who was working at their desk on independent work stayed focused on the small group discussion. In one of the classrooms the discussion was completely teacher led and after posing questions, the teacher would give her thoughts and ideas. Overall, the students observed had a clear understanding of their responsibilities and worked accordingly.

The most commonly used comprehension strategy used by 5th grade was “asking questions”. All seven of the 5th grade teachers used questioning techniques before, during, and after reading. Five of the teachers activated the background knowledge of their students during the observation. Two teachers were observed using the QAR strategies of On My Own, Think and Search, Right There, and Author and Me. Two additional teachers used other methods of having their students make connections to the text. Two teachers taught, “Using sensory images” during their Promethean lessons on similes and metaphors. In four of the classrooms students were asked to produce either oral or written summaries. Two teachers were observed teaching their students to use “fix-up” strategies. In all seven of the classrooms students were asked to use their reading skills to draw inferences, yet the term “inference” was not used. Five teachers utilized the comprehension skill “Predictions”, while one teacher used “Sequencing”.

The 5th grade teachers used fiction texts exclusively throughout the observation cycle. The results of the teacher surveys indicated that fiction was the most frequently used medium for teaching reading.

Recommendations: 3rd – 5th grade Reading Instructional Delivery System

- Good reading instruction requires readers to be actively engaged with their text and with the process. Teachers need to use instructional activities that

engage all students. They should be willing to differentiate these activities to best fit the needs of the students.

- Reading is a social process where readers need to see beyond the text that they are reading with other readers in the world around them. These readers can teach them, just as they can teach other readers. Reading is an interaction with text and an interaction with other readers.
- Reading instruction needs to have a clear purpose and needs to focus on the use of strategies that good readers use. Students need to recognize that the same strategies that adults use are the ones that they need to learn to become strategic readers. 4th and 5th grade teachers need to be actively involved in the reading process with the students. The “Think Aloud” strategy is one way for the teacher to model reading strategy behavior to students.
- At this level readers are not using any one strategy in isolation. Students need to learn to balance the use of strategies while they read. Teachers need to create balance in their instruction so that students learn the importance of weaving strategies to help students put it all together to understand what they are reading.
- Teachers may follow the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model: teacher modeling, guided practice, independent practice, and application of the strategy.
- By using guided reading, the teacher and students will have an opportunity to sit together in a small group to have guided practice with a particular strategy or concept. Groups provide additional practice for students in text at their instructional level. In small strategic reading groups, instruction is focused on a strategy and teachers continue to model, but students begin to take on the responsibility for learning and using the strategy.
- Teach specific features of non-fiction text: maps, charts, photographs, cartoons, boldface print, and headings. Teachers need to teach students how to interpret and use this information through various techniques and activities.
- Enhance critical thinking skills through critical inquiry, analysis, and interpretation of content topics and themes that seek not just knowledge but also a deep level of understanding.
- Practice in extended response should continue in the content areas with nonfiction text.
- No matter the grade level of the child, teachers should be concerned with helping the child learn to read while reading to learn expository or narrative text.

READING ASSESSMENT

Question #2: To what extent are elementary teachers utilizing data-based decision making to assess students' growth in reading?

Results for Grades K-1

2006 Fall Classroom Scan

In the original scan, none of the Kindergarten teachers indicated any assessments for reading ability. Two Kindergarten teachers, however, allowed reading aides to administer assessments to students using the A to Z readers program. 1st grade teachers used at least three different types of assessments to place students into reading levels. Two 1st grade teachers used the original DRA program to assessment students' reading abilities. One 1st grade teacher used running records exclusively to assess students' literacy achievement. Another 1st grade teacher asked one of the reading teachers to administer the Dibels exam to students to make placements for guided reading groups. A to Z reading assessment was the choice of one 1st grade teacher. Two first grade teachers did not use any formal assessment to evaluate students' reading ability.

Survey Results

Kindergarten teachers who answered the on-line survey have reported dramatic modifications in habits concerning assessment of students' reading abilities. When determining if a student should be moved into formal reading instruction, four of five responding Kindergarten teachers always utilized a combination of factors: DRA2 assessment results, whole group instruction, interactive writing contributions, and observing students' reading in the classroom. One teacher also mentioned using the Literacy Guidelines checklist to determine readiness. DRA2 assessments at the Kindergarten level are primarily word attack and phonemic awareness tasks. Only "sometimes used" was selected by one teacher for each category – DRA2 assessment and Interactive writing. These choices indicated that at least one staff member who responded to this survey was not actively and consistently using data or observation of the types which have been specifically and directly taught through staff development in the past two years. These survey results imply a fundamental change in teacher routines and attitudes surrounding reading assessment at the Kindergarten level.

First grade teacher surveys showed primary dependence on non-data driven methods of determining when to move students from text with lower to higher levels of complexity. Guided reading group interaction and oral reading were "always used" by five of seven respondents. Running records, which provide a measure of decoding skill, and DRA2 scores were used with much less frequency according to the on-line survey. DRA2 scores, as an assessment tool for moving students to higher or lower level test, earned an average rating of 2.43 out of 4.0, while running records produced a 2.71 rating. In contrast, oral reading and guided reading group interaction produced 3.71 ratings out of 4.0. Two teachers mentioned that they are using skills lists for particular guided reading book levels. When students show mastery of these skills, they are moved on to the next level.

Using these specific guidelines for reading skills at particular levels may be as helpful as a DRA2 assessment in terms of using objective data to determine movement to a more complex text.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

How do you determine when to move a student to a different level of difficulty in reading texts?

Kindergarten teachers offered these reflections:

DRA2 word tasks – 8 of 8 teachers

Running records – 4 of 8 teachers

Interactive writing and journals for emergent literacy – 3 of 8 teachers

Letter Identification - 3 of 8 teachers

Listening to students; observing reading behaviors – 2 of 8 teachers

Sight word list – 2 of 8 teachers

1st grade teachers offered these reflections:

Running records – 7 of 8 teachers

Anecdotal notes – 5 of 8 teachers

Leveled book skill check sheets – 3 of 8 teachers

Listen to students read – 3 of 8 teachers

Retelling sequence of story – 3 of 8 teachers

Word Attack Strategies – 2 of 8 teachers

DRA2 word tasks – 2 of 8 teachers

Observation of Kindergarten classrooms:

In one classroom, the teacher used a clipboard with literacy guidelines to check students' emergent literacy skills. No other observable assessment routines or methods were observed in the eight Kindergarten classrooms. In two Kindergarten classrooms, students were quizzed over their birthdates, which is listed as a "life skills" assessment on the Kindergarten report card.

Observation of 1st grade classrooms:

Although only mentioned as an assessment tool by three 1st grade teachers in personal interviews, five teachers were observed listening to individual students reading during instructional class time. This is the exact number of 1st grade teachers who stated on the on – line survey that they "always used" oral reading for leveling purposes. Four teachers asked students to retell the sequence of a story read in class. Three teachers were observed taking running records on individual children during classroom reading instruction time. This observation matches well with results from the on-line survey, but is considerably less than the frequency described in 1st grade teacher interviews. Miscues were noted on individual student assessment documents by two 1st grade teachers.

Recommendations: Reading Assessment

Kindergarten:

While Kindergarten teachers have progressed from not utilizing any type of formal or informal systematic assessment of literacy in the classroom, all

Kindergarten teachers are currently using the DRA2 assessment at least three times per year, as directed by the district administration. These DRA2 assessments include word tasks (phonemic awareness) and beginning reading. The Kindergarten report card requires teachers to assess letter identification and sounds, developmental spelling, and sight word recognition. The DRA2 assessment will give teachers information for the 1st quarter and 2nd quarter grading periods. Furthermore, Kindergarten teachers are required to place students at a reading level to reflect competency during the 3rd and 4th quarter grading periods. The DRA2 assessment will again give teachers appropriate information to complete the report card for the 4th quarter, but not for the 3rd quarter grading period.

It is recommended that the Kindergarten teachers utilize the Emergent level Literacy Guidelines as a checklist for student literacy learning and verification for marks on the report card throughout the school year and in addition to data gained through administration of the DRA2 assessment. Two sections on the Emergent level guidelines would fulfill the need for on-going assessment of Kindergarten students' literacy progress: 1) Phonics, Word Recognition and Accuracy
2) Early Reading Behaviors

Although only observed directly in one of the eight classrooms, but described in the individual teacher interviews, many Kindergarten teachers are more cognizant of recognizing initial reading behaviors in their students. The Kindergarten teachers are working to support and enhance early literacy behaviors through activities and direct instruction in the classroom. However, at this point in time, it is also evident that the task of ongoing student assessment is not being utilized to its full potential. Most Kindergarten teachers, as observed in the 2nd quarter of the school year, were not actively recording student literacy behaviors on a regular basis. Informal assessment of students can form the basis for data collection. However, observations of classroom activities should be used to make determinations regarding students' readiness for more and more complex literacy experiences. Utilizing the Literacy Guidelines, or a modified version of the same, will give teachers the ability to record and document students' growth over the school year or during each quarter of the grading period. This systemic recording of students' literacy behaviors in addition to use of the DRA2 assessment components will give Kindergarten teachers the documentation required to report progress to parents, district administration, and to 1st grade teachers at the conclusion of the school year.

1st grade:

When considering that two 1st grade teachers did not use any type of assessment to move students into more difficult text when originally scanned in the fall of 2006, the results of this survey show positive movement toward greater knowledge of students' abilities. Results from the on-line survey showed a continued reliance on oral reading without consistent use of running records to document students' decoding strategies. This is an area for renewed staff development, as is the need to foster fluency and expression as a criterion for reading growth.

Although guided reading group interaction as a choice on the teacher survey did not specifically state “comprehension” as the focal point of that interaction, it is hoped that some comprehension questions would be offered in groups and used to determine if students are understanding text – in addition to decoding and reading with fluency. If teachers are utilizing reading group interaction as a means to develop comprehension strategies and growth for 1st grade students, the survey results showing this strategy as receiving a mark of 3.71 out of 4.0 is a great improvement in developing thinking skills and a purpose for reading beyond decoding of words.

Teachers who are utilizing the Fountas and Pinnell guides for skills to be mastered for particular levels of text complexity are providing themselves a great vehicle for recording students’ progress in both word attack and comprehension skills. The balance of these types of skill and concept competencies are as important to students at the 1st and 2nd grade levels as is the balanced exposure to fiction and non-fiction/non-narrative text.

Overall, the use of data driven methods of assessing students’ progress toward greater mastery of the reading process continues to dominate 1st grade teachers’ practice. Five out of eight 1st grade teachers were observed listening to students during reading, but only three teachers were actually observed taking a running record during classes observed. This is definitely a contrast with the information gained from teachers during individual interviews.

On the 1st grade report card, teachers are to report students decoding ability, fluency in oral reading, and comprehension of grade level text. Teachers are also to report guided reading levels of students. If teachers are listening to children frequently but not taking note of reading miscues or noting fluency issues through running records or anecdotal records then marking the report card in these areas would be problematic. Additionally, the DRA2 assessment requires students to retell the text, a skill that can be taught to students. Three of eight 1st grade teachers noted in their personal interviews that they were actively using retelling the sequence of a story to indicate students’ ability to comprehend text. This is a good step towards understanding students’ abilities, but one that should be practiced by all 1st grade teachers.

As was stated in the Kindergarten section above, teachers are encouraged to use the Literacy Guidelines for the 1st grade and/or Fountas and Pinnell guidelines for leveled books to keep records of students’ reading achievement. These documents can be adapted for groups of students or for particular individuals. The DRA2 Focus for Instruction sheets should assist teachers in determining groups of students who have particular instructional needs. Since the DRA2 is given to 1st grade students at the mid-year, Focus for Instruction sheets will give teachers a means to reassess students who are exhibiting both growth and stagnation of progress.

Results for Grade 2

2006 Fall Classroom Scan

The overwhelming choice of 2nd grade teachers who participated in the original reading program scan in the fall of 2006 was the use of running records to

determine reading achievement levels. One of these teachers utilized the building reading teacher to administer the running records assessment. One 2nd grade teacher did not use any formal assessment program to evaluate students' reading ability. The Dibels exam was administered to students in one 2nd grade classroom by a district reading teacher, and A to Z reading assessment was used by another 2nd grade teacher.

Survey Results

The use of assessment instruments and activities to evaluate students' reading progress in the 2nd grade mirrors those of the 1st grade teachers. Guided reading instruction and oral reading produced average scores of 3.8 out of 4.0. Six of seven teachers responded that these two strategies were always used to move students into more difficult text. Running records were the third most frequently utilized assessment technique for identifying when students were ready for more difficult text. Again, it is interesting that running records are not being used in concert with oral reading to determine placement. DRA2 assessment results were the least likely to be used on a regular basis to determine movement from easier to more difficult texts, producing an average score of 2.3 out of 4.0. One teacher mentioned the use of "comprehension activities" to track students' success and in using comprehension as a means to move students to more difficult texts. This teacher was evidently looking at much more than oral reading to determine readiness. Another teacher noted that assessment strategies would be used in combination to help guide decisions to move students to more difficult texts.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

How do you determine when to move a student to a different level of difficulty in reading texts?

2nd grade teachers offered these reflections:

Running Records – 5 of 7 teachers

Comprehension Questions – 5 of 7 teachers

DRA2 – 3 of 7 teachers

Miscue and other note taking – 3 of 7 teachers

Written response to text – 2 of 7 teachers

Literacy Guidelines – 2 of 7 teachers

Observation of 2nd grade classrooms:

The most frequently observed assessment technique in 2nd grade classrooms was the use of comprehension questions. Six of the seven teachers used comprehension questions as a way to determine progress in reading groups. Three of seven teachers listened to individual students while reading and assisted them with decoding. The remaining assessment techniques observed (miscue analysis notes, retelling of text, responses to text, and fluency) were each used in two classrooms. Responses to text were accomplished through writing.

Recommendations: Reading Assessment

2nd grade:

The movement from dependence on oral reading as the indicator of reading skill to a more balanced approach of oral reading and comprehension questions is a positive and productive step taken by the majority of 2nd grade teachers. The use of comprehension questions, as a means for using guided reading group instruction to gauge reading progress, correlates well with the results of the teacher on-line survey and the interview data. It appears that what 2nd grade teachers have said they do, they are actually putting into practice.

The 2nd grade report card asks teachers to account for the same items that were listed on the 1st grade report card: report students decoding ability, fluency in oral reading, comprehension of grade level text, and guided reading levels of students.

While only three of the 2nd grade teachers were observed listening to students read, only two other 2nd grade teachers actually recorded miscues or running records of students during reading instruction. In order for teachers to have data to accurately grade students on their decoding and fluency in reading, some type of record keeping strategy should be employed to account for marks. The same can be said for reading comprehension. Although students in 2nd grade are assessed on the DRA2 by the end of the 2nd and 4th quarters of the school year, and the report card marks at those times should be heavily dependent on these results, classroom activities and behaviors should also be noted in a systematic fashion by teachers. The Literacy Guidelines and the Fountas and Pinnell recommended skills for specific levels of books will assist teachers by providing ongoing documentation of students' progress in reading skill – both comprehension and decoding/fluency. These two aspects of student reading in the 2nd grade should be of equal importance which appraising students' abilities to read more complex text.

Asking students to respond to text is writing is a skill that is required for students to pass the highest level of text in the DRA2 for 2nd grade. Teachers should be directly modeling and instructing students as to how to respond to text and what types of responses constitute quality work. Students will need instructional support in order to learn to formulate their ideas, summarize information, and give a sequential response when so asked. Learning to elaborate and give detailed information to specific or general questions about a text is a skill that students will be using throughout their school careers as well as into their adult working lives. Teachers are encouraged to create a common rubric to be used by all 2nd grade instructors that will guide both the teaching of written response and the assessment of the quality of those responses. A rubric should be created for the teachers and a complementary rubric created for students to use. If a student can place into written form his/her understanding of a text, the thinking ability of students will increase and should transfer to other areas of instruction in the classroom.

