

Principal & Director Reports

October 2012

AC. Houghton Elementary

Kindergarten Writing Interventions

Kindergarten teacher's primary interventions at this point in the school year are mainly to remediate behavior problems, focus on the importance of learning school rules, and to help build valuable social skills. After preliminary academic testing our new kindergarten students, teachers can easily identify those that are struggling with academics. Even in the first few weeks of school children are already identified and placed on a watch list in the areas of speaking, reading, writing, and math. During our daily intervention time the kinder group works one-on-one with students in one, or sometimes all, of these aspects of learning. Often times finishing work that is incomplete is not only due to not understanding, or getting distracted in a whole group setting, it is frequently due to lack of knowing how to organize materials to complete a project.

Intervention time is used to guide our young learners with questioning and help with skills a child is struggling with. This time is well spent as teachers learn first-hand a lot about how a student is learning, or in most cases why they are not learning. The biggest obstacle for children at this age in the area of writing seems simple, but causes a lot of difficulty, and that skill is mastering proper **pencil grasp**. Not only is it valuable now, but is a skill they will use the rest of their lives! We have various tools and tricks to help students master proper pencil grasp so their hands don't fatigue and also to enable them to write legibly. With one-on-one time we can identify students who need a different writing utensil to become successful writers. Examples of tools used to remediate struggling students include oversized pencils, triangular pencils, and even in some cases 'half' pencils. Half pencils are helpful with students who have little or no muscle tone as they have less pencil to manage. We also use various styles of crayons with these students to help with fine motor skills. Coloring, cutting, and directed play with manipulatives, are all strategies primary teachers use to build the muscles in little hands. Another quick and effective intervention for writing, used during instructional time with young struggling writers, is the use of a highlighter. The student can watch the teacher write the desired skill properly and then the student can easily trace to help be successful and practice writing letters or numbers properly and legibly. ACH kindergarten teachers are excited about having this time in our schedule daily to be able to spend time with kids that would otherwise get frustrated and often give up!

First Grade Writing Interventions

Since we now have four 1st grade teachers, they have decided to try grouping the students, making four groups of high, medium, medium-low and low. Every teacher will take a core curriculum subject needing improvement. Mrs. Horning will teach writing, Mrs. Harrison will have math, Mrs. Kittelson is teaching reading and Ms. Drake has language arts. We will rotate these groups weekly, which gives us enough time to know the children and their skill levels. High- ended students can be challenged and low-ended students can hopefully make noticeable improvement during the year.

This week, Mrs. Horning had group 3, which is the medium group. She was able help the students write "All About Me" stories and have a completed project on day 4. Next week, she will have the low group and will adjust the project to match their skill levels.

This model was used by the second grade teachers last year, and seemed to be successful. First grade decided to keep the time period to 30 minutes daily, which is just right for first graders.

They will communicate with each other during our weekly PLC meetings to make sure children are moved up or down accordingly.

Second Grade Writing Interventions

The second grade has integrated the writing into their Reading groups and there Reading intervention times. During Reading block time, they work on having the students write complete sentences and correct punctuation. Each teacher will have comprehension questions that have to be answered in complete sentences instead of short answer. During Reading intervention time, Mrs. Phillips works on comparing and contrasting stories, retelling the story, and complete sentences on what they learned while reading the story. During Reading block, Mrs. Morgan has her students writing about the story that they have read; starting the beginning working through middle and end. Each of us does Daily Language with our students to try and revisit the importance of looking for the errors that are there. They will continue to work on getting our students to write complete sentences with the correct punctuation.

Third Grade Writing Interventions

Writing intervention is a two month long process for all students. Here are the steps.

