Write Source
Research and Program Efficacy

GReaT SouRCe®
EDUCATION GROUP
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Wilmington, MA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.   WRITE SOURCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The **Write Source Language Programs** build the foundation for an extremely active, engaging writing-based language arts program for grades K-12. Write Source supports teachers by providing them with the materials they need to teach writing effectively and empowers students by giving them an extensive writing resource that emphasizes the literacy skills for writing and learning that they will depend on in all of their classes and throughout their lives.

The **Write Source handbooks** (Grades K-12) provide a friendly, accessible and comprehensive approach to writing, thinking, and learning.

- Strategies for using each stage of the writing process are outlined in "The Process of Writing" section of the Write Source handbooks—from choosing a topic to writing a first draft, from editing & revising to publishing.
- "The Forms of Writing" section provides chapters on all the forms of writing that might be addressed over the course of the year and includes step-by-step guidelines and student models for each form of writing.
- "The Tools of Learning" section helps students develop good listening, speaking, learning, and thinking skills for all subject areas.
- Write Source handbooks provide a solid foundation in writing and language skills. The "Proofreader's Guide" shows students how to use punctuation, check mechanics and spelling, and write effective sentences while the "Student Almanac" provides useful tables, maps, handwriting tips and more.

The **Write Source SkillsBooks** (Grades 1-12) give students editing and proofreading practice with more than 75 exercises covering parts of speech, grammar, mechanics, and usage skills as well as sentence combining practice. (Available as consumable workbooks or in a reproducible version in the Program Guide.)

The **Write Source Language Programs** (Grades K-12) address all aspects of language learning with hundreds of flexible activities linked to the student

handbook—from two-minute minilessons to week-long extended units. The Language Program coordinates with the student handbook for a comprehensive language arts program.

The **Language Program** includes:
- **Program Guide** contains daily lesson plans, comprehensive teacher's notes, and copymasters for activities to help your students develop their writing, thinking, and learning skills.
- **SkillsBook** (reproducible version).
- **SkillsBook Teacher's Edition** includes answers for the editing and proofreading activities in the Program Guide.
- **Handbook** a hardcover copy of the handbook for the teacher.
- **Teacher's Guide** a section-by-section overview of the handbook plus suggestions for getting started activities and minilessons.

The **Daily Language Workouts** (Grades 1-12) are flexible teacher's resources that provide short, high-impact language workout to develop students' editing and proofreading skills and writing prompts and topics to stimulate thinking and inspire free writing. (Available separately.)

Available for *The Writing Spot* (Grade K) and *Write One* (Grade 1) only:
- The **Big Books** are study easel-back books that give the teacher an engaging starting point for the writing and learning activities in *Program Guides*. Fun, colorful illustrations combined with friendly language introduce young writers to the writing process and invite them to explore their thoughts in writing. (Big Book size is 24" x18".)

Available for The Writing Spot (Grade K) only:
- The **Little Big Book** is a child-sized version of the Big Book that provides a handy resource to inspire early writers. (Little Big Book size if 11"x8.5".)

- The **Buddy Book** is a student's own place to respond to activities linked directly to *The Writing Spot Big Book*. Although essential pages are included in the *Program Guide* in reproducible format, young writers enjoy and benefit from having a special place to keep their writing.
- The **Spot Puppet** is a hand puppet that offers an engaging addition to *The Writing Spot* activities.

II. WRITE SOURCE RESEARCH BASE

Effective writing instruction is an essential part of every child's education. The ability to write effectively is vital in today's world. Writing is a survival skill in school—an important tool for learning, understanding, and remembering—that is needed to succeed in all courses from elementary school through college. It is an important social skill, enabling communication across distances by email and letters. Writing is a primary mode of creative self-expression, allowing students to project their unique selves into the world around them. Writing is also a source of voice and empowerment in a democratic society, an avenue for making opinions public and persuading others. Writing is a life skill, needed to apply for a job, perform a job, and advance in a career. Above all, writing is thinking. When students write, they reflect, analyze, and reconsider. Developing writing skills means developing thinking skills, which will help children grow into thoughtful, reasoning adults.

The Write Source program is a resource for teachers who recognize the importance of effective writing instruction. The activities and strategies presented are based on the best of current research and practice advocated by classroom teachers, administrators, teacher educators, and policymakers alike. The Write Source program provides students with the skills they need to succeed in school, preparing them ultimately for college and the workplace. In the program, students develop their thinking skills by learning how to choose and develop their own topics, find information, evaluate the quality of sources, think through relevant issues, formulate a thesis, support an argument, and draw logical conclusions.