Results for Grade 3

2006 Fall Classroom Scan

Third grade classroom teachers used a variety of means to assessment students' reading abilities. Three teachers used text from the Scotts Foresman basal

text to conduct running records. One teacher used the A to Z reading assessment program, another used the QRI words to assess students' reading abilities, and finally one teacher used oral reading and written questions from the basal text to place students. Two of the 3rd grade teachers involved in the original scan indicated using no assessment program to place students in appropriate reading materials.

Survey Results

Third grade teachers reportedly use oral reading of text most frequently as an assessment strategy, producing a rating of 3.5 out of 4.0. The next most frequently used strategy was guided reading group instruction. (3.3 out of 4.0) These results mirror those of teachers in the 1st and 2nd grades, although the ratings produced were not as high. Running records received the lowest frequency of use, again showing a dichotomy between use of data generated by running records and the more informal analysis generated when listening to oral reading of text. In fact, two of the seven 3rd grade teachers indicated that they never used running records. On the other hand, one teacher noted that she does a running record on students because she wants to make sure that students are in a book that is challenging enough for the student. Nothing was mentioned in that particular teacher's comments about accounting for comprehension knowledge in addition to oral reading mastery. For the first time in this teacher survey, DRA2 results were used more frequently than running records to determine movement of students from easier to more difficult text. In addition to the survey tallies, 3rd grade teachers noted that comprehension quizzes and the literacy guidelines were used to help determine student placement in text. Another teacher stated that multiple types of assessment data use used in concert to determine placement.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

How do you determine when to move a student to a different level of difficulty in reading texts?

3rd grade teachers offered these reflections:

Teacher Observation – 3 out of 7 teachers

DRA 2 – 3 out of 7 teachers

Running Records – 2 out of 7 teachers

QRI Word List – 2 out of 7 teachers

Listen to students read – 1 out of 7 teachers

Student work – 1 out of 7 teachers

Reading portfolio – 1 out of 7 teachers

Literacy guidelines – 2 out of 7 teachers

Observation of 3rd grade classrooms:

The most frequently observed assessment technique used in the 3rd grade classrooms was listening to students read orally. In all seven of the classrooms the teachers took time to listen to their students. All seven of the teachers were observed leading the students through discussions including comprehension checks while they were reading. Two of the teachers were observed keeping anecdotal records while the students read. Three of the 3rd grade teachers were observed

using the Literacy Guidelines to help track the progress of their individual students. Two of the teachers have the students keep reading response journals that they review for an assessment of their work. Two of the teachers who use Thinking/Work folders also use rubrics to assess the work student completed inside the folders. One teacher keeps a reading portfolio on all of their students. Two teachers use a Record Reporting sheet that includes the DRA 2, QRI, Running Record, and guided reading data for each student.

Results for Grades 4-5

2006 Fall Classroom Scan

The majority of 4th grade teachers involved in the fall 2006 scan (4 of 6) did not use any type of formal reading assessment to determine competency levels of students in the classroom. One 4th grade teachers used the Scotts Foresman's basal text to conduct running records. One teacher used an informal reading inventory to place students into reading groups. Three current 5th grade teachers involved in the 2006 scan did not utilize any type of formal reading assessment to determine students' reading abilities. One 5th grade teacher taped discussions from literacy circle comprehension discussions to determine the level of book appropriate for the next literacy circle activity.

Survey Results

Six of seven 4th grade teachers answered the survey questions regarding use of assessment strategies to place students into grade appropriate text. One teacher commented, "I will use the students daily performance ahead of any test score. I will use test scores to determine initial grouping, and their performance to determine future grouping." The majority of 4th grade teachers, 50% of the responding group, used all four types of assessment strategies on a "sometimes used" basis. DRA2 assessments, guided reading group interaction and oral reading of text all generated average scores of 2.67 out of 4.0. One teacher noted using DRA2 assessments, guided reading group interaction and oral reading of text on an "always used" frequency. One teacher marked that she never uses running records. No comments were made to indicate the specific use of comprehension skills to move students to more difficult text.

With only one of six 4th grade teachers using any kind of assessment method on a consistent and frequent basis, more information will need to be obtained to determine how students are placed into appropriate text or whether students are not moved into more difficult text throughout the year, thereby lowering the value of assessment strategies in the 4th grade classrooms. Compared to teachers in grades 1-3, these results seem to indicate a reduction in the use of assessment criteria for student placement. However, considering the fact that in the initial scan of fall 20056, the majority of 4th grade teaches (4 of 6) did not use any kind of formal reading assessment, the increases shown in this survey are at least a move toward acknowledgment of the need for more specific and data driven awareness of students' reading abilities by at least all but one teacher in that grade level.

Fifth grade teachers' survey responses varied from those of the 4th grade teachers. Guided reading group interaction received the highest average score, 2.71 out of 4.0. Three of the 5th grade teachers also offered evidence of using guided

reading group interactions to make decisions about moving students into more difficult text. These teachers noted that comprehension measured by large and small group interaction along with written and oral discussions and responses to questions were used to place students during the school year. One teacher noted the use of literacy guidelines to move students. Four fifth grade teachers reported never utilizing running records as an assessment strategy. One fifth grade teacher noted always using oral reading of text, however, no teachers marked “always used” for running records. DRA2 assessments were marked as either sometimes or frequently used by 5th grade teachers, and generated the same average score as oral reading of text.

Although the initial scan showed that three of the current 5th grade teachers did not use any type of formal reading assessment to place students into more difficult text, this survey shows that at most two of the survey respondents use only two of the four types of tools. Therefore no 5th grade teacher currently is teaching without the use of some type of assessment for reading placement, although for the majority of teachers, the use of these tools falls into the “sometimes used” category.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

How do you determine when to move a student to a different level of difficulty in reading texts?

4th grade teachers offered these reflections:

Written responses – 1 out of 7 teachers

DRA 2 – 4 out of 7 teachers

Lexile scores – 1 out of 7 teachers

Anecdotal records – 1 out of 7 teachers

Teacher observation – 1 out of 7 teachers

Nonfiction/fiction comprehension checks – 1 out of 7 teachers

5th grade teachers offered these reflections:

Running records- 1 out of 7 teachers

Teacher observation – 2 out of 7 teachers

Comprehension questions – 2 out of 7 teachers

Anecdotal records – 2 out of 7 teachers

DRA 2- 3 out of 7 teachers

Evaluation of fluency and accuracy – 1 out of 7 teachers

Assessment of student work – 2 out of 7 teachers

Listen to students read – 1 out of 7 teachers

Observation of 4th grade classrooms:

In 2 of the 4th grade classrooms, the assessment technique observed was student interaction with the discussion during reading instruction. Four of the 4th grade teachers listened to the students read orally with only one of those teachers keeping anecdotal notes. In two of the 4th grade classrooms students wrote responses in their guided reading group logs. Additionally, in two of the 4th grade classrooms students wrote responses in their independent reading response logs. One teacher

was observed conducting one-on-one reading conferences with several students while keeping anecdotal records.

Observation of 5th grade classrooms:

In all seven of the 5th grade classrooms the majority of the assessment was observed during large and small group oral discussions and responses to questions. All seven of the teachers asked the students to retell events from their text. Three of the seven 5th grade teachers assigned worksheets to assess the student's understanding of the day's lesson. In three of the classrooms students recorded responses to their reading including questions, connections, vocabulary lists, and summaries that they teacher collected for assessment. In two of the seven classrooms the teachers were observed listening to each of the students read orally. One teacher was observed taking anecdotal notes on the students as they were reading.

Recommendations: 3rd-5th Grade Reading Assessment

Teachers should continue to review and reflect on their reading assessment practices. They should be aware of how the assessments they use allows them to focus their instruction. Professional development should be provided to teachers who need to increase their assessment knowledge. Assessment practices in the third grade vary between teachers. It is recommended that teachers continue to align assessment practices throughout the district.

Overall, the use of data driven methods of assessing students' progress toward greater mastery of the reading process appears to be somewhat lacking at the 4th and 5th grade levels. It is crucial that teachers utilize data from assessment to inform decisions about instruction. This practice helps teachers to begin instruction with specific achievement targets. The teacher monitors student progress on an on-going basis knowing that teaching and learning must be interactive. All assessments thus provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities. Additionally, teachers utilize data analysis and collaborate with other teachers to revise curriculum and instructional practices.

In order for teachers to have data to accurately grade students some type of record keeping strategy should be employed to account for marks. The same can be said for reading comprehension. Although students are assessed on the DRA2 by the end of the 2nd and 4th quarters of the school year, and the report card marks at those times should be heavily dependent on these results, classroom activities and behaviors should also be noted in a systematic fashion by teachers. The Literacy Guidelines and the Fountas and Pinnell recommended skills for specific levels of books will assist teachers by providing ongoing documentation of students' progress in reading skill – both comprehension and decoding/fluency.

Asking students to respond to text is writing is a skill that is required for students in the DRA2 as well as ISAT. Teachers should be directly modeling and instructing students as to how to respond to text and what types of responses constitute quality work. Students will need instructional support in order to learn to formulate their ideas, summarize information, and give a sequential response when so asked. Learning to elaborate and give detailed information to specific or general questions about a text is a

skill that students will be using throughout their school careers as well as into their adult working lives. Teachers are encouraged to create a common rubric to be used by all grade level instructors that will guide both the teaching of written response and the assessment of the quality of those responses. A rubric should be created for the teachers and a complementary rubric created for students to use. If a student can place into written form his/her understanding of a text, the thinking ability of students will increase and should transfer to other areas of instruction in the classroom

READING INSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE

Question #3: To what extent are elementary teachers requesting additional assistance in improving their instructional and classroom management techniques for teaching reading?

Results for Grades K-1

Survey Results

In reference to additional assistance by district provided reading aides, Kindergarten teachers indicated that literacy support is generally offered after guided reading groups have begun. Reading aides help Kindergarten students to work in the literacy centers, or will take reading groups to assist with word study or beginning reading strategies. One Kindergarten teacher specifically noted that the reading aide helps with stations, beginning early in the school year, until students are ready to work independently.

Kindergarten teachers would like more time to work with colleagues in order to plan and share ideas. One teacher specifically noted wanting more planning time with the reading aide in order to work on specific interventions for students. Two teachers requested inservice time to learn more about the use and administration of the DRA2 or improvements in guided reading instruction.

Kindergarten teachers were surveyed about assistance needed in the area of classroom management. Keeping students on task during literacy centers or during interactive writing was a concern of three of five respondents. As was noted above, one teacher asked if reading aides could “handle the classroom management during literacy instruction”. Two respondents asked for instructional assistance. That teacher would like more literacy center ideas, while still another requested help with teaching and modeling work board activities.

First grade teachers were also asked how they are utilizing reading aides and reading teachers for additional assistance in teaching literacy in the classroom. Reading aides are teaching guided reading groups on a daily basis, and trading these groups off with the teachers so that students are all receiving direct instruction from the classroom teacher on either a daily or every other day basis. In addition to formal groups, reading aides are doing some literacy station preparation and overseeing in two classrooms, and providing extra sight word, phonics or writing assistance in four other 1st grade classrooms. Reading teachers assist 1st grade teachers with interventions, strategies and skills aimed toward struggling readers. Two teachers have the reading specialists take a guided reading group each day to teach additional lessons in both phonics and writing. 1st grade teachers frequently discuss struggles they are having with particular students with the reading teachers, including asking for input of reading teachers at parent teacher conferences. From survey responses, it appears that classroom teachers are seeking advice for teaching reading students of all abilities.

Many of the 1st grade teachers would like the opportunity to share ideas and strategies for teaching reading and for record keeping. The respondents especially requested activities for higher achieving students. One teacher requested time to observe other teachers conducting their guided reading lessons. Although not

directly related to pedagogical assistance, one teacher believed that lowering class sizes, so that students can meet with their teachers every day, would be of assistance.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

Observation of Kindergarten classrooms:

Reading aides were observed working in two of the Kindergarten classrooms. In one classroom, the aide worked with a small group of students on letters and sounds identification. In the other classroom, the aide was seen assisting one specific student with letters and sounds. The aide used visual phonics to help prompt this student. After completing this task the aide helped the teacher by assisting with the classroom's whole group activity. The aide kept students on task and helped with props used for a dramatization.

Interview and Observation of 1st grade classrooms:

While observing teachers in the 1st grade, reading aides assisted students in six of eight classrooms. In all six classrooms, reading aides worked with small groups of students using reading games, flash cards and leveled books to conduct reading and literacy instruction. While observing classrooms, the reading teacher took groups of students out of two 1st grade classrooms.

According to a 1st grade teacher, the reading aide provides assistance to individual students, as recommended as an intervention by the BBT team. Another reading aide was asked by 1st grade classroom teacher to assist in reshelving books, organize activities for literacy centers, and to keep track of students' reading for the "Book It" project. One of the 1st grade teachers has a daily parent helper who assists with classroom management while students are engaged in centers and in guided reading groups. All Reading teachers take groups of 1st grade students for targeted group instruction in literacy skills, according to the 1st grade teachers.

Recommendations: Reading Instruction Assistance Kindergarten and 1st grade:

1) Reading aides should be encouraged to participate in activities, such as the literacy book clubs, so as to improve their depth of knowledge and to acquire new techniques for assisting students with beginning literacy skills and concepts. Reading aides should be allowed to participate in teacher inservice programs specifically relating to reading instruction. Aides should also be encouraged to read and respond to literature and professional texts on the topic of emergent reading instruction for Kindergarten and 1st grade students. The District should provide an on-going series of instructional sessions for reading aides, in order to assist them in delivering instruction with a goal toward an increase in student reading competencies. Grade level meetings within the buildings should include reading aides, whenever possible, in order to share reading instruction strategies and answer questions about best practices for guided reading instruction.

2) Reading aides should meet with Reading Teachers on a monthly basis to share information and to learn about techniques to add value to their assistance in the classroom.

3) Teachers should continue to or refine the practice of writing out lesson plans for reading aides to follow. Regular feedback should be offered to classroom teachers from reading aides so as to alert teachers as to progress or struggles of students as observed through small group or individual instruction. Reading aides provide a service to the classroom teacher as an additional time of literacy instruction and practice for students.

4) Reading aides should not be used for clerical activities or classroom management. Interactions with students in centers should be related to literacy instruction and/or practice. A reading aide in the Kindergarten or 1st grade classroom could serve as the focus of a center based on literacy skills and concepts. Parent volunteers are better used for classroom management assistance in rooms where students are beginning to learn how to move from one center to the other. Teachers must spend considerable amounts of time teaching and modeling centers for students and add in increasing amounts of independence as students demonstrate their ability to handle the activities.

5) Classroom teachers must lead by example, by learning from each other in the elementary school building and from teachers in other buildings in the District. Ask for time to watch a colleague – building principals will volunteer to cover a class or help to arrange a time when teachers may go together to visit a teacher in another building or next door. Taking the initiative to share instructionally related information at grade level meetings is each teacher's responsibility. Participating in book clubs or technology trainings within the district or signing up for ROE workshops and sharing information at faculty or grade level meetings helps classroom teachers to redefine their craft and reflect on what was learned from experiences with both children and peers.

6) Reading strategies for high achieving students directly relates to educational research in gifted education. High functioning students need opportunity for exploration outside of the structured classroom time, and absolution from completing assignments given to the entire class. Here is the place for differentiated instruction – allowing for investigations, even at the 1st grade or Kindergarten level, into texts and materials that focus on non-narrative/non-fiction child centered interest areas. Utilize Jackie Bopp for additional reading materials. Go back to the Curry Samara type, Blooms taxonomy hierarchy of thinking skills to plan activities and/or questions to answer. These students need to develop a deep knowledge of topics that hold their interest, not necessarily more difficult materials that may be beyond their comprehension. Use the literacy guidelines to assist in planning for teaching literacy concepts. Employ more writing activities, as writing is the highest form of literacy demonstration.

7) Use Parent volunteers to provide yet another person to listen to children read and to supervise writing in journals.

