

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
Core Curriculum
Secondary Education

LANGUAGE ARTS OFFICE

Meeting
of
Middle School Language Arts Curriculum Council
12 September 2005

MINUTES

Schools without Representation

Apollo	Dandy
Attucks	Glades
Crystal Lake	Sunrise

Anita Plummer, Secondary Language Arts Curriculum Specialist, began the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

FCAT Writing+ Updates

Department Chairpersons were referred to a PowerPoint on the updates of the FCAT Writing+ exam. The design of the test will include an essay and a multiple-choice section. The multiple-choice component will test the writing process based on the four elements of the rubric: focus, organization, support, and conventions. The four parts will include the following sections:

- 1 Writing Plans are 4-option item types that will assess focus and organization. These types of items provide a prewriting structure and may include charts, webs, diagrams, outlines, or any other prewriting structure.
- 2 Writing Samples are 4-option item types that will assess focus, organization, and support. These writing samples are written in draft form and contains numbered sentences. At grades 4 and 8, paragraph markers are used. These samples will include a variety of modes of writing; they are not limited to essays.
- 3 Cloze Selections are 3-option item types that will assess conventions. These items may be informational or literary and contain three or more numbered blanks.

Minutes, Page 2

- 1 Stand-Alone Structures are 3-option item types that will assess conventions. The stand-alone items measure knowledge of the conventions of spelling, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure.

For the 2006 operational administration, students will have 45 minutes for the essay portion and two sessions, 40 minutes each, for the multiple-choice section. The performance task, essay, and the multiple-choice section will be equally weighted. Students will receive a scale-test score between 100-500. Students will also receive a rubric score of 1 to 6 for the essay portion, and points correct out of points possible for focus, organization, support, and conventions for the multiple-choice portion. In the spring of 2006, students will receive scores for both sections of the test. Standards setting for achievement levels will be done in 2006-07, and a notice of graduation requirement will be given to 9th grade students. In 2007-08, grade 10 students will receive achievement level scores that count for graduation.

Anita also shared samples of the 2005 FCAT Writing sample papers taken from the *Report on FCAT Writing Assessment* handbook. Score points of one, three, and six were placed on the overhead projector and discussed individually. Since the papers are written within 45 minutes and scored and published as drafts, they can be used to teach revising and editing, steps of the writing process that are usually neglected as a result of writing on demand or prompt writing. Students should be reminded that these papers are not exemplary models of writing.

A writing process rubric was shared and Anita mentioned the importance of providing analytical feedback for revising and editing. The sample papers were examined for areas that should be revised for elaborated details, clarity, effective introductions, and effective transitions; and also edited for conventions.

Anita also discussed the levels of support and where they fall in the rubric. Students receiving higher scores will have to elaborate consistently throughout the essay. When students are not fully elaborating in their writing, they should be given the opportunity to revise it for more specific details.

Minutes, Page 3

Assessment Accountability and Briefing Book

Chairpersons were referred to an excerpt of the *Assessment Accountability and Briefing Book* to review the writing and reading content tested on FCAT. It states that fourth grade students should draft and revise writing in cursive. Even though most of students' writing will be produced electronically in the future, teachers are concerned that many students do not know how to sign their names. It was suggested that the epidemic of FCAT prompt writing, as opposed to teaching the SSS for writing, could be the reason why these benchmarks are not being mastered at this level. A copy of the 8th grade content will be included in the October folder.

Successful Strategies for Writing Achievement

The Florida Department of Education Office of School Improvement published a document that outlines strategies for all educators and parents that facilitate writing achievement. It explains the rubric and emphasizes the importance of providing students "real" opportunities to write. Below are guidelines for including writing in the curriculum:

- 1 Give children choices about the **form** of their writing and the **topics**.
- 2 Provide ways for children to talk about their writing and get **feedback** from others.
- 3 Provide situations with audiences for children to **showcase** their work.
- 4 Give students time in class to **revise** and **edit** their writing before others read it.
- 5 Make writing opportunities meaningful and interesting—not "busy work."
- 6 Set up writing workshops with a balance of shared, guided, and independent writing activities.
- 7 Evaluate the content of what children write rather than focusing solely upon the way the piece is written; having someone criticize the form of writing before acknowledging the message is very discouraging.
- 8 Demonstrate your joy of writing (and your roadblocks) by writing along with your students.

The document also included instructional activities for writing across the curriculum that provide students with meaningful opportunities to learn. The full report can be accessed at <http://osi.fsu.edu> or contact the Florida Department of Education Office of School Improvement at 850-487-1023.

2005-2006 Electronic Academic Improvement Plans

The folder also included a copy of directions on how to access the AIPs. This year teachers will be able to generate group AIPs by selecting groups of students with similar performance needs and interventions. AIPs should be completed by the end of the first quarter. If students score 3 and below in the trait of ideas, they should be given an AIP in writing. Chairpersons were asked to share the form with other staff members at their school.

Handouts

Summarized Rubric (8th Grade)
Writing Map (6-8)
FCAT Test Summary of Tests and Design
Meeting Dates, 2005-06
FCAT Interpretive Products 2005-2006
Broward Council of Teachers of English Applications (BCTE)
Conference Dates, 2005-06
Levels of Support
The Writing Process