The Write Source program presents writing as a process; provides students with frequent opportunities to write; fosters students' ability to assess and revise their own writing; builds grammar, punctuation, and spelling skills; and develops students' overall literacy skills, including those of struggling learners and non-native English speakers.

Teaching writing as a process enables students to gain control over the complex task of writing.

When writing is taught as a process students are encouraged to develop a piece of writing over time in five recursive stages that mirror the stages that expert writers go through when working on their own authentic writing—prewriting, drafting, revising, editing or proofreading, and publishing. Initially popularized by Donald Graves (1991, 1994), Lucy Calkins (1994), and others (e.g., Atwell, 1987; Fletcher, 1993; Hillocks, 1987), this approach is currently the most widely accepted way of teaching writing. Virtually all educators agree that writing should be taught as a process (e.g., Cooper, 2000; Routman, 2000; Ruddell, 2002; Tompkins, 2000). Because the process approach breaks writing into these major stages, it enables students to understand and gain control over the complex task of writing. Furthermore, research suggests that when writing is taught as a process, student achievement increases (e.g., Hillocks, 1986; Holdzkom, Reed, Porter, & Rubin, 1982; Keech & Thomas, 1979).

"Writing workshop" is an approach to writing instruction based on the writing process. Advocated by numerous researchers and writing specialists (e.g., Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Cooper, 2000; Hansen, 1987; Ruddell, 2002), writing workshop involves setting aside a period of class time on regularly scheduled days for students to draft, revise, edit, and share their own work (Graves, 1994; Calkins, 1994). This approach simulates the process of real authors as closely as possible (Cunningham & Allington, 2003). An essential component of writing workshop, emphasized by many researchers and educators, is allowing students to choose their own topics (e.g., Routman, 2000). When children can choose their own topics and share their work, they feel more motivated to write. In addition, hearing peers' responses also helps children develop a sense of audience, which they need to become good revisers (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Moffett, 1992; Moffett & Wagner, 1992). Ideally, children are introduced to writing workshop in elementary school and continue with it through middle and high school (Ruddell, 2002). Writing workshop not only helps students learn the process of writing, it also supports the development of writing as a lifetime

skill, making students aware of the multiple audiences and purposes for writing (Hughey & Slack, 2001).

Because a clear understanding of the writing process is so important to becoming an effective writer, each Write Source handbook begins with "The Process of Writing" section which provides explanations and models for each step in the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading, and publishing. All the models include sidenotes that point out key passages and writing strategies and demonstrate an important concept: good writing undergoes changes to make it better writing. This section provides clear advice on getting started, selecting a topic, and gathering details. It covers revising, using the six-traits of writing assessment to help students learn to identify areas of strength and weakness in their writing. Editing and proofreading are described in "The Process of Writing" section and demonstrated in actual writing models in "The Forms of Writing" section. "The Proofreader's Guide" at the back of each handbook is a quick reference for the conventions of writing that students can refer to whenever they are asked to write. In addition, the Write Source handbooks present a variety of strategies, such as using graphic organizers, outlining, and listing, that help students organize their thinking and writing. At each level, the handbook serves as the writer's resource. Students access the handbook whenever they need to find answers to their questions about writing. Because the handbook serves as a reference, it has a distinct advantage over traditional textbooks which most students open only at the teacher's direction. The handbooks offer students advice, guidelines, writing models, and rules for writing to support them every time they write.

Students need frequent writing opportunities to become strong writers.

Frequent opportunities to write, for a variety of purposes and in a range of genres, are also necessary to the development of good writers. The benefits of frequent writing have been emphasized by many authorities, including the National Reading Panel (2000) and the U.S. Department of Education Office of the Secretary (2001) in the summary of evidence-based instruction essential to the No Child Left Behind

initiative. Many opportunities and extended time to practice, share, and discuss writing builds confidence and skill in student writers (e.g., Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983, 1994).

In years past, students typically were not given frequent writing opportunities in school nor the type of writing tasks that engage them in deep thinking (Applebee, 1981; Langer, 1986) which are critical to helping students to develop fully as writers. Recently educators have begun to appreciate the need to show students how to think and write in all disciplines (Atwell, 1989). Because students are not equally familiar with all modes of writing, such as expository and persuasive writing, students need instruction in various forms of writing and how they are organized (Downing, 1995; Lenski & Johns, 2000). Even students who have participated in writing workshop and other writing activities benefit from further guidance in writing informational and other types of text (Collins, 1998; Stotsky, 1995).