Results for Grade 2

Survey Results

Reading aides assist 2nd grade teachers by provided additional guided reading group instruction. At least one teacher had requested that the reading aide instruct the high group of students, while another teacher sends her lowest group to the reading aide. Nearly all of the 2nd grade teachers rotate groups with their reading aides. Reading teachers assist 2nd grade teachers by instructing struggling or below level students. One teacher indicated that the reading teacher comes into the classroom to assist at-risk students. Two other teachers mentioned having specific conversations with the reading teachers about strategies, concerns and the knowledge of reading that is gained from these reading specialists.

Second grade teachers offered a variety of answers when asked about what type of reading instruction assistance they require from the district. These requests ranged from more student contact time for reading groups to assistance with record keeping. One teacher asked for additional funds to purchase activities for students to complete at their seats. Another 2nd grade teacher asked for inservice assistance to incorporate “sensory images” into comprehension instruction.

In the area of classroom management, second grade teachers have asked for assistance in developing alternatives to literacy centers, center ideas that have more educational value to students, or for additional funds for center activities. Two teachers declined any further assistance in classroom management. One teacher would like to realign the classroom day in order to make time for individual student conferences.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

Observation of 2nd grade classrooms:

Students in 2nd grade classrooms were observed receiving additional reading instruction assistance from reading aides, reading teachers and special education teachers. One classroom utilized parent volunteers to assist with classroom management while students are engaged in centers. Reading aides, however, were utilized in each of the 2nd grade classroom. All reading aides taught groups of students on a rotating basis with the classroom teacher. In addition to literacy tasks, classroom teachers asked reading aides to assist with spelling in one classroom and with the “Book-It” program in two classrooms. During the observation times, the building reading teachers took student groups for reading instruction in four of the 2nd grade classrooms. Special education teachers removed students from the classroom for literacy instruction in three observed classrooms.

Recommendations: Reading Instruction Assistance

2nd grade:

- 1) Reading aides should be encouraged to participate in activities, such as the literacy book clubs, so as to improve their depth of knowledge and to acquire new techniques for assisting students with beginning literacy skills and concepts. Reading aides should be allowed to participate in teacher inservice programs specifically relating to reading instruction. Aides should also be encouraged to read

and respond to literature and professional texts directed toward the topic of struggling readers and the use of writing to increase reading aptitude. The District should provide an on-going series of instructional sessions for reading aides, in order to assist them in delivering instruction with a goal toward an increase in student reading competencies. Grade level meetings within the buildings should include reading aides, whenever possible, in order to share reading instruction strategies and answer questions about best practices for guided reading instruction.

2) Reading aides should meet with Reading Teachers on a monthly basis to share information and to learn about techniques to add value to their assistance in the classroom.

3) Teachers should continue to or refine the practice of writing out lesson plans for reading aides to follow. Regular feedback should be offered to classroom teachers from reading aides so as to alert teachers as to progress or struggles of students as observed through small group or individual instruction. Reading aides provide a service to the classroom teacher as an additional time of literacy instruction and practice for students.

4) Reading aides should not be used for clerical activities or classroom management. Interactions with students in centers should be related to literacy instruction and/or practice. Parent volunteers are better used for classroom management assistance.

5) Teachers must spend considerable amounts of time teaching and modeling centers for students and add in increasing amounts of independence as students demonstrate their ability to handle the activities. Caution should be practiced in giving students games that may not directly relate to literacy learning. Rather, asking students to read and write at their desks is not inappropriate for 2nd grade children. Center activities do not have to be flashy or overly stimulating, but rather should serve a purpose of connection to the rest of the academic day: supporting concepts taught in science units by writing and/or reading about these topics. If a particular comprehension skill seems to present problems for students, a set of questions to choose and to write about may form the basis for further classroom discussion. Follow up in the classroom from center activities builds a knowledge base and accountability for completing activities assigned. 2nd grade students don't need to change center activities as frequently as 1st grade children, due to increasing attention spans, and interest in or skill in reading and writing. Provide a wide variety of books and book making materials. Allow students to use this literacy learning time to write in and illustrate their journals. Allow students to investigate topics through the use of DVD's or CD-Roms. Students can practice using a word processing program on a computer, after whole or small group instruction.

6) Classroom teachers must lead by example, by learning from each other in the elementary school building and from teachers in other buildings in the District. Ask for time to watch a colleague – building principals will volunteer to cover a class or help to arrange a time when teachers may go together to visit a teacher in another building or next door. Sharing at grade level meetings are each teacher's responsibility to the district. Participating in book clubs or technology trainings within the district or signing up for ROE workshops and sharing information at

faculty or grade level meetings helps classroom teachers to redefine their craft and reflect on what was learned from experiences with both children and peers.

Results for Grade 3

Survey Results

Reading aides in 3rd grade classrooms are used much like 2nd grade teachers, with small groups of students or with a guided reading group. In small group lessons, reading aides work with students on a variety of literacy skills - context clues, comprehension strategies, fluency practice, summarizing, sequencing- generally any skills that were reinforced or taught during the normal reading instruction time. One reading aide also works with students on writing skills and technique. In all but two classrooms, reading teachers assist 3rd grade teachers by taking below level students for additional practice. Two 3rd grade teachers mentioned the reading specialist as a “go to person” when the questions arise about a student. Another teacher did not identify any specific contact with the reading teacher in her building.

In the area of additional reading instruction assistance, 3rd grade teachers are asking for assistance with implementing guided reading and managing the large numbers of students in their classrooms. Two teachers mentioned difficulties with determining grades, especially percentage grades that must be entered into the grading system, when students are working with different reading levels. One teacher asked for assistance with promoting independent reading.

Classroom management assistance requests from 3rd grade teachers revolved around keeping all students engaged while working with smaller groups of students. Teachers would like assistance with center ideas, especially dealing with how to keep students engaged and held accountable for independent work without using worksheets or busy work. One teacher noted that time was a problem, but that she was responsible for rearranging the school day to make time for reading instruction. One teacher did not ask for any assistance with classroom management issues.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

Observation of 3rd grade classrooms:

Recommendations: Reading Instruction Assistance

Reading aides were observed working with students in six of the seven 3rd grade classrooms. The one remaining classroom utilizes a reading aide, but not during this classroom observation period. In two of the classrooms, students are pulled out of the classroom to work with the aide in another room. This aide works with individual students and also with small groups. In another 3rd grade classroom the aide teaches the spelling lessons to all of the students broken into smaller groups. The classroom teacher stated that this allows her to have more time to meet with her guided reading groups. In two of the 3rd grade classrooms the reading aide was observed focusing on the same reading strategy as the classroom teacher. In one classroom it was observed that the reading aide provided a second dose of small group reading instruction to the lower level readers.

Recommendations: Reading Instruction Assistance

1) Reading aides should be encouraged to participate in activities, such as the literacy book clubs, so as to improve their depth of knowledge and to acquire new techniques for assisting students with beginning literacy skills and concepts. Reading aides should be allowed to participate in teacher inservice programs specifically relating to reading instruction. Aides should also be encouraged to read and respond to literature and professional texts directed toward the topic of struggling readers and the use of writing to increase reading aptitude. The District should provide an on-going series of instructional sessions for reading aides, in order to assist them in delivering instruction with a goal toward an increase in student reading competencies. Grade level meetings within the buildings should include reading aides, whenever possible, in order to share reading instruction strategies and answer questions about best practices for guided reading instruction.

2) Reading aides should meet with Reading Teachers on a monthly basis to share information and to learn about techniques to add value to their assistance in the classroom.

3) Teachers should continue to or refine the practice of writing out lesson plans for reading aides to follow. Regular feedback should be offered to classroom teachers from reading aides so as to alert teachers as to progress or struggles of students as observed through small group or individual instruction. Reading aides provide a service to the classroom teacher as an additional time of literacy instruction and practice for students.

4) Reading aides should not be used for clerical activities or classroom management. Interactions with students in centers should be related to literacy instruction and/or practice. Parent volunteers are better used for classroom management assistance.

5) Reading aides should be used to provide additional reading minutes for students. They should not provide the instruction instead of the classroom teacher.

6) Teachers must spend considerable amounts of time teaching and modeling centers for students and add in increasing amounts of independence as students demonstrate their ability to handle the activities. Caution should be practiced in giving students games that may not directly relate to literacy learning. Rather, asking students to read and write at their desks is not inappropriate for 3rd grade children. Center activities do not have to be flashy or overly stimulating, but rather should serve a purpose of connection to the rest of the academic day: supporting concepts taught in science units by writing and/or reading about these topics. If a particular comprehension skill seems to present problems for students, a set of questions to choose and to write about may form the basis for further classroom discussion. Follow up in the classroom from center activities builds a knowledge base and accountability for completing activities assigned. 3rd grade students don't need to change center activities as frequently as K-2nd grade children, due to increasing attention spans, and interest in or skill in reading and writing. Provide a wide variety of books and book making materials. Allow students to use this literacy learning time to write in and illustrate their journals. Allow students to

investigate topics through the use of DVD's or CD-Roms. Students can practice using a word processing program on a computer, after whole or small group instruction.

7) Classroom teachers must lead by example, by learning from each other in the elementary school building and from teachers in other buildings in the District. Ask for time to watch a colleague – building principals will volunteer to cover a class or help to arrange a time when teachers may go together to visit a teacher in another building or next door. Sharing at grade level meetings is each teacher's responsibility to the district. Participating in book clubs or technology trainings within the district or signing up for ROE workshops and sharing information at faculty or grade level meetings helps classroom teachers to redefine their craft and reflect on what was learned from experiences with both children and peers.

Results for Grades 4-5

Survey Results

Fourth grade teachers' responses to the question about how reading aides are utilized produced answers that varied significantly from those given by K-3 teachers. Reading aides are used for reinforcement of guided reading lessons taught by the teacher. However, reading aides are also used for spelling reviews, to teach organizational skills, reinforce skills taught during whole group instruction, and reading comprehension and writing strategies. Only one of the 6 responding 4th grade teachers indicated that reading specialists take students from the classroom for additional reading strategy instruction. The referenced students were learning disabled students. Most fourth grade teachers ask reading teachers for advice and for histories of students who had been serviced by Title I programs in the past. The reading teachers provided scores and other data to point out the students' strengths and weaknesses in the area of reading development. Teachers have borrowed books at lower reading levels from reading teachers.

Fourth grade teachers would like additional information about how to teach comprehension activities, especially "fix up strategies" and help with teaching poetry. One teacher expressed a desire to have a more "concrete scope and sequence" for teaching 4th graders beyond the literacy guidelines. One teacher would like assistance with organizing her classroom library for better use by students. Another would like to reorganize the daily schedule to allow more time for all the activities and instruction that is necessary, while the last respondent felt that no further instructional support was necessary at this time.

When asking about classroom management assistance, four of the six respondents felt that their classrooms were running well and that no formal assistance would be required. The students are working well independently or in reading groups. One teacher expressed concern over time management and whether her day was organized well enough to find the time to teach everything that was necessary.

In the district's 5th grade classrooms, two teachers stated that they do not have access to reading aides this year. Assistance is generally given to students who are struggling with reading, on a daily or every other day basis. One teacher has a reading aide because the BBT requested additional help for a particular student. Spelling and reading instruction are the focus of reading aide assistance. Reading

specialists give the least assistance to 5th grade teachers, according to the on-line survey. Four of the seven respondents to the on-line survey replied that reading teachers are not utilized. One teacher stated that a few students are provided with reading instruction from the specialist. Two teachers have asked for background information on students previously serviced by the reading specialist, or have borrowed leveled books from the reading teacher. One teacher has asked for help with reading instructional techniques.

When asked about additional reading instruction inservice needs, 5th grade teachers are asking for a variety of assistance. Teachers would like help with guided reading in upper-grade level classrooms, working with non-fiction texts, and with assistance in helping below level students. One teacher asked for assistance with comprehension strategies. Another staff member asked for a common set of materials to teach skills and strategies – perhaps a basal text. Two teachers felt that they did not require any additional inservice in reading instruction at this time.

The majority of the fifth grade teachers did not request assistance in the area of classroom management. One teacher would like some ideas to engage students while others are working in guided reading or literacy circle groups. Another would like assistance with management of the school day in order to hold individual conferences with students. One teacher believes that her classroom management issues revolve around large class sizes.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

Observation of 4th grade classrooms:

Reading aides are utilized in all of the 4th grade classrooms. While observing teachers, reading aides assisted students in two of the seven classrooms. In one of the classrooms, the reading aide worked with a small group of students on reading instruction. In another 4th grade classroom the reading aide and the special education teacher walked around the room during guided reading instruction. They monitored and assisted students who were working independently.

Observation of 5th grade classrooms:

Reading aides are utilized in five of the seven 5th grade classrooms. However, during the observation period aides were not used.

Recommendations: Reading Instruction Assistance 4th – 5th Grades:

1) Reading aides should be encouraged to participate in activities, such as the literacy book clubs, so as to improve their depth of knowledge and to acquire new techniques for assisting students with beginning literacy skills and concepts. Reading aides should be allowed to participate in teacher inservice programs specifically relating to reading instruction. Aides should also be encouraged to read and respond to literature and professional texts directed toward the topic of struggling readers and the use of writing to increase reading aptitude. The District should provide an on-going series of instructional sessions for reading aides, in order to assist them in delivering instruction with a goal toward an increase in student reading competencies. Grade level meetings within the buildings should include reading aides, whenever possible, in order to share

reading instruction strategies and answer questions about best practices for guided reading instruction.

2) Reading aides should meet with Reading Teachers on a monthly basis to share information and to learn about techniques to add value to their assistance in the classroom.

3) Teachers should continue to or refine the practice of writing out lesson plans for reading aides to follow. Regular feedback should be offered to classroom teachers from reading aides so as to alert teachers as to progress or struggles of students as observed through small group or individual instruction. Reading aides provide a service to the classroom teacher as an additional time of literacy instruction and practice for students.

4) Reading aides should not be used for clerical activities or classroom management. Interactions with students in centers should be related to literacy instruction and/or practice. Parent volunteers are better used for classroom management assistance.

5) Reading aides should be used to provide additional reading minutes for students. They should not provide the instruction instead of the

WRITING INSTRUCTION AND ACTIVITY

Question #4: To what extent are elementary teachers teaching writing to students?

Results for Grades K-1

Survey Results

Combined Kindergarten and 1st grade teacher survey results showed that 50% of teachers use interactive writing activities on a daily basis, and another five of twelve respondents use interactive writing three to four times per week. Shared experiential stories were the second most frequently used strategy in the Kindergarten, while journal writing came in second in the 1st grade.

Considering the grade levels separately, four of the five Kindergarten teachers reported using interactive writing as a strategy on a daily basis, whereas four of seven 1st grade teachers used the strategy on a 3-4 times a week basis. Looking over the full listing of possible writing activities on the survey, the majority of Kindergarten teachers use some type of writing at least 3-4 times per week – especially journals, retelling stories and non-fiction experiences. In 1st grade, all types of writing activities surveyed received at least one or two votes for daily use except non-fiction experiences, which are largely dependent on field trips.

When asked for evidence to support their survey responses, Kindergarten teachers mentioned student products of writing, which are visible in the classroom – especially interactive writing activities. Poetry notebooks and journals are kept by students, and avail Kindergarten teachers the opportunity to experience emergent writing and drawing on an individual basis. Students produce responses to stories as a result of listening lab centers. Story webs and comic strips are created to sequence story plots. One teacher mentioned utilizing non-fiction experience writing in the form of shared or interactive writing activities.

1st grade teachers offered a wide range of evidence to support writing activities in the classroom. Writing opportunities are provided in literacy centers, journal time, as a response to shared reading or guided reading books, or as a result of field trips. Writing occurs in a large group setting – especially for interactive writing – or in small groups as an extension to a reading group activity. Retellings of stories help students to sequence events in the plot. One teacher indicated more use of oral response than written response. In this teacher's room, students sometimes write answers to questions or describe field trips in large groups or in journals.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

Observation of Kindergarten classrooms:

Two distinct types of writing activities were observed in the Kindergarten classrooms: teacher directed and student directed. Teacher directed activities included those required by the teacher in center activities, morning messages where students filled in blanks left by the teacher or situations where teachers asked students for upper or lower cases letters or for ending punctuation for sentences or in poems. Teacher directed activities were found in four classrooms. In two cases,

teachers did all of the writing. In two classrooms, students wrote in their poetry books by finding particular letters in the poems.