- Read two or more books about theme and pick out some vocabulary words the students are unfamiliar with (as a class).
- Research those vocabulary words and find the definitions (as a class).
- Brainstorm our ideas on a web. I model first then students create their own web.
- Start writing ONLY one paragraph a day (5 paragraphs total). I model first my paragraph then students create their own.
- When rough draft is complete students self-edit with a red and green color pencil.
- Then student will group up with another student and correct each other's papers.
- When finished the teacher will sit down and conference with each individual student about their paper and we make corrections and talk about their story.
- After the conferencing is finished the final draft can be created.
- Teachers always have an activity that goes along with the writing unit such as: Map making, feast, paper mache, etc.

Heppner Elementary & Heppner High School

It is hard to believe that October is already here, but the recent cold mornings are a sure sign that fall has arrived. Our enrollment is currently 174 students at HES and 176 at HHS. The HES staff and I enjoyed our Open House on the evening of Wednesday, September 26 and based on the smiles of our students and parents faces during the evening, I would say it was a huge success. Open House for HHS will be held on Wednesday, October 17, 2012.

The HES Student Council elections were also recently held and I am happy to report that all of the students who were running for positions ran clean campaigns and gave outstanding speeches. The HES Student Council members for the 2011/2012 school year are;

President- **Madison Combe**, Vice President- **Gibson McCurry**, Secretary- **Olivia Schmidt**, Treasurer- **Keegan Gibbs**, Publicity Director- **Drew Coe** and Fourth Grade Representative- **Madelyn Nichols**.

This month's board report will focus on interventions in place in our Heppner schools with emphasis on writing support during the school day. At both HES and HHS we use the Three Tier Pyramid Response to Intervention as a decision making tool designed to allow for early and effective responses to our students' learning and behavioral difficulties, while providing them with a level of instructional support matched to their level of need using teacher data and assessment results for evaluating the effectiveness of our instructional practices. RtI (which has been a district priority the past couple of years) relies on evidence-based instructional practices and frequent progress monitoring to provide the assessment data necessary to make decisions about student progress and the need (if any) for more additional support and intervention. These steps are also known as Tier 2-supplemental support and Tier 3-intensive interventions. The pyramid model is intended to reduce unnecessary referrals to special education by ensuring that all children in the general education setting (Tier 1) have access to high quality curriculum and instruction that are taught with fidelity, and that each student receives a level of instruction matched to their level of need. The model is not intended to replace special education and its procedural safeguards.

Tier 1 Core Program components that are currently in place at HES to help ensure that all students are meeting the mark in regards to MCSD-Goal #3 include; Reading Mastery (with ability grouping), HEROES Reading Program, Saxon Math, DIBELS, MAPS, Easy CBM, educational assistant support/help in the classroom, parent volunteer help/support in the classroom, HHS TA help/support in classroom, "lunch bunch" study hall, and "after school" study hall to name a few.

Tier 2 Supplemental Program components include; Title I Services, Success Maker, Read Naturally, Bal-A-Vis-X, Bring Up Grades (BUG), Benchmark Boost, COLT Tracks, and C.O.L.T. Intervention Time.

Tier 3 Intensive Program components include; Special Education, one on one specialized instruction, Title I Services, and Success Maker.

Heppner Elementary also offers many other intervention strategies in the classroom. All teachers create differentiated group configurations to meet student needs. Students may work in small groups or work one-on-one with parent helpers, educational assistants or the classroom or Title I teacher to review concepts. Colt Tracks are used school-wide in the classroom as a behavior intervention. They are a way to monitor student behavior and to communicate with parents daily. Bal-a-Vis-X is utilized as an intervention to help with motor planning, among other things. Success Maker is also used as an intervention at every grade level to boost student achievement in reading and in math. All classrooms are using *Step up to Writing* to improve student achievement in writing at all grade levels this school year. *Step up to Writing* was purchased as a curricular strategy to help bring a better school wide focus to the writing process at HES across all grade levels.

Other writing interventions include *Handwriting without Tears*, which has been used by a number of teachers to help their students with handwriting. Classroom teachers draw from their backgrounds and from their own materials to offer interventions in their classrooms daily. Teachers at H.E.S. work with each other to target student learning styles and to maximize student achievement in the classroom.