The Write Source program helps teachers instruct students in using the writing process and provides many activities for practice. Yearlong lesson plans for each grade level support the writing process and are organized in a sequence of instruction that follows the writing framework for each level. The writing activities help students use the steps in the writing process. The lesson plans connect skills activities to the forms of writing. The handbook and Language Program activities guide students as they visit and revisit the steps within each writing task, which reinforces the concept that the stages of the writing process are recursive. Moreover, teachers can customize the lesson plans to accommodate individual or small groups. Because young writers do not all develop literacy skills at the same pace, this feature helps teachers in meeting the individual needs of their students as they learn to use the writing process. Teachers rely on the handbook during writing instruction and encourage students to use the handbook on their own as they are asked to write for a variety of purposes each day. Each Language Program assists language arts teachers with information on creating a writing workshop environment in which students learn the process of writing through many opportunities to practice and share their writing.

Teaching students to write beginning with simpler and more personal forms of writing and moving to more analytical and complex writing tasks helps them develop fluency in their writing.

The writing framework in each handbook is based on James Moffett's work on the teaching of communication skills. Moffett draws on developmental psychology, cognition, and his observations from the classroom to create a continuum of the development of students' ability to think and write in abstract terms, separate from themselves. He explains, "whereas adults differentiate their thought into specialized kinds of discourse such as narrative, generalization, and theory, children must for a long time make narrative do for all. They utter themselves almost entirely through stories—real or invented—and they apprehend what others say through story" (Moffett, 1983, p.49).

The writing framework for each Write Source handbook follows Moffett's understanding of how children develop as writers and therefore begins with the more accessible forms of written communication such as personal writing, and moving through the increasingly more challenging forms of academic, creative, and reflective writing, as well as research that shows that it is beneficial for students at all grade levels to be engaged in a wide range of forms (Barchers, 1998). Viewed as a series, the Write Source handbooks and Language Programs facilitate students' growth in learning about the dynamics of discourse with repeated opportunities to explore the same forms of writing each year. Because the personal forms of writing draw upon students' prior knowledge and are not heavily dependent on research or other outside sources, they also allow students to immediately start writing, which is essential to their development as writers.

Moving through the hierarchy of writing forms helps students develop higher-order critical thinking skills that are necessary for effective communication. The organizational hierarchy of the framework reflects the taxonomy of higher-level thinking skills that students need to develop for understanding and fluency. The progression of the framework supports students at each grade level as they are asked to

write on many topics for a variety of purposes. As the writers grow, the writing framework in each handbook "grows" with them to provide consistent guidelines and age-appropriate models for the same written communication forms. Students in Kindergarten (*The Writing Spot*) begin by creating list and notes and progress towards more complex writing like creating stories and by twelfth grade (*Writers INC*) students begin with writing personal narratives and are writing position papers and essays of evaluation towards the end of the year. Through ongoing discussions about writing and with many opportunities to practice the various writing forms, students learn to communicate effectively.

Understanding the six-traits of effective writing and how to revise effectively is essential to becoming a skillful, independent writer.

Good revision is essential to effective writing (Lane, 1993). In the revision stage of the writing process, students must take another look at, or "re-vision" (Calkins, 1994), their work. Because revising is not a natural stage for children (Graves, 1983), revision skills must be taught and practiced. In this stage, students must ask themselves if they have expressed themselves clearly, whether they should add or delete anything from their piece, and whether they need to find different words to make their writing more interesting (Cooper, 2000). Conferencing or seeking advice from others is key to becoming an effective reviser (Moffett, 1992; Moffett & Wagner, 1992). Hearing others' questions and comments over time results in the internalization of readers' responses, enabling children to gain a stronger sense of audience, which is necessary to writing clearly and effectively.