Student directed writing activities were found in four classrooms. These activities were primarily interactive writing projects based upon non-fiction classroom activities such as planting seeds for pumpkins or comprehension activities where students determine the problem/solution for a plot of a fiction text. Teachers assisted students by modeling letters and prompting for letter sounds in each classroom. Three of four classrooms used visual phonics prompts to assist students' recall of letters and sounds. In two classrooms journals were utilized to give students the opportunity to freely express themselves and to practice emergent literacy skills.

Observation of 1st grade classrooms:

Journals and interactive writing formed the most frequently observed writing activities in 1st grade classrooms. Students used journals for the following purposes: to write responses to literature, write to prompts, and for free writing activities. Students used their journals during that time when other students were engaged in guided reading. Journal writing happens at the students' desk, not at a literacy center. Five groups of 1st grade students were observed using journals for writing. Interactive writing activities were also noted in five classrooms. The topics for four of the classrooms were non-fiction, and used either sequencing from a science experiment or a seasonal topic for the interactive writing activity. Two classrooms utilized student writing and comprehension skills in developing either KWL charts or semantic webs – both utilizing non-fiction texts. Two teachers modeled writing, but did not invite student participation. In one of the 1st grade classrooms, no evidence of student created writing or writing activities in student centers was apparent during the classroom observation.

Recommendations: Writing Instruction and Activity

Kindergarten and 1st grade:

1) Use metacognition to describe what good readers and writers do. Reinforce left to right tracking, conventions of writing and the concept of "word". Modeling by the teacher and active participation by the student will enhance learning of these early literacy concepts.

2) Employ daily the vocabulary of the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing in order to assist students in understanding the concept of "idea" and to help students generate their own ideas for writing projects. "Ideas" helps students determine if a sentence in "interactive writing" remains true to the point of an exercise or a central idea in a text. Use think alouds to assist in generating ideas. "Word choice" may assist in developing multiple ways to describe an event or an idea. "Word choice" builds vocabulary, especially expressive and academic vocabulary.

3) Allow students to own the act of writing in front of their peers. Writing becomes a social event, a sharing, a collaboration and the beginning of editing and revision. Interactive writing with students as creator of thought, places teachers in the role of facilitators, directors and guides, rather than dictators.

4) Role model writing as a natural part of reading. Especially for 1st grade: Allow students time to share their journals with each other. Teachers should model how to respond to others' writing in the journal. Build a community of writers and readers in the classroom, where sharing ideas and acceptance of ideas is the norm.

5) Integrate writing into all topics taught, including mathematics. Write as a response to literature, as a response to learning in science, social science and experiences. These types of writing activities form the basis for extended response and using a static text or experience as the basis for written expression and reflection.

6) Create time for some type of actual writing on a daily basis by rearranging the daily schedule. Writing is not filling in letters on a line or filling in a missing word – that is a worksheet activity, which may have legitimate purposes. Writing is not merely the act of writing letters – although that is a building block to literacy. Writing is the purposeful thought transcribed onto paper – modeling and talking through what should be shared, for what purpose and why – and then transferring those ideas onto paper. All other ancillary activities may well support literacy, but writing itself is something more. For the most immature, writing is a drawing with an accompanying description, which may be verbal. Identifying letters in words and transcribing them contributes greatly to understanding phonemics and conventions of words in English. The discussion in class by the teacher, the negotiation of what should be shared – that is part of the writing process (generating ideas and then drafting sentences). Students share in process by actually transcribing, placing ideas onto the paper. The teacher's job is to metacognitively provide substance of purpose for why we share in written form, by developing language and adding an expressive value to our thoughts.

7) Allow students to interact with instructional technology available in the school district as a means to promote interest in writing.

8) With grade level colleagues, develop new rubrics to document student progress in writing. These rubrics do not need to wait for use when a writing sample has been refined for publishing. Assist students in creating a child friendly version for their own use. Teachers should be able to use these rubrics to plan instruction based on students' strengths and weaknesses in writing, to share with parents, or to use at a BBT or RtI meeting for specific students.

Results for Grade 2

Survey Results

Compared to Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers, writing activities in the 2nd grade happen much less frequently – generally once to twice weekly. No category of writing activity was engaged on a daily basis, and only three types – response to literature, journals and retelling stories – were used 3-4 times per week. The Activity with the highest frequency score was journal writing (2.6 out of 4.0). Activities least frequently used by 2nd grade teachers were shared experience stories and non-fiction experiences, the latter was never used by three of the seven respondents. Interactive writing, a technique widely used by Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers was used by five 2nd grade teachers on a 1-2 times per week basis and not at all by two of the 2nd grade teachers.

When asked to cite evidence to support the use of writing in the classroom, 2nd grade teachers discussed journal writing and interactive writing activities, which teachers are just beginning to try in the classroom. One teacher mentioned a focus on “ideas and organization” from the 6 Traits of Writing. Another 2nd grade teacher has students using journals, creating their own books and writing responses to literature in a third notebook. Writing seems to be linked to reading instruction in most cases.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

Observation of 2nd grade classrooms:

Written responses to literature or to non-fiction text were the most frequently observed type of writing activity in the 2nd grade classrooms. Story writing, whether on a computer, on paper in a literacy center or in a journal, was the next most frequently observed writing activity, being found in three 2nd grade classrooms. Students in two classrooms had created KWL charts to accompany their guided reading books or were engaged in letter writing. One 2nd grade teacher assigned journal writing.

Recommendations: Writing Instruction and Activity

2nd grade:

1) Restructure classroom time to allow for writing instruction throughout the day, and specifically within the language arts block. At a time when students should be more comfortable and experimental with their use of reading to learn, 2nd grade teachers have admittedly not provided regular opportunities for students to write in the classroom. Utilize a writing workshop, of approximately 45 minutes in length. This time may include the following: 5-10 min. mini-lesson; 25-30 min writing time; 10 min sharing session. This writing time is in addition to time spent on written response to reading materials.

2) Although journal writing received the highest frequency of use in the teacher survey, only one teacher was observed using this medium in the classroom in a fashion that was not related to a written response to literature. Allowing free choice in writing is also important for students’ expressive development, especially when encouraging risk taking outside of a teacher generated prompt or assignment.

3) Response to literature or non-fiction text is an excellent way to extend ideas from reading, as long as the task is not too limiting. Students who are required to extend an author’s idea and/or use the text to verify a new idea or an opinion learn to engage in more than knowledge or comprehension level thinking. Writing for response to literature or non-fiction text is an essential skill, and one that was observed and is encouraged in order to develop higher order thinking using established text.

4) Students should be interacting with writing as a daily part of their language arts experience, and as a way of learning content based, academic vocabulary (especially when using non-fiction, non-narrative text) . Generating “ideas”, “word choice”, “organization” and “conventions” through interactive writing, teachers will metacognitively model good writing and students will develop and generate the written documentation of learning. Interactive writing at the 2nd

grade could include smaller groups of students during guided reading type activities. Students would generate ideas and extension from the assigned text (fiction or non-fiction). Teachers and students in the 2nd grade should utilize rubrics to self-evaluate writing and to engage students in discussions of writing styles and habits.

5) Allow students in 2nd grade to interact with instructional technology now available in the district's computer labs and in some classrooms as a way to build enthusiasm for writing as a communication tool.

6) Utilize interactive writing as a means to process content area learning in a whole or small group setting, to process information learned in shared or guided reading lessons.

Results for Grade 3

Survey Results

Results of the teacher on-line survey suggest that responses to literature and journal writing are the most frequently used writing activities in the 3rd grade, each posting an average of 3.71 out of 4.0. These two types of activities are used daily by three of the seven respondents. The next most frequently used writing activity is "responses to non-fiction", which produced a result of 3.43 out of 4.0. Every category of writing activity was used by at least one teacher on a daily basis, and only retellings of field trips as a non-fiction experience was not used at all by two teachers. The majority of writing is done on monthly basis.

When asked to cite evidence of student writing activities, teachers in the 3rd grade shared a variety of activities including letter writing, "thinking folders", using 6 - traits as the basis for instruction, student choice, and conferencing. One teacher wrote about teaching students to "think aloud while writing", as the teacher or class participated in read alouds. One teacher utilized post-it notes to reinforce students' abilities to write about the comprehension skill being taught during any given week. Students worked on sequencing the events in a story by using color-coded post-it notes. Journal writing is based on a prompt in three classrooms. Summarizing both orally and in written form was used in one classroom. Social studies, science and math are used as a context for writing in journals as well.

These survey results point to rich experiences for the majority of students in the 3rd grade, as they learn to expand their repertoire of writing activities and contexts.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data

Observation of 3rd grade classrooms:

Students were observed writing in all seven of the 3rd grade classrooms. Written responses to literature or to non-fiction text were the most frequently observed type of writing activity in the 3rd grade classrooms. In five out of the seven classrooms, students were observed writing responses during and after their reading experiences. These responses included making connections and predictions, asking questions, and writing summaries. In one of those classrooms the students were writing friendly letters to the teacher to tell her about the book they had read independently. Other writing activities observed included essay

writing, journal writing, story writing, answers to comprehension questions, sentences to explain idioms, and facts learned from listening to teacher read text.

Recommendations: Writing Instruction and Activity

3rd grade:

1) Continue to expose students to varieties of reasons and purposes for using writing as a medium for communicating ideas. Continue to use writing as a response to reading. Expand the use of written response from narrative-based activities to non-narrative/non-fiction experiences with texts from topics in the traditional content areas. The students have textbooks in Social Studies and Science from which writing activities could be based. Expand writing in the content areas to responses created from science experiments – the precursor of a lab report; or a persuasive paper using a social studies topic for student debate. Use instructional technology to assist students in finding more information than that found in their textbooks as a source of information for these expository writing pieces.

2) Regularly use the 6 +1 Traits vocabulary and rubrics to assist students in defining the qualities of good writing in the texts written by other children and in text written by authors. Expand the use of 6 Traits vocabulary to include non-fiction texts and writing assignments. Assist students in learning to use a rubric – one trait at a time.

3) Consider the merits of rearranging the school day to teach content area subject matter within the traditional Language Arts block. One of our greatest needs today is for students to be able to competently read informational text and to use that information in a meaningful way. By the 3rd grade, with the implementation of subject area textbooks and accompanying trade books on related topics, students should be exposed to a variety of means to gather together factual information and process it to build background knowledge. These aforementioned skills are essential to comprehending any type of text. Therefore, why not use the Social Studies and Science textbooks and supplemental texts as the primary materials for whole group or small group lessons on specific reading comprehension skills as well as a means to learn this new content? Students would have opportunities to write about what they learned in the lesson and therefore create responses to non-fiction text in the process.

Results for Grade 4-5

Survey Results

In the 4th grade classrooms, students participate in writing responses to literature more frequently than any of the other possible choices on the teacher survey (3.33 out of 4.0). The next most frequently utilized writing activity in the 4th grade was responding to non-fiction text with an average rate of 3.0 out of 4.0). No writing activities were listed as used “Daily or nearly every day”. Most were noted in the “sometimes or monthly” categories. Journals were marked as “never used” by two 4th grade teachers, but utilized three or four times weekly by two other 4th grade teachers.

Fifth grade teachers, according to the on-line survey, also used responses to literature as the most frequent writing activity in the classroom (3.71 out of 4.0). Combined results for 4th and 5th grade classrooms produced a result of 2.50 out of 4.0 for the use of response to literature. Next in line is the use of classroom journals in the 5th grade, indicated as “used daily” in one classroom, and responses to non-fiction text.

Least utilized in the 4th and 5th grades are pieces that retell classroom field trips, which are non-fiction experiences (1.71 out of 4.0). Upper grade students participate in limited field trips, which may account for the limited use of this type of writing. Personal experience pieces were also less frequently used than retelling of stories from class in both 4th and 5th grade classrooms.

Five of the 6 respondents to the 4th grade survey offered evidence to support their claims to utilizing writing activities in class. Two teachers offered responses that showed direct links between reading comprehension instruction and written responses in both fiction and non-fiction genres. Two teachers are using learning logs, where students record their thoughts about things that they are learning during the week or use a “free write” to allow students freedom to express themselves without grading.

When asked to provide evidence of writing experiences in the classrooms, 5th grade teacher responses varied from “none” to a detailed list of activities including not only literature but writing assignments connected to social studies and science. Non-fiction writing is also completed when non-fiction texts are used in reading groups. In two classrooms, students are involved writing monthly newsletters home to parents.

These survey results of the 4th and 5th grade classrooms show that reading and writing instruction are going hand in hand. A lack of frequency in writing in the 4th grade is evident in that most instruction is being accomplished only on a monthly basis. Writing activities seem to be conducted more frequently in 5th grade classrooms than in the 4th grade.

Classroom Observation/Interview Data:

Observation of 4th grade classrooms:

During the observation period the amount and types of writing activities varied among the 4th grade classrooms. In two of the classrooms students were independently working on essay writing. Through student interview it was evident that the students had worked through the writing process as they created these essays. In another classroom the teacher and students worked together on the process of gathering ideas and generating a good paragraph. Four of the teachers had the students writing in response to their guided reading books or independent reading books. The students in those four classrooms wrote their responses in either a reading response binder or guided reading log. Students in one classroom were independently creating and typing sentences using their spelling words on laptop computers. In one classroom the completion of a worksheet was the only writing observed. In one of the 4th grade classrooms, no evidence of student created writing or writing activities was apparent during the classroom observation period.

Observation of 5th grade classrooms:

Written responses to literature were the most frequently observed writing activity in 5th grade. In three of the 5th grade classrooms, students were asked to provide written responses pertaining to books they were currently reading. In one of those three classrooms, students were assigned to answer an extended response question similar to those found on the ISAT test. In one classroom students were working with writing activities that focused on the vocabulary found in their current class novel. In three of the 5th grade classrooms student writing was done in order to complete an assigned worksheet.

Recommendations: Writing Instruction and Activity

4th and 5th grades:

- 1) Use personal narrative as a means to improve writing skill and facility.
- 2) Re-organize the classroom schedule to allow for writing on an every day basis. Writing activities should include: response to literature, response to content knowledge, and free writing. Learning logs as opposed to journals are an excellent way to reinforce the concept of writing to learn.
- 3) Encourage free writing, as a time for expression that is free from grading.
- 4) Continue the use of non-narrative writing with a clearer purpose and audience. Use non-narrative, content related writing to increase exposure and application of academic vocabulary – terms related to content knowledge – in ways beyond definitions or using specific words in sentences. Begin the process of introducing the “research” report or lab report into student’s writing activities.
- 5) Increase the amount of time and effort in the 4th grade classrooms for writing practice and experience. At the present time, writing in the 4th grade is inconsistent throughout the grade level. Increased use of writing as an instructional tool will better ensure uniformity in the “opportunity to learn” and preparation for more complex learning in upper grades. Worksheet completion is not a writing activity.

WRITING INSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE

Question #5: To what extent are elementary teachers requesting additional assistance in improving their instructional techniques for teaching writing?

Results for Grades K-1

Survey Results

Kindergarten teachers have requested time to share with colleagues in other Kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms. One teacher requested assistance with creating prompts for early primary children to use in their writing journals. Helping students make the connection between interactive writing activities and journal writing is the request of another Kindergarten teacher. Lastly, one teacher was concerned with the mechanics of how students hold their pencils and how to help break them of bad habits developed before entering school.

Five of the first grade teachers who responded to the survey requested assistance in the area of writing instruction. Teachers at 1st grade were concerned with fostering creativity and engagement in the writing process, especially with the wide range of ability demonstrated by students in our classrooms. One teacher asked for a staff development workshop on how to work with beginning writers. Another asked for ways to inspire children to think creatively like in a writer's workshop format. One 1st grade teacher asked for a more specific curriculum including mini lessons and guidelines for when topics should be taught to lower primary students.