Other writing and non-writing interventions and strategies being used in Heppner High School classrooms this year include some of the following;

- a. Scheduling students who have not met state standards into extension classes. Extension classes are a way to provide additional time and writing instruction in the critical areas of language arts and math.
- b. Capturing student time with teacher instruction before school, after school and tutorial. Communication with parents on each and every case to provide additional time and guidance is essential.
- c. Friday morning concentrated work with a focus on writing.

- d. Study table grades 5-8 with coaches and teachers present for additional writing assistance and support.
- e. Activity period assigned reading/writing of informational text.
- f. Guided study halls.
- g. Read 180 computer program being used for reading deficiencies.
- h. Success-maker math computer program use for deficiencies in math.
- i. Making accommodations according to the students IEP's.
- j. Reading of tests and quizzes.

We continually seek opportunities to increase partnerships with all stakeholders for continued implementation of our District 236 plan and to provide the necessary learning opportunities, strategies and interventions to facilitate our district goals in all areas, with an additional focus on writing this school year.

I would like to end by again thanking each of you for your support of Heppner Schools, and your commitment to all students of the Morrow County School District.

Irrigon Elementary School

On August 13th and 14th, teachers from Windy River and Irrigon Elementary met and worked with a trainer from Sopris West to learn how to use a program called Step Up to Writing (SUTW). SUTW addresses a few gaps in our current adopted writing curriculum (Write Source) by providing students with systematic way to compose paragraphs and essays using color coding and patterns to develop clear, organized paragraphs and essays.

Here's an example of a paragraph using the color coding system displayed on the right:

My favorite animal is the Giant Panda for two reasons. First of all, I like the panda because it looks so cute and cuddly. The panda's black and white body colors are simple, make it stand out, and look soft. Its sad looking face makes me want to hug it and make it happy. In addition, I am fond of the giant panda because it is endangered. We all should try to preserve the animals, like the panda, that are in danger of extinction. Clearly, the Giant Panda is animal I like best.



the

To facilitate the SUTW program, there are note taking methods and graphic organizers that help students move information from a rough draft/idea form to well-written paragraphs. In addition, students are given highlighters to help them analyze example essays or each other's essays to help learn the method for writing.

Teachers are also working together to plan and execute an effective and comprehensive writing program at IES. At this point in the year teachers are working with students to improve grammar and conventions, which are traditionally some of the weakest areas in student writing. Our teacher's plan books are all online and I was easily able to follow what is being done in our 5th grade classrooms this week for writing:

Monday 10/01	Tuesday 10/02	Wednesday 10/03	Thursday 10/04
Writing 7:40am-8:30am	Writing 7:40am-8:30am	Writing 7:40am-8:30am	Writing 7:40am-8:30am
1) Journal 2) Review run-on sentences. 3) Discuss the order of five and six part sentences. 4) Discuss the three sentence structures with 3-7a. 5) Write an example of each structure with 3-7b together. Standards: 5.L.3a Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style. 5.L.2e Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.	1) Journal 2) Discuss the four kinds of sentences with 3-8a. 3) Write examples of each kind of sentence. Standards: 5.L.3a Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style. 5.L.2e Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.	1) Journal 2) Discuss conjunctions with handout and memorize the most common conjunctions (mnemonic = FANBOYS). 3) Assign conjunctions wksh. Standards: 5.L.3a Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style. 5.L.2e Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed. 5.L.1a Explain the function of conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections in general and their function in particular sentences.	1) Journal 2) Look at handout 3-9a which combines kinds of sentences with sentence structures. 3) Fill in 3-9b together. 4) Watch youtube video "Conjunction Junction." Standards: 5.L.3a Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style. 5.L.2e Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed. 5.L.1a Explain the function of conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections in general and their function in particular sentences.
Spelling 8:30am-8:50am	Spelling 8:30am-8:50am	Spelling 8:30am-8:50am	Spelling 8:30am-8:50am
1) pre-test 2) Discuss meanings of words. 3) Assign p. 26-27. Standards: 5.L.2e Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.	1) Review meanings of words. 2) Assign p. 28-29 in packet. Standards: 5.L.2e Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.	1) Review meanings of words. 2) Assign p. 30 in packet. Standards: 5.L.2e Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.	TEST