Using the six-traits of effective writing to assess can help students in their efforts at revision (Spandel, 2001). These traits represent six characteristics of good writing: stimulating or interesting ideas; a logical organization; an engaging voice; original word choice; good sentence flow; and correct writing mechanics, such as spelling, punctuation, and grammar usage. In the "six-trait" approach, students are asked to revise their work with an awareness of the presence or absence of these characteristics

(Spandel, 2001). When students evaluate their own writing in this way, they strengthen their self-assessment and metacognitive skills (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Graesser, 1998; Strickland & Strickland, 1998; Stiggins, 1996). Students learn the six-traits model to help them identify the strengths and weaknesses in a piece of writing and to develop a common vocabulary for talking about writing. As students use the writing process and practice with the forms of writing, the six-traits rubrics help all students learn to read their own writing objectively. Six-trait writing instruction has also been shown to improve student writing test scores (Jarner, Kozol, Nelson, & Salsberry, 2000). Practice in revision prepares students for the writing assessments that are administered by the schools. The majority of states include writing samples as part of their statewide assessment programs (Spandel, 2001, p.19), and a large number of districts across the country have adopted traits-based instruction to help their students perform better as writers.

The Write Source handbooks and Language Programs introduce the six-traits in "The Process of Writing" section. The six-traits provide a common language for teachers and students to use as they assess and evaluate writing. Each trait is described in detail and demonstrated in the forms of writing in each handbook. The program includes samples of student writing and scoring rubrics for practicing with the traits. Each handbook also provides revising, editing, and proofreading checklists based on the traits. The checklists help students take responsibility for improving their writing and using conventions correctly. As students use the checklists and scoring rubrics, they learn to evaluate their writing objectively and revise their writing effectively.

The six-traits of good writing are introduced in *Write One* for first graders and elaborated throughout the series. Students learn how the six-traits can help them focus on important tasks in each stage of the writing process. In the prewriting and drafting stages, students are to focus on their ideas and organization. During revising and editing, students are to focus on sentence smoothness and the correctness of mechanics. This approach breaks down complicated ideas into manageable segments,

and helps students understand clearly what they do well and what they need to improve in their writing.

Each Write Source program includes a comprehensive assessment section with models and scoring rubrics that are based on the six-traits. Like the student handbooks, the Write Source Language Program supports teachers with materials appropriate to the specific grade level of the program. The samples of student writing and the scoring rubrics for the various modes of writing are developmentally appropriate and easy to implement. The six-traits rubrics at each level provide students with consistent support and practice for identifying the strengths and weaknesses in writing and may be used throughout the program as well as for final assessment.

The mechanics of writing should be taught as part of the overall process of writing.

Gaining control of the mechanics of writing—punctuation, spelling, and correct usage—is clearly important to becoming an effective writer. Research has shown that grammar lessons taught without making connections to the context of authentic writing do not typically help students better write or edit their own work (Hillocks, 1986; Weaver, 1997). Many experts on writing and cognition emphasize the importance of learning these conventions in the context of the students' own writing (e.g., Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Spandel, 2001; Weaver, 1997). Routman (2000) points out, "Writers learn to control conventions best 'at the point of need,' that is, in the context of real writing." This is not to say that mechanics, usage, and grammar should not be introduced in lessons directed by the teacher. What is necessary is that once introduced, these skills are made meaningful only by practice in the context of students' own writing. In addition, these skills should be reinforced as appropriate with mini-lessons.

In the Write Source program, grammar instruction and practice is emphasized. Beginning in first grade, Proofreading Guides are included in each book to help

children build a mastery of writing mechanics over time and in the context of their own real writing. Students can use these guides to check for correctness in their own work as well as in their peers' work. Because students are asked to apply these rules and conventions in context, students are better able to learn and retain important information on writing mechanics. The rules for writing at each level are located in the back of the handbook in the "Proofreader's Guide" section. These pages of rules for mechanics, usage, and grammar are yellow and, therefore, easy to locate. This section serves as a self-contained resource within the handbook.

Because writing conventions are essential, mini-lessons to build skills are often needed (Routman, 2000). The Program Guides provide mini-lessons to reinforce mechanics usage and grammar skills that teachers can apply when they find students are struggling with particular concepts. The Program Guides also provide additional opportunities for students to practice grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling skills. The skills activities included in the Program Guides help students link the need for correct mechanics to their own needs as writers. Each Write Source Language Program for grades one through twelve includes a SkillsBook that coordinates with each handbook's Proofreader's Guide, the "Yellow Pages." Each SkillsBook provides practice activities for the basic writing skills, mechanics, usage, and grammar. Each activity also provides opportunity for students to practice the skill in original writing. Students who are given daily practice in editing and proofreading the writing of others will gradually learn to apply conventions correctly to their own writing. Research supports devoting classroom time to model and discuss writing, and to address conventions within writing instruction (Spandel, 2001).