Recommendations: Writing Instruction Assistance

Kindergarten and 1st grade:

1) Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers jointly or separately create a list of instructional topics they see as beneficial and developmentally appropriate for students who are beginning to read and write. From this list of topics, look for common themes and develop mini-lessons for each theme or discrete topic. Include possible books or activities as a basis for extensions and practice for the mini-lesson. Develop guidelines or rubrics to assess progress, knowledge, or application of the skill or concept taught in the mini-lesson.

2) Correlations between journal writing and interaction writing require teaching and student modeling. Metacognition practice on the part of the teacher, verbal reminders and directly instructed practice may assist in moving activity from interactive whole group learning to individual student journals. Teachers will need to directly instruct students using an actual journal to model the identical behaviors reinforced by interactive writing in the whole group setting. Small groups of students may also benefit from this type of transfer learning. Students can then share their journal work in small groups or in pairs – comparing their efforts to those created in the large group interactive writing sessions.

3) Utilize “Wee Write”, published by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratories, as a basis for early writing activity and lessons. Employ the vocabulary from the 6+1 Traits of writing as a basis for encouraging good writing techniques and audience. Develop or use established rubrics to assess students’

writing growth and to assist in helping students to self – assess their work. Continue to utilize Interactive Writing as a technique to teach fundamental constructs of literacy.

4) Experiment with instructional technology as a tool for increasing interest in writing as a means of communication with others.

5) Use students' journal writing and writing created in the Writer's Workshop to look for patterns of errors, misconceptions, or 6 Traits Vocabulary related deficits in writing skill, in order to determine what topics to teach in mini-lessons and to use as teaching points in interactive writing lessons. An example of a mini-lesson in the Writer's Workshop time is a brainstorming for prompts. Teachers would engage in metacognitive modeling (thinking aloud) in order to show students how to develop writing topics. Use the text, "Word Matters" by Fountas and Pinnell as a guide, especially appendices 45 through 47.

Results for Grade 2

Survey Results

Two of the second grade teachers would like more information on using interactive writing, as at least one noted involvement in the district book club this year. Engagement in the writing process was suggested as an inservice topic. Additionally, at least one of the 2nd grade teachers would like help in preparing students to write extended responses of the type found on the ISAT. One of the seven respondents did not ask for any additional assistance in writing instruction.

Recommendations: Writing Instruction Assistance

2nd grade:

1) Request that the grade level leader for 2nd grade devote agenda time to discuss implementation of interactive writing. Teachers need to devote time to sharing what is working and not working with using this technique to improve literacy in the classroom. Teachers involved in the book club this year should have ample ideas to share with the entire group and/or to expand upon from a book club meeting.

2) Encourage two or three 2nd grade teachers to sign up for an ISAT writing workshops sponsored by the ROE and then share information with teachers at their building and/or grade level or inservice meetings. Use the ISBE website as a resource for sample written responses for reading and mathematics.

3) Create opportunities to write about non-fiction topics or to free write when not responding to a reading assignment. Students as young as 2nd grade need to see examples (teachers leading by example) of using writing as a communication tool whenever learning is expected and supported.

4) Go back to the 6 Traits materials – either from previous inservice or at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory website for more information on teaching the traits in the classroom. The Curriculum Office has a new 6 Traits Kit that was designed for 3rd through 5th grade students. However, materials designed the lower end of the age spectrum may be usable for 2nd grade students. Reinforce the vocabulary of the traits as you are reading aloud, when introducing and teaching about topics in science, social studies, looking at sequence in mathematics or

reading – all through the day. The traits of good writing are so very obvious in the materials we use, or can be an indicator that the materials are of poor quality if the traits are absent.

5) Rearrange the school day to eliminate down time and build in more time for thinking, reflecting and writing.

6) Experiment with instructional technology as a tool to build interest in writing.

Results for Grade 3

Survey Results

From the 3rd grade teacher surveys, teachers would like assistance with teaching the 6 traits of writing to their students. Along with this direct instruction, two teachers would like more formalized curriculum for teaching writing, which would include mini-lessons and targets for instruction. Two teachers requested assistance with ISAT- especially extended response writing in math and reading. Finally, there is an interest in doing individual counseling and editing as requested by one 3rd grade teacher.

Recommendations: Writing Instruction Assistance

See 4th and 5th grade recommendations

Results for Grades 4-5

Survey Results

When questioned about what assistance is needed in the area of writing instruction, two 4th grade teachers indicated that they were presently attending or have recently attended writing workshops. Two teachers were concerned about time allocated in the classroom schedule, although one teacher felt that she did not need any further writing instruction assistance. One 4th grade teacher specifically asked for assistance with 6 Traits of Writing, especially in order to improve students' ability to develop ideas for writing projects.

5th grade teachers offered very few requests for assistance in writing instruction. One asked for further inservice on using the 6 Traits rubrics. Another asked for help working with students who have IEP's for written language. A third 5th grade teacher would like assistance with ISAT extended response writing in math and reading. Four of the 5th grade teachers did not ask for any help or felt that none was needed at this time.

Recommendations: Writing Instruction Assistance

1) Share information learned at workshops regarding ISAT extended response formats and techniques. Transfer these techniques to other content areas beyond reading and math to descriptions of science experiments or phenomenon and social studies topics.

2) Ask for assistance from Special Education teachers regarding how best to assist students who are experiencing difficulty getting down their ideas into text. Investigate the possibility of having a student scribe for others or assigning a

student to complete work on the computer, rather than using handwriting as the medium for completing the assignment.

3) Watch DVD on 6 + 1 Traits of Writing, available in the Unit Office Curriculum Library. Use materials in the new 6 + 1 Traits kit to assist teachers in using rubrics and vocabulary with texts and content-based materials.

4) Utilize grade level meetings and district inservice to share ideas on individual counseling of students' writing assignments

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS
READING PROGRAM K-5 FOR 2009-2012

Instructional Methodology

Reading Instruction

Kindergarten through 2nd Grades:

▪ **Comprehension Skills**

Increase and improve the use, variety and quality of comprehension questions and activities

More complex thinking activities are needed for students who can decode but who labor over comprehension

Teach reading skills either directly or indirectly with all reading texts, regardless if primary content is Social Studies, Science, Mathematics or Narrative text.

Rearrange instructional day to allow for interdisciplinary units and reduce extraneous, non-instructional activities.

Rearrange instructional day to provide students with at least 20 minutes of uninterrupted reading time every day (grades 1-2)

Use small group mini-lessons to reinforce skills and concepts; use guided reading lessons to directly instruct students in new strategies and allow practice.

▪ **Word Work and Vocabulary Development**

Continue to use Visual Phonics, especially in Kindergarten and 1st grade, as a cuing system for letter/sound identification

Build vocabulary through oral reading and discussion of all types of texts, and activating background knowledge and other pre-reading activities

Increase students' academic vocabularies through use of non-fiction text materials

Use instructional technology as a means to reinforce word families, rhyming, vocabulary, and phonemic awareness.

Uniform use of the Fountas and Pinnell Phonics program in grades K-2 to directly instruct students in word attack skills and English language learning

▪ **Fluency**

Use oral reading in the classroom to check decoding skills, and assess fluency.

Demonstrate fluency through read alouds and shared reading of big books or trade books

Emphasize phrasing and use of punctuation to check students' comprehension of the text

▪ **Planning**

Increase use of checklists, Literacy Guidelines, Focus for Instruction sheets (to plan guided reading lessons, shared reading lessons), and whole group reading lessons so that comprehension, word attack skills, vocabulary, and fluency are

addressed daily and at an appropriate level for the students' reading and comprehension abilities.

Introduce centers to the classroom only one or two at a time. Add additional center (one or two more each time) after the new centers are mastered by the children. Use Fountas and Pinnell "Guided Reading" – 1st 6 weeks – as a guide.

Increase use of instructional technology for overall student learning of alphabetic principals, writing and reading comprehension. Students need to have access to and ability to manipulate computers and other technologically oriented devices.

3rd through 5th Grades:

- **Planning**

Reorganize classroom daily schedules to limit the time spent on reading narrative text and increase time spent on Social Studies and Science oriented instruction. Achieving a 50-50 balance between use of non-fiction and fiction text for instruction is the goal. Use texts related to units of instruction in the content areas along with the district-adopted textbook as the primary texts for reading and content knowledge instruction.

Increase use of checklists, Literacy Guidelines, Focus for Instruction sheets to plan guided reading lessons, shared reading lessons, and whole group reading lessons so that comprehension, word attack skills, and vocabulary are addressed daily and at an appropriate level for the students' reading and comprehension abilities.

Help student learn strategies for doing their work. It is important for students to learn not only subject matter content, but also how to think about, approach, and do their work in each subject. Divide new or difficult tasks into segments and provide students with guides for accomplishing them.

Carefully prepare for the discussion by selecting engaging materials and developing stimulating questions.

Use the reliable data from the DRA 2 to identify students with reading difficulties and provide appropriate lessons for each student's instructional needs.

Increase the variety and types of genres used for reading instruction. Provide students with the opportunity to receive instruction from realistic fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, science fiction, non-fiction, biographies, and poetry.

Work within grade level groups to discuss and collaborate to develop a list of before, during, and after reading techniques.

- **Comprehension**

Teach reading strategies as content area (Science, Social Studies, Mathematics) is being taught – including but not limited to: increasing academic vocabulary and decoding of complex words, comprehension skills of cause and effect, summarizing, building background knowledge, and inferences.

More complex thinking activities are needed for students who can decode but who labor over comprehension

Increase and improve the use, variety and quality of comprehension questions and activities before, during, and after reading.

Carefully select the text to use when teaching a given strategy.

Talk about comprehension strategies while teaching them.

Teach reading skills either directly or indirectly with all reading texts, regardless if content is Social Studies, Science, Mathematics or Narrative text.

Make sure that the text is appropriate for the reading level of students.

Teach students how to independently choose books that are at their appropriate level.

Use small group mini-lessons to reinforce skills and concepts

Use guided reading lessons to directly instruct students in new strategies and allow practice at their instructional level.

Provide the appropriate amount of guided practice depending on the difficulty level of the strategies that students are learning.

Continue to teach fix-up strategies. Students need to use the meta-cognitive strategies of adjusting rate, rereading, using reference materials, and experts when they are “stuck”.

Minimize the amount of time the “Round Robin” oral reading technique is used in whole group and guided reading group instruction. Students need the opportunity to read silently and then respond following the assigned reading.

- **Word Work and Vocabulary Development**

Build vocabulary through oral reading and discussion of all types of texts, and activating background knowledge and other pre-reading activities

Increase students’ academic vocabularies through use of non-fiction text materials

Use instructional technology to provide exposure to new words in multiple contexts, and to allow sufficient practice sessions in vocabulary instruction.

Provide students with strategies to make them independent vocabulary learners.

Consider using Marzano’s 6 step approach to vocabulary instruction: 1 – teacher provides a description, explanation, or example of the new term, 2 – students restate the explanation of the new term in their own words, 3 – students create a nonlinguistic representation of the term, 4 – students periodically do activities that help add to their knowledge of vocabulary terms, 5 – periodically students are asked to discuss the terms with one another, 6 – periodically students are involved in games that allow them to play with the terms

Take time to carefully select vocabulary words. Avoid always using pre-selected words from publishing companies.

- **Fluency**

Use trade books and other forms of fiction as free choice reading, as well as the basis for text to teach fluency and comprehension strategies.

Continue to have students participating in scaffolded independent-level silent reading.

Give students varied opportunities to hear text. Teachers need to make sure that they are reading aloud to students and modeling good expression, phrasing, and pacing.

Conference and monitor student's book selections with oral reading checks. Use Reader's Theatre scripts with students who need extra fluency practice.

Reading Assessment

Kindergarten through 2nd Grades:

- Routinely utilize the Literacy Guidelines to make sure students are exposed to and directly instructed in the areas of word attack skills and comprehension
- Develop methods of recoding anecdotal notes regarding Kindergarten students' early literacy behaviors
- Routine use of running records to record students' word attack skills and fluency
- Increase use of comprehension questions, especially those in the areas of sequencing, inference, cause and effect, sensory imaging, and use of charts and graphs for problem solving. Through classroom interaction or assigned activities, assess students' thinking skills and therefore ability to read and comprehend more complex text.
- Create or use prepared comprehension guidelines (found in the Fountas and Pinnell text "Guided Reading" on pages 117-130) to assist teachers in assessing students' progress in comprehending and decoding text at a level appropriate for the complexity of text presented.
- Use written responses to text as a means to assess comprehension. Develop rubrics to score/grade quality of written work.

3rd through 5th Grades:

- Routinely utilize the Literacy Guidelines to make sure students are exposed to and directly instructed in comprehension.
- Increase use of comprehension questions, especially those in the areas of sequencing, inference, cause and effect, sensory imaging, and use of charts and graphs for problem solving.
- Use data from assessments to guide instruction.
- Become more aware of progress students are making by using a progress monitor tool.

Writing Instruction

Kindergarten through 2nd Grades:

- Create and use mini-lessons to teach uniform and developmentally appropriate writing skills and concepts
- Utilization of interactive writing by teachers in Kindergarten and Pre-K through 2nd grades. Use this technique to reinforce all literacy learning in large or small group settings, with narrative and non-narrative text, and to process information learned throughout the day.

- Use direct instruction which employs metacognition to model expected writing behaviors including journal writing, free writing, response to text, descriptive writing, sequencing
- Regularly use the 6 + 1 traits vocabulary terms to describe good writing when reading aloud, when writing as a group or in retelling of experiences.
- Amend the daily schedule in classrooms to incorporate writing into the language arts block.
- Model and use writing as a literacy learning strategy in all content areas, as well as related to the reading process
- Use writing as a response to literature and non-fiction text at developmentally appropriate levels starting in Kindergarten
- Create new rubrics for teacher and student use to evaluate progress in writing skills and knowledge

3rd through 5th Grades:

- Work to achieve balance between fiction and non-fiction purposes for writing.
- Regularly use the 6 + 1 traits vocabulary terms to describe good writing when reading aloud and when presenting mini-lessons on writing craft.
- Amend the daily schedule in classrooms to incorporate writing into instruction across the curriculum.
- Use writing as a means to increase the use of academic vocabulary, especially when writing summaries or descriptive paragraphs related to math, science and social studies topics.
- Continue to plan for a variety of types of writing, including free writing and purposeful writing with an audience in mind. Increase frequency of writing in the classroom, especially at the 4th grade.
- Create and use mini-lessons to teach uniform and developmentally appropriate writing skills and concepts
- Use direct instruction which employs metacognition to model expected writing behaviors including journal writing, free writing, response to text, descriptive writing, expository writing, persuasive writing, narrative writing and sequencing
- Regularly use the 6 + 1 traits vocabulary terms to describe good writing when reading aloud, when writing as a group or in retelling of experiences.
- Amend the daily schedule in classrooms to incorporate writing into the language arts block.
- Model and use writing as a literacy learning strategy in all content areas, as well as related to the reading process
- Use writing as a response to literature and non-fiction text at developmentally appropriate levels.

Staff Development
Reading Instruction

Kindergarten through 2nd Grades:

- Increase use of instructional technology to reinforce reading and writing knowledge. Provide teachers with opportunities to learn how to create “flip charts” for the Promethean systems. Locate interactive and simulation websites for student use in increasing reading skills and strategies.
- Use professional texts as on-going group studies in the area of teaching comprehension to students in the K-2 grade levels.
- Investigate opportunities to build a set of usable strategies for teaching gifted students in the classroom. Plan activities that allow for differentiation – not all students producing the same product, or creating the same writing samples, etc. Allow students to investigate their interest areas to a greater extent
- Visit other teachers classrooms in the district – either at your grade level or at a grade above or below. Share what you learn in these rooms, ask questions, network more actively with the use of technology (I-Chat).
- Participate in or set up informal professional learning communities to discuss shared books, or brain storm instructional ideas
- Utilize the K-2 Continuum of Literacy Learning by Fountas and Pinnell as a major reference for reading instruction in grade level meetings, informal teacher discussions and in personal professional development

3rd through 5th Grades:

- Increase use of instructional technology to reinforce reading and writing knowledge. Provide teachers with opportunities to learn how to create “flip charts” for the Promethean systems. Locate interactive and simulation websites for student use in increasing reading skills and strategies.
- Use professional texts as on-going group studies in the area of teaching comprehension to students in the 3-5 grade levels.
- Investigate opportunities to build a set of usable strategies for teaching gifted students in the classroom. Plan activities that allow for differentiation – not all students producing the same product, or creating the same writing samples, etc. Allow students to investigate their interest areas to a greater extent.
- Visit other teachers’ classrooms in the district – either at your grade level or at a grade above or below. Share what you learn in these rooms, ask questions, network more effectively with the use of technology (I-Chat).
- Participate in or set up informal professional learning communities to discuss shared books, or brain storm instructional ideas.