Each grade level has done a phenomenal job of coordinating their writing instruction. By doing so, they will be able to work together and review student writing collaboratively, which in turn will generate discussion on effective teaching practices. IES Teachers are continually working to find the best ways to integrate SUTW, Write Source, and the Oregon Writing Scoring Rubric into a cohesive, effective writing program that teaches students to be solid, well-rounded writers from an early age.

Irrigon High School

Instead of providing a traditional language arts instruction in the middle school, we have separated into two distinct classes – one period of reading and one period of writing. Last year, through the use of Gear-Up funds, we were able to purchase Step-Up-To-Writing. This is a researched based systematic program that helps students become proficient writers of narrative and expository essays. It is still too early to determine the longitudinal impact but initially

results have been promising. IES has implanted this Step-Up-To-Writing program this year as well and the added continuity should prove even more beneficial to students.

Middle school students who are struggling and/or failing writing class are assigned to small-group tutorial twice a week during advisory. These smaller settings make it ideal for staff to provide more individualized writing instruction. Students who are also placed in Read 180, which in addition to being a reading intervention, receive embedded writing instruction as well.

At the high school level, it has been more challenging to provide a specific writing intervention class. Currently, all writing instruction occurs within the language arts class. However, within the language arts PLC we are discussing ways to offer a writing intervention class for high school students at the semester. We are also exploring ways to collaboratively score student work so that teachers can assign more writing practice and still provide high quality feedback without spending inordinate amounts of time reviewing and grading student work.

In addition, as a staff we are working on embedding writing tasks into other courses such as science and social studies. Within the next few weeks, we will begin the process of establishing common expectations for written responses on tests and assessments. For instance, if a student writes an essay response or even a single sentence on an exam, there will be an expectation that the writing meets certain quality standards, such as correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Riverside High School

Currently we have the following interventions in place at RHS to support struggling writers. Seniors that have not passed their State writing test or completed the two required work samples are scheduled to re-take the state writing test beginning 10/20/12. Additionally, we have calendared out several more opportunities throughout the year for students to complete work samples to meet the graduation requirement. Mr. Carpenter is working with those students in the language arts and lab classes to prep for the test.

Special education students needing services for reading and writing are in the Read 180 program for one period and then are receiving additional writing support with Mr. Prindle in a lab class.

Content area teachers are also focusing on informal writing strategies such as:

TEA paragraphs (paragraphs with a topic, evidence, and analysis)

writing summaries of reading assignments, graphic organizers and Cornell notes

The language arts department has been working on a style guide that would be consistent throughout the building and grades. Ms. Brown, 7th grade L.A. teacher, is working on some school-wide word wall materials to help support better writing.

Overall we are working diligently on both our reading and writing. Our building truly understands the importance of sharing this duty. In our PLC's we discuss ways to infuse reading/writing in all content and non-content areas.

Sam Boardman Elementary School

Writing:

90-90-90 schools focus on writing. Writing is about good thinking. Getting students to write takes purposeful instruction.

Grade level PLC teams have identified grade expectations for each quarter. They collect writing samples (Common Formative Assessments) four times per year. They analyze the results and write SMART goals. Part of the data analysis and SMART goal process has teachers list what is

working and brainstorm a list of possible solutions for students who are meeting expectations. Their SMART goal includes the grade level strategy they will incorporate. Our first round of writing assessments is currently under way and will be analyzed mid October.

K-Team:

The kindergarten team uses a program called ***Kid-Writing*** by Nelly Edge. ***Kid-Writing*** uses a daily journal approach by having students “write” about a picture they drew. In the beginning, students create “magic lines” or a single line, or even a string of letters to “tell about their picture”. The teacher then dictates their story using words above their magic lines.