Beginning with grade one, each program includes a SkillsBook with activities for practice in editing and proofreading. These mechanics, usage, and grammar topics appear in the same order in the SkillsBook as they do in the Proofreader's Guide in each handbook. The program integrates skills instruction into the writing that students are asked to produce. This way students learn conventions within the context of writing. For example, the programs suggest teaching the quotations marks that identify

a speaker in the context of a personal narrative or story. This integration helps students "see" the function of conventions as they relate to communicating effectively, as well as providing the model students need precisely at the time when the convention is critical to conveying meaning. As students come to understand that correctness is essential if one's writing is to be understood, they become more effective in editing their writing. The editing checklists in the handbooks and the SkillsBook activities in the programs help students learn to check their writing for errors and become better proofreaders.

Improving students' writing skills also makes them better readers and thinkers.

Researchers and educators describe important connections between reading and writing skills and instruction (e.g., Barchers, 1994, 1998; Dahl & Farnan, 1998; Pearson & Tierney, 1984; Ruddell, 2002; Shanahan, 1990; Tierney & Shanahan, 1991). There are several reasons for this. Reading and writing develop together naturally (Calkins, 1994; Sulzby & Teale, 1991) and both are constructive processes that require similar strategies and thus reinforce one another (Lewin, 1992). Both require setting a purpose, activating relevant prior knowledge, constructing meaning, revising hypotheses or understandings during meaning making, and finalizing that meaning making (Pearson & Tierney, 1984). When developed in tandem, reading and writing improve achievement, enhance communication skills, and build critical thinking ability (Cooper, 2000). Engaging students in writing activities has also been shown to improve reading ability (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991). For example, writing activities in the primary grades enhance students' knowledge of letters and their sounds. This can also be the case for struggling upper grade level students. Because writing reinforces phonologic knowledge (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) it may also benefit low-achieving adolescent readers and English language learners.

The National Reading Panel (2000) has pointed out that several key reading strategies rely on students' ability to write, such as using graphic and semantic organizers,

generating and answering questions, and summarizing. In addition, writing is one of the major modes of reader response, which supports students' comprehension of text (Cooper, 2000). Many educators advocate journaling in response to reading to help students construct meaning and reinforce comprehension skills (Atwell, 1987; Tierney, Readance, & Disgner, 1990.)

When reading and writing are used as learning tools across the curriculum, students improve their content area knowledge as well as their literacy skills (Gavelek, Raphael, Biondo, & Wang, 2000; Guthrie & McCann, 1997; Morrow, Pressley, Smith, & Smith, 1997). Writing has also been advocated as a way to strengthen thinking skills (Perkins, 1992). When students write before and after an assigned reading in a content area, they must think more deeply about the reading (Santa, Havens, & Harrison, 1996). As Vacca and Vacca explain, "Writing facilitates learning by helping students explore, clarify, and think deeply about the ideas and concepts they encounter in their reading" (2002, p. 247). For this reason, writing-to-learn activities, such as exploratory writing and journaling, are advocated in all subject areas (Vacca & Vacca, 2002).

In the Write Source program, the reading-writing connection is emphasized throughout. *The Writing Spot* lessons include information on how letters have sounds, how letters and sounds make words, and how words are put together into sentences and *Write One* contains a reading and word-study section that reinforces phonics generalizations, such as consonant blends and digraphs, long and short vowel sounds, compound words, and others.

As students progress through the elementary levels, "The Tools of Learning" activities cover reading skills such as reading graphics, reading new words, and reading to understand; working with words, including phonics, making new words, and making contractions; and listening and thinking skills, including graphic organizers and other skills. Additional skills that affirm the reading-writing connection, such as finding information, vocabulary skills, and speaking and listening skills, are also covered.

During middle and high school, reading for comprehension, reading to learn, and other thinking and learning skills are presented in more depth, further strengthening the cognitive abilities required for efficient reading and writing. In addition, students are instructed on how to conduct research, including how to find information and evaluate the quality of their sources.

At all grade levels in Write Source, students are asked to write in response to literature, which develops their critical thinking skills and helps them deepen their understanding of the texts they analyze. In elementary school students are asked to write book reviews and by high school, students are able to write an extended literacy analysis. Writing in a variety of formats and genres helps students understand diverse text structures and read these forms in the same way that encouraging student writers to do wide reading helps them develop as writers.