Reading Assessment

Kindergarten through 2nd Grades:

- Create or modify comprehension guidelines for leveled text, found in Fountas and Pinnel text “Guided Reading”

- Share techniques for creating usable and organized anecdotal notes, running records, and using the Literacy Guidelines
- Create rubrics for assessing quality of written responses. Share students' written work in grade level groups and evaluate writing samples

3rd through 5th Grades:

- Continue to improve knowledge of the data provided by the DRA2 and other assessment method such as running records. Learn how to use the data to place students in texts at their instructional level for a portion of their reading instruction.
- Meet with Middle School teachers to discuss difficulties in content learning when students are competent in reading content area texts.
- Create lesson plans utilizing content text to teach comprehension and word attack skills normally taught with narrative text.
- Create or modify comprehension guidelines for leveled text, found in Fountas and Pinnel text "Guided Reading"
- Share techniques for creating usable and organized anecdotal notes, running records, and using the Literacy Guidelines.
- Create rubrics for assessing quality of written responses. Share students' written work in grade level groups and evaluate writing samples.
- Teachers utilize data analysis and collaborate with other teachers to revise curriculum and instructional practices.

Writing Instruction

Kindergarten through 2nd Grades:

- Explore the use of instructional technology to increase writing opportunities for students in the classroom
- Create a set of skills and competencies which are expected of students in the early stages of writing along with a rubric to describe these skills and competencies
- Create new rubrics to assess students' writing throughout the year, including required district writing assessment samples

3rd through 5th Grades:

- Share samples of student non-fiction, expository writing. Score the work with a common rubric and discuss positives and negatives in students' skills. From these discussions, create mini-lessons for writing instruction in the classroom.
- Utilize the District's new 6 + 1 Traits teacher kit for grades 3-5. New ideas could be shared at a series of inservices or grade level meetings or independently.
- Share samples of extended response activities and use the ISAT criteria to score the samples. Discuss in groups how to improve students' work as a reflection of those areas in which students score low or high.

- Develop ideas for writing assignments that incorporate content area knowledge and vocabulary. Recommend that these assignments relate to actual world problems or science experiments, not hypothetical situations, so as to include introductory research skills.
- Improve use of instructional technology to show examples of content-based descriptive reports and to identify topics for writing.

Curriculum and Materials

Reading Instruction

Kindergarten through 2nd Grades:

- Types of Texts Used for Instruction
Continue to increase the use of non-fiction text when teaching pre-reading, literacy building activities, and comprehension strategies
- Purchase Fountas and Pinnell Phonics manuals for all K-2 classrooms
- Ensure that “Guided Reading” by Fountas and Pinnell is available for all K-2 staff, with an additional copy in each building’s professional development library.

3rd through 5th Grades: No Recommendations

Reading Assessment

Kindergarten through 2nd Grades:

- Purchase Fountas and Pinnell “Guided Reading” text for all K-2 classrooms
- Implement the use of the Focus for Instruction sheets from the DRA2 as a tool to assist in curricular planning.
- Create easily used forms to document running records, word attack skills and comprehension questions for use in guided reading groups

3rd through 5th Grades:

- Fully implement the use of Focus for Instruction sheets from the DRA2 as a tool to assist in curricular planning.
- Create a form to document assessment data outside of DRA2.

Writing Instruction

Kindergarten through 2nd Grades:

- Ensure that all teachers in grades K-5 have copies of the text “Wee Write” from NWREL.
- Ensure that all teachers in grades K-2 have copies of the text “Word Matters” either in the classroom or in the building professional library.
- Create written curriculum for writing instruction, including curriculum mapping of mini-lessons
- Create new rubrics for assessing writing assignments from the 6 + 1 Traits materials for use by students and teachers throughout the school year

3rd through 5th Grades:

- Consider the purchase of the 6 + 1 Traits Kit for each elementary building
- Create written curriculum for writing instruction, including curriculum mapping of mini lessons
- Create new rubrics for assessing writing assignments from the 6 + 1 Traits materials for use by students and teachers throughout the school year

CONCLUSION

The evaluators wish to thank the Kindergarten through 5th grade teachers of the Geneseo Community Unit School District for allowing us to come into your classroom, ask questions and watch your students and your craft. We have noted in many places the changes, which have occurred in the teaching of literacy skills since the time of the initial scan by Diane Harvey in 2006. Teachers have, for the most part, been very accepting and even embraced the opportunities to learn more and new ways of teaching literacy in the classroom. Ms. Harvey has been instrumental in bringing about many of the techniques implemented in our classrooms. She has helped organize on-going staff development for all teachers in grades K-5, and for that we are grateful.

As a result of teachers' willingness to learn and Diane's willingness to teach, the elementary schools now have a cohesive assessment program. We have more consistent delivery of reading instruction, using a variety of iterations of guided reading, and early primary teachers have learned how to teach literacy through interactive writing techniques. Of course, the refinement of instructional methodology is never really complete. Therefore, as a result of this audit, the elementary teachers have a blue print of staff development in the next three years with aims to enhance students' reading comprehension and communication skills in the area of writing.

Our goal in this process is to continue to increase students' abilities in reading texts of all types – especially non-fiction which will be the backbone of students' learning experiences through their post-secondary years and beyond. As we continue to collect data on students' abilities in reading and writing and further assess progress through the middle school and high school years, the work done to lay foundations of literacy in the elementary years cannot be understated. The high school and middle school teachers are only beginning to investigate ways to teach students more productive reading and writing techniques at more advanced levels. Yes, students continually learn more sophisticated ways to interact with text and need guidance and direct instruction from teachers. We hope that in the near future teams of teachers across the grade levels K-12 will meet to discuss in common terms professional techniques for teaching word attack skills, academic vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and written communication using all types of text. Seeing each other as cogs in a great wheel rather than compartments in a maze is a goal for the district's literacy instruction. Working and talking and sharing together, we hope that literacy will become a more common topic and a source of pride in our students' achievements in the years to come.

APPENDIX A

DRA2 RESULTS

DRA2 Test Results by Grade Level for 2007-08

Scores are marked for the % of students in each category at the time of test administration.

Grade level	Spring Test Below Level	Spring Test On Level	Spring Test Above Level
Kindergarten	19.9%	30.9%	49.2%
1 st Grade	32.9%	32.5%	34.6%
2 nd Grade	40.1%	30.5%	29.4%
3 rd Grade	31.5%	49.4%	19.1%
4 th Grade	16.9%	77.8%	5.3%
5 th Grade	21.1%	71.0%	7.9%

DRA2 Test Results by Grade Level for 2008-09

Scores are marked for the % of students in each category at the time of test administration.

Grade Level	Winter Test Below Level	Winter Test On Level	Winter Test Above level
Kindergarten			
1 st Grade			
2 nd Grade			
3 rd Grade			
4 th Grade			
5 th Grade			

APPENDIX B

K-5 INDIVIDUAL SURVEYS

1. Kindergarten Literacy Instruction Survey

The Geneseo CUSD #228 is undertaking a complete K-12 program evaluation or audit of our current instructional practices in the area of literacy instruction. The audit includes teacher surveys and classroom observations. This survey is a part of the overall K-12 audit. Please answer these questions with as much detail as possible. Thank you.
Joni Swanson and Nikki Kubiak

*** 1. Describe the degree to which the following configurations are used for emergent literacy and early reading instruction in your classroom**

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Exclusively Used (Daily)
Shared Reading (Whole Group) Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small Group Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided Reading Group Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 2. Describe the degree to which the following organizers are utilized to plan daily emergent literacy or reading instruction.**

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Exclusively Used (Daily)
Literacy Guidelines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus for Instruction Sheets from the DRA2 testing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running Records	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DRA2 test results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Site evidence of your use of these instructional planning tools

3. To what extent do you engage students in writing activities?

	Never	Sometimes (1-2 times per week)	Frequently (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Interactive Writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shared Experiential Stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responses to Literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retelling of Stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retelling of Non-Fiction Experiences (ie field trips)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What evidence do you have to support your answers to the questions above?

*** 4. To what extent do you use the following to directly instruct students in early literacy and reading comprehension strategies?**

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Retelling of Text/Story	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activating Background Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking Questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating Sensory Images	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making Connections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drawing Inferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Charts and Graphs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem Solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What evidence do you have to support your answers to the questions above?

*** 5. To what extent to you utilize the following types of text in the classroom for teaching purposes**

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poetry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Biography	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Books without Text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

*** 6. How do you decide when a Kindergarten student is ready to move from emergent literacy to formal reading instruction?**

	Never Used	Sometimes used	Frequently used	Always used
DRA2 assessment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Whole group interaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interactive Writing Activity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Observation of Reading in Classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

*** 7. How do you utilize reading aides to assist with instruction of emergent and early literacy in your classroom?**

*** 8. In the area of reading instruction, I would like to request assistance with the following:**

*** 9. In regards to writing instruction, I would like assistance with the following:**

*** 10. In regards to classroom management during literacy instruction, I could use assistance in the following areas:**

Thank you for completing this survey. Nikki Kubiak and Joni Swanson will be making arrangements to visit your classrooms in the coming weeks. They will be utilizing a series of questions to assist in completing the audit of the K-12 literacy/reading instructional practices in the District.

1. 1st Grade Literacy Instruction Survey

The Geneseo CUSD #228 is undertaking a complete K-12 program evaluation or audit of our current instructional practices in the area of literacy instruction. The audit includes teacher surveys and classroom observations. This survey is a part of the overall K-12 audit. Please answer these questions with as much detail as possible. Thank you.

Joni Swanson and Nikki Kubiak

* 1. Describe the degree to which the following configurations are used for emergent literacy and early reading instruction in your classroom

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Exclusively Used (Daily)
Shared Reading (Whole Group) Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small Group Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided Reading Group Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 2. Describe the degree to which the following organizers are utilized to plan daily emergent literacy or reading instruction.

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Exclusively Used (Daily)
Literacy Guidelines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus for Instruction Sheets from the DRA2 testing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running Records	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DRA2 test results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Site evidence of your use of these instructional planning tools

* 3. To what extent do you engage students in writing activities?

	Never	Sometimes (1-2 times per week)	Frequently (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Interactive Writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shared Experiential Stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responses to Literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retelling of Stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retelling of Non-Fiction Experiences (ie field trips)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What evidence do you have to support your answers to the questions above?

*** 4. To what extent do you use the following to directly instruct students in early literacy and reading comprehension strategies?**

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Retelling of Text/Story	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activating Background Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking Questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating Sensory Images	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making Connections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drawing Inferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Charts and Graphs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem Solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What evidence do you have to support your answers to the questions above?

*** 5. To what extent do you utilize the following types of text in the classroom for teaching purposes?**

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poetry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Biography	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Books without Text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

*** 6. How do you decide when a 1st grade student is ready to move into more difficult levels of text?**

	Never used	Sometimes used	Frequently used	Always used
DRA2 assessment results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running Records	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided Reading group interaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oral Reading of text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

*** 7. How do you utilize reading aides to assist with instruction of students in your classroom?**

*** 8. How do you utilize reading teachers to assist you with instruction of students in your classroom?**

*** 9. In the area of reading instruction, I would like to request assistance with the following:**

*** 10. In regards to writing instruction, I would like assistance with the following:**

*** 11. In regards to classroom management during reading instruction, I could use assistance in the following areas:**

Thank you for completing this survey. Nikki Kubiak and Joni Swanson will be making arrangements to visit your classrooms in the coming weeks. They will be utilizing a series of questions to assist in completing the audit of the K-12 literacy/reading instructional practices in the District.

1. 2nd Grade Literacy Instruction Survey

The Geneseo CUSD #228 is undertaking a complete K-12 program evaluation or audit of our current instructional practices in the area of literacy instruction. The audit includes teacher surveys and classroom observations. This survey is a part of the overall K-12 audit. Please answer these questions with as much detail as possible. Thank you.

Joni Swanson and Nikki Kubiak

* 1. Describe the degree to which the following configurations are used for reading instruction in your classroom

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Exclusively Used (Daily)
Shared Reading (Whole Group) Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small Group Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided Reading Group Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 2. Describe the degree to which the following organizers are utilized to plan daily reading instruction.

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Exclusively Used (Daily)
Literacy Guidelines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus for Instruction Sheets from the DRA2 testing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running Records	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DRA2 test results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Site evidence of your use of these instructional planning tools

*** 3. To what extent do you engage students in writing activities?**

	Never	Sometimes (1-2 times per week)	Frequently (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Interactive Writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shared Experiential Stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responses to Literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retelling of Stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retelling of Non-Fiction Experiences (ie field trips)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What evidence do you have to support your answers to the questions above?

*** 4. To what extent do you use the following to directly instruct students in reading comprehension strategies?**

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Retelling of Text/Story	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activating Background Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking Questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drawing Inferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating Sensory Images	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making Connections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Determining Importance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summarizing Information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Charts and Graphs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem Solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What evidence do you have to support your answers to the questions above?

*** 5. To what extent do you utilize the following types of text in the classroom for teaching purposes**

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poetry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Biography	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historical Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>			

*** 6. How do you decide when a 2nd grade student is ready to move into more difficult levels of text?**

	Never used	Sometimes used	Frequently used	Always used
DRA2 assessment results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running Records	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided Reading group interaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oral Reading of text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>			

*** 7. How do you utilize reading aides to assist with instruction of students in your classroom?**

*** 8. How do you utilize reading teachers to assist you with instruction of students in your classroom?**

*** 9. In the area of reading instruction, I would like to request assistance with the following:**

*** 10. In regards to writing instruction, I would like assistance with the following:**

*** 11. In regards to classroom management during reading instruction, I could use assistance in the following areas:**

Thank you for completing this survey. Nikki Kubiak and Joni Swanson will be making arrangements to visit your classrooms in the coming weeks. They will be utilizing a series of questions to assist in completing the audit of the K-12 literacy/reading instructional practices in the District.

1. 3rd Grade Literacy Instruction Survey

The Geneseo CUSD #228 is undertaking a complete K-12 program evaluation or audit of our current instructional practices in the area of literacy instruction. The audit includes teacher surveys and classroom observations. This survey is a part of the overall K-12 audit. Please answer these questions with as much detail as possible. Thank you.

Joni Swanson and Nikki Kubiak

* 1. Describe the degree to which the following configurations are used for reading instruction in your classroom

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Exclusively Used (Daily)
Shared Reading (Whole Group) Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small Group Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided Reading Group Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 2. Describe the degree to which the following organizers are utilized to plan daily reading instruction.

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Exclusively Used (Daily)
Literacy Guidelines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus for Instruction Sheets from the DRA2 testing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running Records	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DRA2 test results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Site evidence of your use of these instructional planning tools

*** 3. To what extent do you engage students in writing activities?**

	Never Used	Monthly (at least once a month)	Sometimes (every other week)	Frequently (2-3 times per week)	Daily or nearly every day
Shared Experiential Stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responses to Literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responses to Non-Fiction text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal experience pieces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retelling of Stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retelling of Non-Fiction Experiences (ie field trips)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What evidence do you have to support your answers to the questions above?