Kindergarten students show developmental progress by having the right number of lines to tell their story; line breaks to represent words, letters for sounds in words, actual words. As students see the teacher model writing each day, are exposed to sounds and letters in reading, and get feedback in their daily journals, they learn to write.

Team 1:

Team 1 teachers are implementing ***Kid Writing*** alongside ***Write Source***. ***Kid Writing*** honors students in their developmental stages, encourages them to connect their thoughts to written letters, and gives them confidence to write. ***Write Source*** focuses on the key elements of a sentence, beginning with a capital and ending with a period. Write Source also exposes students to different kinds of writing: labeling pictures, note writing, and letters home.

Team 2:

Team 2 teachers develop a well written paragraph. Teachers teach and expects students to demonstration proper use of capitals, the right punctuation mark, and correct spelling within their well written paragraph. Team 2 teachers use a variety of strategies, drawing from good literature, to help students incorporate a variety of adjectives, nouns and pronouns into their writing.

Team 3:

After a close look at the CCSS, Team 3 teachers are focusing on paragraphs with a strong topic sentence and supporting details. They are using modeling and individual conferencing as a main strategy for teaching the three traits students will be scored on in third grade; ideas, organization, and conventions. Team 3 teachers are integrating literature from the Common Core Language Arts Curriculum

Windy River Elementary

Writing- Writing- Writing

These are on the wall just in front of me, in my busy office, to keep me focused on writhing as our main bread and butter at Windy river Elementary School.

By the planning and design of the previous principal, Mark Jones, Windy River staff was principally involved in the Step Up To Writing curriculum for a two day training on using this curriculum at Windy River. From there, I have taken the helm of this school and Writing is to be our wisest choice for school improvement.

1. First of all, every teacher is using Step Up To Writing curriculum and the instructional methods that it gives for writing. It has us beging with writing correct sentences and this process is being followed in every class, in every grade. It gets harder leading to writing correct paragraphs and then to essays compositions.

2. First we have a Reading/ Writing block in the master schedule for two hours each day. Besides this, Writing is being used in Math, Science and Social studies in many classrooms.
3. Fourth grade teachers are concentrating on writing solid good sentences. They are following the school/district pacing guides in Writing. Students who are ready to proceed from sentences and start paragraphs are being challenged to do this during an intervention time when other students are pulled out to ELD, Title, or SPED. Another fourth grade teacher uses writing to make book reports instead of punching the right answer of the basic AR reading questions in the computer. In the end, they wind up writing a seven paragraph book report on a book they have just finished reading. Step Up To Writing processes are reiterated in Science and Social Studies. If they are teaching something about sentence structure, those same sentence structures are repeated in Science and Social Studies. Positive Action is a new behavior curriculum in our school. One teacher uses a Positive Action Writing Journals for work and student reflection. Writing is also reflected in vocabulary, grammar and reading. Student in one class have to write the meaning of the parts of speech, definitions of words, and respond to Reading assignments in written complete sentences. Writing is used when students in Math have to write in their math journals the Language Objectives and the Content Objectives. One teacher has students practice cursive handwriting. This starts with letters, words, sentences and then paragraphs using cursive penmanship.
4. Fifth grade teachers also do similar and different things to improve writing. They all use Step Up To Writing as their base writing instruction. Two teachers are using Writing in Science and Social Studies. One uses a Science Writing Log notebook. Also during the Writing block it is related back to Science and Social Studies. Writing goes both ways for both Writing content and the content of other subjects. One teacher noted that they make students write, in any subject, in complete sentences. In Math, one teacher makes their students write out the Math procedures to solving numerical problems. In Reading one teacher has students write complete definitions in paragraphs which summarizes stories read of the Reading literature.
5. Sixth grade is also using Step Up To Writing. Included, one teacher in Math has students explain in writing how they got the answer they put down. This makes them tell in detail what they did using writing. In Math work-samples to be put into Mastery In Motion, one teacher has students write and explain their work accomplished in Math word problems. From Reading to writing one teacher make the students write explaining the novels read. With Science and Geography one teacher has their students answer the questions in complete sentences.
6. In specialty classes there are other emphasizes put into writing as well. The ESL teacher has students write in a Daily writing Journal. They write the Language Objectives, and do all their daily work in writing in the same journal. Writing is eminently everywhere as what is being taught, writing it, and it is used in the instruction itself. The ESL teacher hardly ever makes copies for students to fill. They use their Writing Journals to write everything to learn, read, explain, practice and write. With this stated, she emphasizes to her students correct speech which models correct writing. Students must use speech tickets out of the room, reviewing the day's instruction taught. Basically you write what you speak. The Title Reading/ Math teacher has her students to write Math summaries. She also makes them take notes of daily Math instructions in class. The Special Education room uses a differentiated writing curriculum called Reasoning Writing SRA. A child comes here if writing is in their IEP goals. They also do Journal Writing daily. Here they write 5 complete sentences of 4 different topics. They also get help in the classroom work of Step Up To Writing assignments from the main classroom writing work.