The handbooks also help develop students' listening, speaking, viewing, and test-taking skills for academic success across the curriculum. The program includes graphic organizers to help students become active readers who can respond effectively to their reading assignments, use learning logs, and take effective notes. When students are encouraged to use writing as a thinking tool, teachers can easily monitor what the students are learning. The Write Source handbooks help students gain confidence as independent learners as they access the handbooks to find the learning suggestions and strategies that will help them to succeed in all the content areas.

Writing activities help improve overall literacy for struggling learners and non-native English speakers.

Often struggling learners are viewed as needing slowed-down, more concrete instruction. However, as Allington and Walmsley (1995) have pointed out, slowing down instruction ensures that delayed readers will always remain behind their peers. For at-risk students, Cunningham and Allington (1999) have concluded, "consistently high-quality classroom instruction" has an "enormous impact." Such high-quality

instruction includes authentic purposes for reading and writing, reading and writing across the curriculum, a variety of literacy experiences, and guided reading and writing, as well as lessons that teach essential reading strategies (Cunningham & Allington, 1999). With the integration of writing into the curriculum, all students have the opportunity to build the range of literacy skills they need to become effective readers and writers.

The Write Source handbooks are written to be accessible to a wide range of students at each grade level. Therefore, every student, including those who are struggling learners or English language learners benefit from using the handbooks. Each handbook is student-friendly and age-appropriate in tone and design. The illustrations and drawings on the handbook pages help transmit the text message. Text is presented in manageable chunks so students with a wide range of reading levels can access the information. Written as a learning resource, students quickly learn to use the handbooks to find the information they need to complete assignments in all content areas. The handbooks maintain a consistent, easy-to-read style that provides explanations, guidelines, and annotated models. The reader may revisit the information as often as needed to learn the featured concept. Students who are easily frustrated by difficult-to-read textbooks will find the handbooks easy to use and enjoyable to read.

For students who struggle with literacy, many elements in the Write Source program scaffold more successful writing and reading. The models of writing given, with accompanying sidenotes, illustrate good writing practices. In addition, the books introduce graphic organizers and other prewriting strategies to help students organize their thoughts and begin to write. The six-trait approach to evaluating and revising one's own work clarifies the revision process for struggling students, enabling them to better assess and revise their writing. Models of different levels of writing are provided in the Program Guide to further illustrate how students can improve their work. The program for each level includes teacher's notes on addressing the special needs of struggling and English language learners.

The Write Source handbooks are designed to be accessible and inviting to all students, including struggling readers and writers. The SkillsBooks present lessons in one- or two-page spreads that struggling students will find inviting, rather than intimidating. Older students who may be reluctant to participate in class discussions can use the handbooks to find immediate support. The questions that frequently cause blocks to getting started or lead to frustration are effectively answered with strategies and guidelines that facilitate learning. Headings, lists, and color are used throughout the handbooks to help students locate and understand the information they need to be more successful writers and readers.

See pages 31-34 for research base bibliography.

CASE STUDIES

III.   CASE STUDIES

Livingston Parish School District
Frost Elementary School
Livingston, LA

District Demographics:*

Schools: 36

Teachers: 1,196

Students: 20,200

Special Education Students: 1,831

Poverty: 18%

Ethnic: African American 6%, Caucasian 94%

About Frost Elementary School:

Grades: K-8

Enrollment: 326

Shannon Graham, a 4th grade teacher at Frost Elementary, describes the school:

"The class size ranges from about 18-25 students. It is a Title I school with about 54% of students on free/reduced lunches. Our school is ranked academically above average with a school performance score around 95."

About *Writers Express*:

"The wonderful thing about *Writers Express* is that it is a handbook not a textbook, therefore allowing the opportunity to use it not only during the English block, but

*All district demographic information is from Market Data Retrieval, unless otherwise noted.

throughout the curriculum. This handbook is a resource tool and a reference guide for my students to use as a means of mastering the beauty of the written word. It is a way for them to learn to express their thoughts and feelings in a variety of ways including journals, reports, poetry and story writing.

I have been utilizing the program for two years. I am a standards-oriented teacher and I have always found a need to supplement the textbook. When I looked at this handbook for the first time, I was hooked! I knew I had found a tool that was child-friendly and illustrated the traits all good writers possess.