*** 4. To what extent do you use the following to directly instruct students in reading comprehension strategies?**

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Retelling of Text/Story	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activating Background Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking Questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drawing Inferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating Sensory Images	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Determining Importance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making Connections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summarizing or Synthesizing Information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fix-Up Strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Charts and Graphs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem Solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What evidence do you have to support your answers to the questions above?

*** 5. To what extent do you utilize the following types of text in the classroom for teaching purposes?**

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poetry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Biography	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historical Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

*** 6. How do you decide when a 3rd grade student is ready to move into more difficult levels of text?**

	Never used	Sometimes used	Frequently used	Always used
DRA2 assessment results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running Records	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided Reading group interaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oral Reading of text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

*** 7. How do you utilize reading aides to assist with instruction of students in your classroom?**

*** 8. How do you utilize reading teachers to assist you with instruction of students in your classroom?**

*** 9. In the area of reading instruction, I would like to request assistance with the following:**

*** 10. In regards to writing instruction, I would like assistance with the following:**

*** 11. In regards to classroom management during reading instruction, I could use assistance in the following areas:**

Thank you for completing this survey. Nikki Kublak and Joni Swanson will be making arrangements to visit your classrooms in the coming weeks. They will be utilizing a series of questions to assist in completing the audit of the K-12 literacy/reading instructional practices in the District.

1. 4th Grade Literacy Instruction Survey

The Geneseo CUSD #228 is undertaking a complete K-12 program evaluation or audit of our current instructional practices in the area of literacy instruction. The audit includes teacher surveys and classroom observations. This survey is a part of the overall K-12 audit. Please answer these questions with as much detail as possible. Thank you.

Joni Swanson and Nikki Kubiak

* 1. Describe the degree to which the following configurations are used for reading instruction in your classroom

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Exclusively Used (Daily)
Shared Reading (Whole Group) Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small Group Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided Reading Group Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 2. Describe the degree to which the following organizers are utilized to plan daily reading instruction.

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Exclusively Used (Daily)
Literacy Guidelines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus for Instruction Sheets from the DRA2 testing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running Records	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DRA2 test results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Site evidence of your use of these instructional planning tools

*** 3. To what extent do you engage students in writing activities?**

	Never Used	Monthly (at least once a month)	Sometimes (every other week)	Frequently (2-3 times per week)	Daily or nearly every day
Shared Experiential Stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responses to Literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responses to Non-Fiction text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal experience pieces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retelling of Stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retelling of Non-Fiction Experiences (ie field trips)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What evidence do you have to support your answers to the questions above?

*** 4. To what extent do you use the following to directly instruct students in reading comprehension strategies?**

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Retelling of Text/Story	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activating Background Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking Questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drawing Inferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making Connections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating Sensory Images	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Determining Importance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summarizing or Synthesizing Information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using Fix-up Strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Charts and Graphs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem Solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What evidence do you have to support your answers to the questions above?

5. To what extent do you utilize the following types of text in the classroom for teaching purposes?

	Never Used	Sometimes used	Frequently used	Daily
Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poetry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Biography	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historical Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>			

*** 6. How do you decide when a 4th grade student is ready to move into more difficult levels of text?**

	Never used	Sometimes used	Frequently used	Always used
DRA2 assessment results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running Records	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided Reading group Interaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oral Reading of text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>			

*** 7. How do you utilize reading aides to assist with instruction of students in your classroom?**

*** 8. How do you utilize reading teachers to assist you with instruction of students in your classroom?**

*** 9. In the area of reading instruction, I would like to request assistance with the following:**

*** 10. In regards to writing instruction, I would like assistance with the following:**

*** 11. In regards to classroom management during reading instruction, I could use assistance in the following areas:**

Thank you for completing this survey. Nikki Kubiak and Joni Swanson will be making arrangements to visit your classrooms in the coming weeks. They will be utilizing a series of questions to assist in completing the audit of the K-12 literacy/reading instructional practices in the District.

1. 5th Grade Literacy Instruction Survey

The Geneseo CUSD #228 is undertaking a complete K-12 program evaluation or audit of our current instructional practices in the area of literacy instruction. The audit includes teacher surveys and classroom observations. This survey is a part of the overall K-12 audit. Please answer these questions with as much detail as possible. Thank you.

Joni Swanson and Nikki Kubiak

* 1. Describe the degree to which the following configurations are used for reading instruction in your classroom

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Exclusively Used (Daily)
Shared Reading (Whole Group) Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small Group Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided Reading Group Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 2. Describe the degree to which the following organizers are utilized to plan daily reading instruction.

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Exclusively Used (Daily)
Literacy Guidelines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus for Instruction Sheets from the DRA2 testing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running Records	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DRA2 test results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Site evidence of your use of these instructional planning tools

*** 3. To what extent do you engage students in writing activities?**

	Never Used	Monthly (at least once a month)	Sometimes (every other week)	Frequently (2-3 times per week)	Daily or nearly every day
Shared Experiential Stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responses to Literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responses to Non-Fiction text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal experience pieces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retelling of Stories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retelling of Non-Fiction Experiences (ie field trips)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What evidence do you have to support your answers to the questions above?

*** 4. To what extent do you use the following to directly instruct students in reading comprehension strategies?**

	Never Used	Sometimes Used (1-2 times per week)	Frequently Used (3-4 times per week)	Daily
Retelling of Text/Story	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Activating Background Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Asking Questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drawing Inferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making Connections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating Sensory Images	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Determining Importance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summarizing or Synthesizing Information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using Fix-Up Strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Charts and Graphs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem Solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What evidence do you have to support your answers to the questions above?

*** 5. To what extent do you utilize the following types of text in the classroom for teaching purposes?**

	Never Used	Sometimes used	Frequently used	Daily
Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poetry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historical Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Biography	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science Fiction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

*** 6. How do you decide when a 5th grade student is ready to move into more difficult levels of text?**

	Never used	Sometimes used	Frequently used	Always used
DRA2 assessment results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Running Records	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guided Reading group Interaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oral Reading of text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

*** 7. How do you utilize reading aides to assist with instruction of students in your classroom?**

*** 8. How do you utilize reading teachers to assist you with instruction of students in your classroom?**

*** 9. In the area of reading instruction, I would like to request assistance with the following:**

*** 10. In regards to writing instruction, I would like assistance with the following:**

*** 11. In regards to classroom management during reading instruction, I could use assistance in the following areas:**

Thank you for completing this survey. Nikki Kubiak and Joni Swanson will be making arrangements to visit your classrooms in the coming weeks. They will be utilizing a series of questions to assist in completing the audit of the K-12 literacy/reading instructional practices in the District.

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

Kindergarten & 1st grade Combined Survey Results				12 respondents	
	4	3	2	1	Rating
Classroom Organization					
Shared Reading/Whole Group	Daily 12	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used 0	4
Small Group	Daily 9	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used 0	3.75
Guided Reading Groups	Daily 10	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 0	Never used 0	3.8
Instructional Planning					
Literacy Guidelines	Daily 7	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used 0	3.4
Focus for Instruction (DRA2)	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used 3	2.2
Running Records	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 9	Never used 0	2.3
DRA2 Test Results	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 10	Never used 0	2.25
Writing Activities					
Interactive Writing	Daily 6	3-4 times weekly 5	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used 0	3.4
Shared Experiential Stories	Daily 3	3-4 times weekly 5	1-2 times weekly 4	Never used 0	2.9
Responses to Literature	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 4	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used 1	2.6
Journals	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 8	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used 0	3
Retelling of Stories	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 5	1-2 times weekly 6	Never used 0	2.6
Retelling of Non-fiction exp.	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 6	1-2 times weekly 6	Never used 0	2.5
Direct Reading Instruction					
Retelling of Text/Story	Daily 8	3-4 times weekly 4	1-2 times weekly 0	Never used 0	3.7
Background Knowledge	Daily 11	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 0	Never used 0	3.9
Asking Questions	Daily 10	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 0	Never used 0	3.8
Sensory Imaging	Daily 3	3-4 times weekly 5	1-2 times weekly 3	Never used 1	2.8
Making Connections	Daily 9	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used 0	3.7
Drawing Inferences	Daily 3	3-4 times weekly 7	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used 0	3.25
Charts and Graphs	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used 0	2.9
Problem Solving	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 8	1-2 times weekly 0	Never used 0	3.3
Text Genres					
Fiction	Daily 12	3-4 times weekly 0	1-2 times weekly 0	Never used 0	4
Poetry	Daily 7	3-4 times weekly 4	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used 0	3.5
Non-Fiction	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 7	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used 0	3.25
Biography	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 7	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used 0	3.25
Books without Text	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 7	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used 0	3.25
			11	1	2
			10	2	1.8
Assessment Strategies					
DRA2 Assessment	Always 5	Frequently 1	Sometimes 6	Never used 0	2.9
*Whole Group Instruction	Always 4	Frequently 1	Sometimes 0	Never used 0	3.8
*Interactive Writing Activity	Always 4	Frequently 1	Sometimes 1	Never used 0	3.6
*Observation of Reading	Always 4	Frequently 1	Sometimes 0	Never used 0	3.8
**Running Records	Always 1	Frequently 3	Sometimes 3	Never used 0	2.7
**Guided Reading Instruction	Always 5	Frequently 2	Sometimes 0	Never used 0	3.7
**Oral Reading of Text	Always 5	Frequently 2	Sometimes 0	Never used 0	3.7
* = K only					
** = 1st only					

2nd Grade Survey Results		7 Respondents			
	4	3	2	1	Rating
Classroom Organization					
Shared Reading/Whole Group	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 5	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used	3
Small Group	Daily	3-4 times weekly 5	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used	2.7
Guided Reading Groups	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly	Never used	3.6
Instructional Planning					
Literacy Guidelines	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 3	Never used	2.85
Focus for Instruction (DRA2)	Daily	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used 3	1.6
Running Records	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 3	Never used 1	2.4
DRA2 Test Results	Daily	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 3	Never used 1	1.4
Writing Activities					
Interactive Writing	Daily	3-4 times weekly	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used 2	1.7
Shared Experientiai Stories	Daily	3-4 times weekly	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used 1	1.6
Responses to Literature	Daily	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used	2.3
Journals	Daily	3-4 times weekly 4	1-2 times weekly 3	Never used	2.6
Retelling of Stories	Daily	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 6	Never used	2.3
Reteling of Non-fiction exp.	Daily	3-4 times weekly	1-2 times weekly 4	Never used 3	1.5
Direct Reading Instruction					
Retelling of Text/Story	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 4	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used	2.8
Background Knowledge	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 4	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used	2.8
Asking Questions	Daily 5	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly	Never used	3.7
Sensory Imaging	Daily	3-4 times weekly 4	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used 1	2.4
Making Connections	Daily	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 4	Never used	2.4
Drawing Inferences	Daily	3-4 times weekly 6	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used	2.8
Charts and Graphs	Daily	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 3	Never used 2	1.6
Problem Solving	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used	2.4
Determining Importance	Daily	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 6	Never used	2.3
Summarizing Information	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 4	Never used	2.6
Text Genres					
Fiction	Daily 3	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used	3.1
Poetry	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used	2.4
Non-Fiction	Daily	3-4 times weekly 4	1-2 times weekly 3	Never used	2.6
Biography	Daily	3-4 times weekly	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used 2	1.7
Historical Fiction	Daily	3-4 times weekly	1-2 times weekly 4	Never used 3	1.6
Assessment Strategies					
DRA2 Assessment	Always 1	Frequently 1	Sometimes 4	Never used 1	2.3
Running Records	Always 3	Frequently 1	Sometimes 2	Never used	2.7
Guided Reading Instruction	Always 6	Frequently 1	Sometimes	Never used	3.8
Oral Reading of Text	Always 6	Frequently 1	Sometimes	Never used	3.8

3rd Grade Survey Results		7 Respondents			Rating
	1	3	2	1	
Classroom Organization					
Shared Reading/Whole Group	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 4	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used	3.1
Small Group	Daily	3-4 times weekly 4	1-2 times weekly 3	Never used	2.6
Guided Reading Groups	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 4	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used	2.8
Instructional Planning					
Literacy Guidelines	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used	2.4
Focus for Instruction (DRA2)	Daily	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 3	Never used 2	1.6
Running Records	Daily	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 4	Never used 2	1.8
DRA2 Test Results	Daily	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 6	Never used	2.1
Writing Activities					
Shared Experienciai Stories	Daily 1	2-3 times per week	Monthly 5	Never used	2.3
Responses to Literature	Daily 3	2-3 times per week	Monthly 4	Never used	2.8
Responses to Non-Fiction	Daily 1	2-3 times per week 2	Monthly 4	Never used	2.5
Personal Experience Picces	Daily 1	2-3 times per week 2	Monthly 3	Never used	2.7
Journals	Daily 3	2-3 times per week 1	Monthly 3	Never used	3
Reteling of Non-fiction experiences	Daily 1	2-3 times per week	Monthly 4	Never used 2	2
Direct Reading Instruction					
Retelling of Text/Story	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 5	1-2 times weekly	Never used	3.3
Background Knowledge	Daily 5	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used	3.6
Asking Questions	Daily 6	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly	Never used	3.85
Sensory Imaging	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used	3
Making Connections	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used	3.4
Drawing Inferences	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used	3
Charts and Graphs	Daily	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 4	Never used 1	2.1
Problem Solving	Daily	3-4 times weekly 5	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used	2.7
Determining Importance	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 4	Never used	2.7
Summarizing Information	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used	3.4
Fix Up Strategies	Daily	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used 2	2.6
Text Genres					
Fiction	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used	3.4
Poetry	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 3	Never used	2.85
Non-Fiction	Daily 3	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used	3.3
Biography	Daily	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used	2.2
Historical Fiction	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 4	Never used	2.5
Assessment Strategies					
DRA2 Assessment	Always 1	Frequently 3	Sometimes 3	Never used	2.7
Running Records	Always 1	Frequently 2	Sometimes 2	Never used 2	2.3
Guided Reading Instruction	Always 4	Frequently 1	Sometimes 2	Never used	3.3
Oral Reading of Text	Always 3	Frequently 3	Sometimes	Never used	3.5

4th & 5th Grade Survey Results		13 Respondents			
	4	3	2	1	Rating
Classroom Organization					
Shared Reading/Whole Group	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 8	1-2 times weekly 4	Never used	2.8
Small Group	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 9	Never used 1	2.2
Guided Reading Groups	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used 3	2.3
Instructional Planning					
Literacy Guidelines	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 7	Never used 1	2.5
Focus for Instruction (DRA2)	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 7	Never used 4	1.6
Running Records	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 5	1-2 times weekly 8	Never used 5	1.6
DRA2 Test Results	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 10	Never used 1	2.1
Writing Activities					
Shared Experientiai Stories	Daily 1	2-3 times per week 1	Monthly 7	Never used 2	1.9
Responses to Literature	Daily 1	2-3 times per week 5	Monthly 7	Never used	2.5
Responses to Non-Fiction	Daily 3	2-3 times per week 3	Monthly 9	Never used 1	2.1
Personal Experience Pieces	Daily 1	2-3 times per week 5	Monthly 5	Never used 2	2.4
Journals	Daily 1	2-3 times per week 5	Monthly 5	Never used 2	2.4
Reteling of Non-fiction experiences	Daily 1	2-3 times per week 5	Monthly 8	Never used 3	1.7
Retelling of Stories	Daily 3	2-3 times per week 3	Monthly 9	Never used 1	2.2
Direct Reading Instruction					
Retelling of Text/Story	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 6	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used	2.8
Background Knowledge	Daily 5	3-4 times weekly 6	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used	3.2
Asking Questions	Daily 11	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used	3.8
Sensory Imaging	Daily 3	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 7	Never used 1	2.6
Making Connections	Daily 6	3-4 times weekly 5	1-2 times weekly 1	Never used 1	3.2
Drawing Inferences	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 5	1-2 times weekly 4	Never used	3
Charts and Graphs	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 7	Never used 1	2.7
Problem Solving	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 5	Never used 1	2.8
Determining Importance	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 3	1-2 times weekly 6	Never used	2.8
Summarizing Information	Daily 6	3-4 times weekly 5	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used	3.3
Fix Up Strategies	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly	1-2 times weekly 4	Never used 7	1.8
Text Genres					
Fiction	Daily 4	3-4 times weekly 9	1-2 times weekly	Never used	3.3
Poetry	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly	1-2 times weekly 11	Never used 1	2
Non-Fiction	Daily 6	3-4 times weekly 4	1-2 times weekly 2	Never used 1	3.15
Biography	Daily 2	3-4 times weekly 2	1-2 times weekly 10	Never used 1	2.1
Historical Fiction	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly 1	1-2 times weekly 11	Never used	2.2
Science Fiction	Daily 1	3-4 times weekly	1-2 times weekly 10	Never used 3	1.8
Assessment Strategies					
DRA2 Assessment	Always 1	Frequently 5	Sometimes 7	Never used	2.5
Running Records	Always 3	Frequently 3	Sometimes 5	Never used 5	1.7
Guided Reading Instruction	Always 3	Frequently 4	Sometimes 5	Never used 1	2.7
Oral Reading of Text	Always 2	Frequently 3	Sometimes 8	Never used	2.5

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATION FOCUS FOR GRADES K-5

Survey for K-5 Audit/Program Evaluation - Reading/Literacy Fall 2008

Classroom Observation Questions

Date: Time: Grade Level: Teacher:

1. How do you determine when to move a student to a different level of difficulty in reading texts? (Interview)
2. Describe something that has changed in your reading instruction over the past year – something that you do differently or an area in which you believe you have improved upon former practice. (Interview)
3. Describe something in the lesson that you want me to specifically know about – before or after viewing (Interview).