7. The school administration also has a discipline writing program that makes good use of detention time. Here, students have to write sentences and or narratives of poor choices made and better choices to make next time. They are also given writing assignments of apology to offended teacher or student for their incorrect decisions made.

Write right like a rite.

This is our focus this year at Windy River Elementary.

Management's Discussion and Analysis

Financial Highlights

The district continues to hear positive news when it comes to school budgets; however, with the increase in PERS costs the budget will need to be \$6.3B just to stay at the current level of funding. Below is other positive information we have received:

1. We have received different grants this year that total approximately \$80,000 that we anticipate will have a very positive impact in communities and schools. These grants must be used on specific items that are outlined in each of the grants.
2. The district is seeing no decrease in student counts.

Future Financial Planning

The district completed their financial audit in September and we expect to receive the final report sometime in the November timeframe. There were various issues identified by the auditors with the most pressing at this time being segregation of duties at the district office. The district has contacted Linn Benton ESD, who provides our technical support on our operating system, to complete a process audit to see how we can segregate our duties and become more efficient using the operating system.

Purchases: The district is still planning to purchase one vehicle in 2012-13 and various maintenance equipment (bucket lift, tractor, backhoe, etc.) – based on actual expenditures.

Current Financial Issues and Concerns

The same financial concerns we have identified in previous reports continue today: 1) staffing levels, 2) funding levels, 3) capital expenditures that need to be made, 4) ensuring our technology is staying current, and 5) other expenditures that are unforeseen.

The plan is to start the district forecasting in October with various scenarios based on anticipated revenues. The district will also be developing a report that will show budget to actuals and prior year to current year expenditures in key object codes. The key focus will be payroll as these expenditures still make up over 80% of the entire district budget.

Maintenance

The district was visited by Johnson Controls (JC) a company that provides energy saving solutions for districts. JC will be issuing various options to the district in the next few months that will help us identify key upgrades that need to take place that will save the district money on an ongoing basis. We visited all schools and are in the process of providing the necessary energy usage by school for the past 2 years. The next step will be to evaluate the options and determine a long term plan to address our building issues. JC also provides financing solutions through the energy savings each school will achieve through the upgrades. We have also set up a meeting with a company called Ameresco that has the same type of programs.

Based on the above process, the district will be identifying a 5 year, 10 year, and 20 year plan to address the significant maintenance issues that need to be completed (roofs, paving, flooring, etc.)

The district is also working with vendors and the Boardman Fire Department to update the Riverside fire detection system. The previous month there were a chain of events that ended up setting off the fire alarms and we could not get the system to clear properly. Based on inquiry and past knowledge the issue stems from having 3 different systems within the building that don't talk with one another, thus, the plan will be to update the school fire detection to allow better system communication and ability to pinpoint where the incident has taken place in the school.