Observation questions:

1. Describe how the teacher organizes reading/language arts instruction in the following configurations: (Describe only the arrangement(s) observed)
 - a. Whole Group setting
 - b. Small Group setting
 - c. Guided Reading Group setting
2. Describe what students are doing when engaged in instructional activities with the teacher and what students are doing when engaged in independent activities. (Describe only the arrangement(s) observed)
 - a. Whole Group setting
 - b. Small Group setting
 - c. Guided Reading Group setting
3. Describe classroom management attributes observed when some students are working with the teacher (small group or guided reading groups) and others are working independently. (If not seen, mark N/O)
4. Describe classroom management attributes observed when students engage in independent work time after whole group instruction. (If not seen, mark N/O)

5. Describe writing activities observed in the classroom. (If not seen, mark N/O)
6. Describe the level of student engagement in reading and writing activities as observed in the classroom.
7. Describe instructional activities directly related to improving or assessing reading comprehension skills and concepts. (If not seen, mark N/O)

2006 INITIAL SCAN QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

Fall Scan 2006 Results		
Kindergarten 6 current teachers		
Classroom Organization	Census using each type	
Shared Reading/Whole Group	6	
Small Group	0	
Guided Reading Groups	0	
Assessment Strategies	Census using each type	
DRA2 Assessment	0	
Whole Group Instruction	0	
Interactive Writing Activity	0	
Observation of Reading	0	
None	6	
1st Grade 5 current teachers		
Classroom Organization	Census using each type	
Shared Reading/Whole Group	5	
Small Group	0	
Guided Reading Groups	5	
Assessment Strategies	Census using each type	
DRA2 Assessment	2	
Running Records	1	
Guided Reading Instruction	0	
Oral Reading of Text	0	
Other	2	
None	2	
2nd Grade 6 current teachers		
Classroom Organization	Census using each type	
Shared Reading/Whole Group	6	
Small Group	0	
Guided Reading Groups	6	
Assessment Strategies	Census using each type	
DRA2 Assessment	0	
Running Records	4	
Guided Reading Instruction	0	
Oral Reading of Text	0	
Other	2	
None	1	
3rd Grade 7 current teachers		
Classroom Organization	Census using each type	
Shared Reading/Whole Group	7	
Small Group	0	
Guided Reading Groups	4	
Assessment Strategies	Census using each type	
DRA2 Assessment	0	
Running Records	3	
Guided Reading Instruction	0	
Oral Reading of Text	0	
Other	3	
None	2	
4th Grade 6 current teachers		
Classroom Organization	Census using each type	
Shared Reading/Whole Group	6	
Small Group	2	
Guided Reading Groups	2	
Assessment Strategies	Census using each type	
DRA2 Assessment	0	
Running Records	1	
Guided Reading Instruction	0	
Oral Reading of Text	0	
Other	1	
None	4	
5th Grade 4 current teachers		
Classroom Organization	Census using each type	
Shared Reading/Whole Group	3	
Small Group	1	
Guided Reading Groups	0	
Assessment Strategies	Census using each type	
DRA2 Assessment	0	
Running Records	0	
Guided Reading Instruction	0	
Oral Reading of Text	0	
Other	1	
None	3	



**Geneseo Community
Unit School District
#228**

March 12, 2009

**Report to the
Board of Education**

Reading

Writing

Literacy

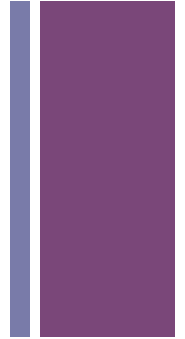
Technology

Elementary Literacy Audit Kindergarten – 5th Grade

Joni Swanson, Ph.D.

Nikki Kubiak, M.S. Reading

+ Purpose of Elementary Audit



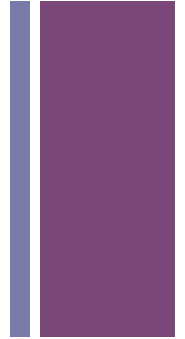
- Evaluate **progress in reading instruction** from fall 2006 to fall 2008 in grades K-5
- Guide **elementary inservice** and staff development programming for 2009-10 through 2011-12 school years
- Guide **reading curriculum adoption** in 2009-2010

+ Research Questions



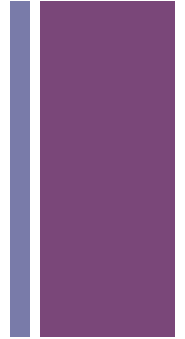
- To what extent are elementary teachers utilizing instructional techniques that reinforce basic elements of successful reading: **fluency, decoding and comprehension**?
- To what extent are elementary teachers utilizing data based decision making to **assess students' growth in reading**?
- To what extent are elementary teachers requesting additional assistance in improving their instructional **and classroom management techniques for teaching reading**?
- To what extent are elementary teachers teaching **writing to students**?
- To what extent are elementary teachers requesting additional assistance in **improving their instructional techniques for teaching writing**?

+ Methodology of Research



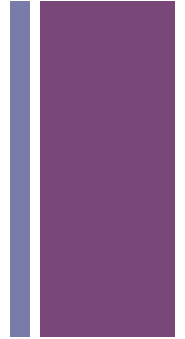
- Teacher on-line **surveys**
- Teacher **interviews**
- Teacher and student **observations** in the classroom

+ Data Topics



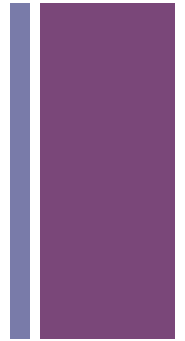
- Reading Instructional Delivery and Content
- Reading Assessment
- Reading Instruction Assistance
- Writing Instruction and Activity
- Writing Instruction Assistance

+ Improvements in K-2 since 2006



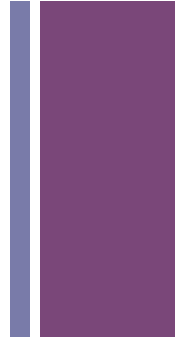
- Increased use of **assessment data** to place students in appropriate materials
- Increased use of **guided reading and small group instruction**
- Increased use of **interactive writing** technique with K-1 students
- Increased use of **writing** in the K-1 classrooms
- Movement toward use of **comprehension** as a teaching strategy in the K-1 classrooms
- Increased use of **non-fiction text** with students during instruction

+ Recommendations for Continual Improvement K-2 – Reading Instruction



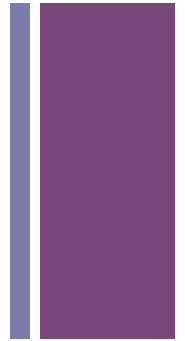
- Increase use of **comprehension questions and strategies** in the grade 1-2 levels
- Increase use of **fluency** as a means to determine comprehension of text.
- Increase use of **word attack skills**, especially word families and word parts in addition to decoding (phonemic) skills
- Increase explicit teaching and use of **academic vocabulary**-especially as it relates to content learning in Social Studies, Science and Mathematics
- Increase use of **instructional technology** tools to improve students' literacy
- Increase use of **nonfiction text and content area learning** to achieve balance between narrative/novel and non-fiction content driven text.

+ Recommendations for Continual Improvement K-2 – Reading Assessment



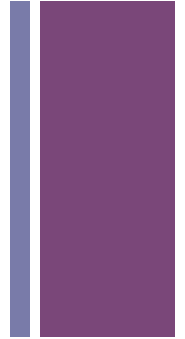
- Use assessment tools to **place students** into appropriate materials **throughout the school year**.
- Improve **record keeping techniques for periodic assessment of** students' progress in reading skills and processes (decoding, fluency and comprehension)

+ Recommendations for Continual Improvement K-2 – Reading Assistance



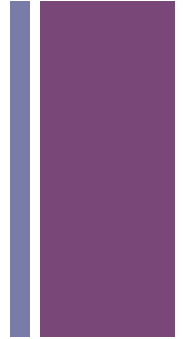
- **Rearrange the school day** to allow for content area learning as a focus for reading strategies and skills.
- Allot time, especially at the beginning of the school year, to teach students the **habits and behaviors expected during center or non-teacher** contact time.
- Reading aides should be given **more direction and conferencing** to direct instruction.
- Reading aides will need **additional professional development** in the area of reading instruction.

+ Recommendations for Continual Improvement K-2 – Writing Instruction



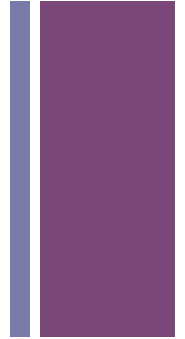
- Increase **writing for learning**, especially in the **2nd grade**
- Consistent and regular use of the **6 + 1 Traits Vocabulary** to describe good writing.

+ Recommendations for Continual Improvement K-2 –Writing Instruction Assistance



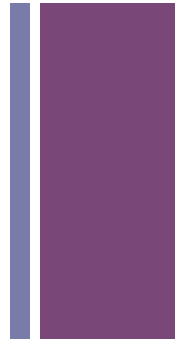
- Utilize grade level meeting or professional development time to plan time to **revisit the 6 Traits** writing vocabulary and ideas for teaching writing.
- **Attend ROE inservices** on ISAT writing (2nd grade teachers), and volunteer to share or teach colleagues.
- **Re-arrange the school day** to allow for Writer's Workshop time.
- Learn more about using **instructional technology** as a teaching tool for writing.

+ Improvements in 3-5 since 2006



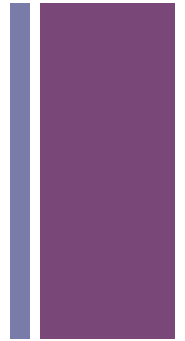
- Increased **use of assessment data** to place students in appropriate materials
- Increased use of a **variety of configurations** for reading instruction
- Increased use of **instructional tools for planning** the teaching of reading
- Increased use of **comprehension strategies** during reading instruction, as well as during content area instruction
- Increased use of **nonfiction text** with students during instruction
- Increased use of **written responses** to fiction and nonfiction texts

+ Recommendations for Continual Improvement 3-5 – Reading Instruction



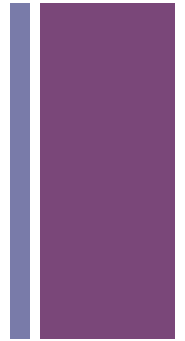
- Increase and improve the use, variety, and quality of **comprehension questions** and activities done before, during, and after reading
- Increase the amount of time students are reading text that is at their **instructional level**, and with guided teacher instruction.
- Enhance **critical thinking skills** through critical inquiry, analysis, and interpretation
- Increase explicit teaching and use of **academic vocabulary**-especially as it relates to content learning in Social Studies, Science and Mathematics
- Increase use of **instructional technology** tools to improve students' literacy
- Increase use of **nonfiction text and content area learning** to achieve balance between narrative/novel and non-fiction content driven text.

+ Recommendations for Continual Improvement 3-5 – Reading Assessment



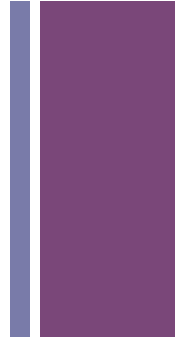
- Increase use of **checklists, Literacy Guidelines, and Focus for Instruction** sheets to plan guided, shared, and whole group reading instruction.
- Use **assessment tools to place students into appropriate materials** throughout the school year.
- Improve **record keeping techniques for periodic assessment of** students' progress in reading skills and processes (decoding, fluency and comprehension)

+ Recommendations for Continual Improvement 3-5 – Reading Assistance



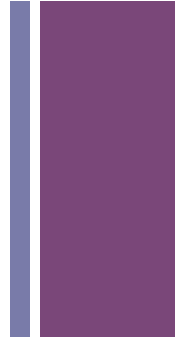
- Allow time for **content area learning** to be a focus for instruction of reading strategies and skills.
- Use the **professional learning communities** model to allow teachers to work and learn collaboratively, discuss shared professional books, and brainstorm instructional ideas.
- Allot time to teach students **habits and behaviors** that are expected during non-teacher contact time.
- Reading aides should be given more **direction and conferencing** to align instruction to students needs. They should also receive additional **professional development** in reading instruction.

+ Recommendations for Continual Improvement 3-5 – Writing Instruction



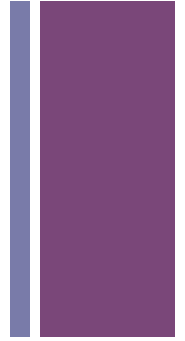
- Increase **writing for learning**
- Organize the classroom schedule to allow for writing on an **everyday basis**. Writing activities could include: response to literature, response to content knowledge, free writing, and learning logs.
- Consistent and regular use of the **6 + 1 Traits Vocabulary to describe** good writing.

+ Recommendations for Continual Improvement 3-5 –Writing Instruction Assistance



- Request to **attend** workshops on ISAT extended response writing or to plan to share ideas at grade level or inservice programs.
- Utilize the **6 + 1 Traits** kit for grades 3-5, wherein additional teaching ideas and a DVD on the traits will supply new information.

+ Overall Recommendations

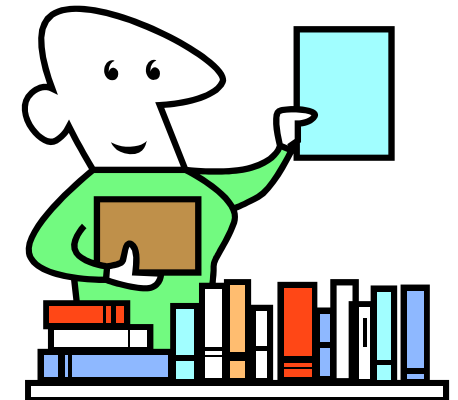
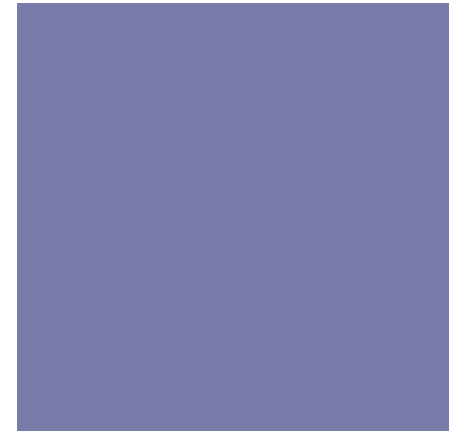


- Instructional Strategies
- Staff Development
- Curriculum and Materials

- Planning for 2009 - 2012



Geneseo CUSD #228



Elementary Literacy
Audit 2009