I begin each year by teaching the six-traits of effective writing, introducing my students to journal writing and portfolio management. We then spend time building paragraphs and writing short essays while simultaneously learning the steps in the writing process. Then we branch out across the curriculum incorporating our writing skills in every aspect of our day.

[*Writers Express*] is very child-friendly. The illustrations help present the important information in a fun and exciting way. The format breaks the writing process into simple steps and more importantly, it gives real-life examples (samples) of writing done by other kids. The checklists and proofreading guides are invaluable. It also teaches students how to use a dictionary, a thesaurus, how to become a better speller, punctuation skills, test-taking strategies as well as how to work in cooperative groups. Most of all it teaches children how to express themselves using the written word, something timeless and the greatest gift a child can receive.
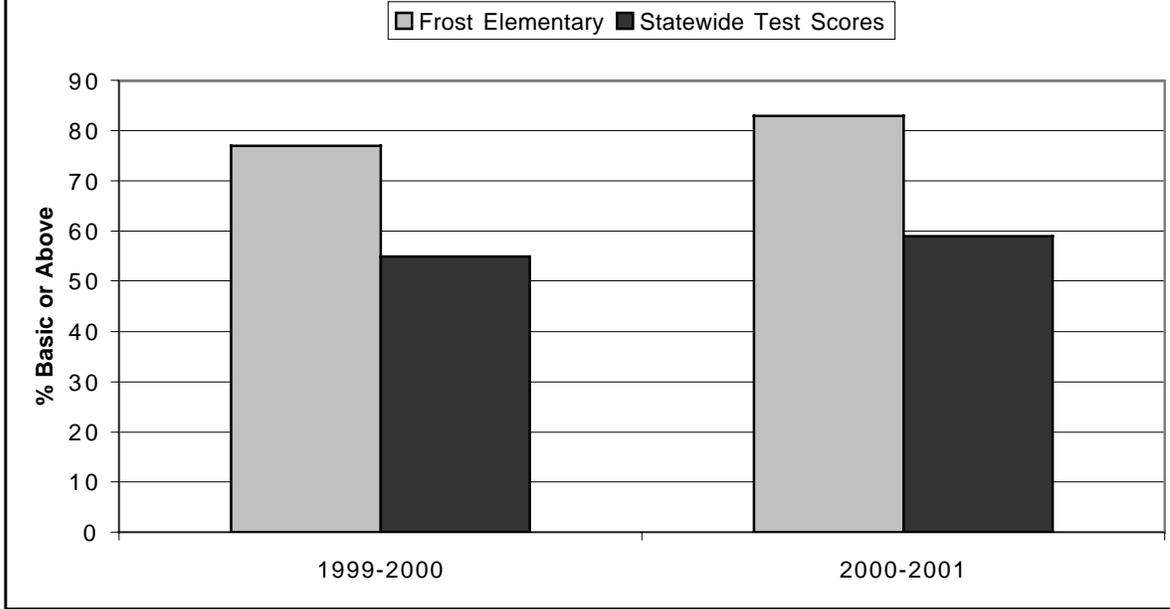
Since the LEAP [Louisiana Educational Assessment Program] Test is primarily an essay-formatted test, the best way to prepare is to write, write, write…Because *Writers Express* covers all forms of writing as well as teaching the process and traits of effective writing, students are prepared to share ideas, to organize thoughts and feelings, to use their personal voice and to write in smooth and accurate sentences

when answering test questions. Not only will they be ready for the LEAP test, they will be ready for life!

I know that my students perform very well on the LEAP Test. I believe that before using the program I had more students scoring at the basic level. Since using *Writers Express*, I now have more scoring at the proficient level and a small number to reach advanced. This program gives my students the confidence they need to write. It motivates them by guiding them through the process of writing. It helps them learn strategies for developing stimulating ideas. It gives them skills to organize their thoughts into fluent "spiced up" sentences that impress those fortunate enough to read their beautiful writing."

Shannon Graham, Teacher
Frost Elementary

Frost Elementary vs. State ELA LEAP Scores
Grade 4

Frost Elementary ■ Statewide Test Scores

% Basic or Above

	1999-2000	2000-2001
Frost Elementary	77	83
Statewide Test Scores	55	59

Vermilion Public Schools
James A. Herod Elementary
Abbeville, LA

District Demographics:

Schools: 20

Teachers: 575

Students: 8,575

Special Education Students: 1,353

Poverty: 33%
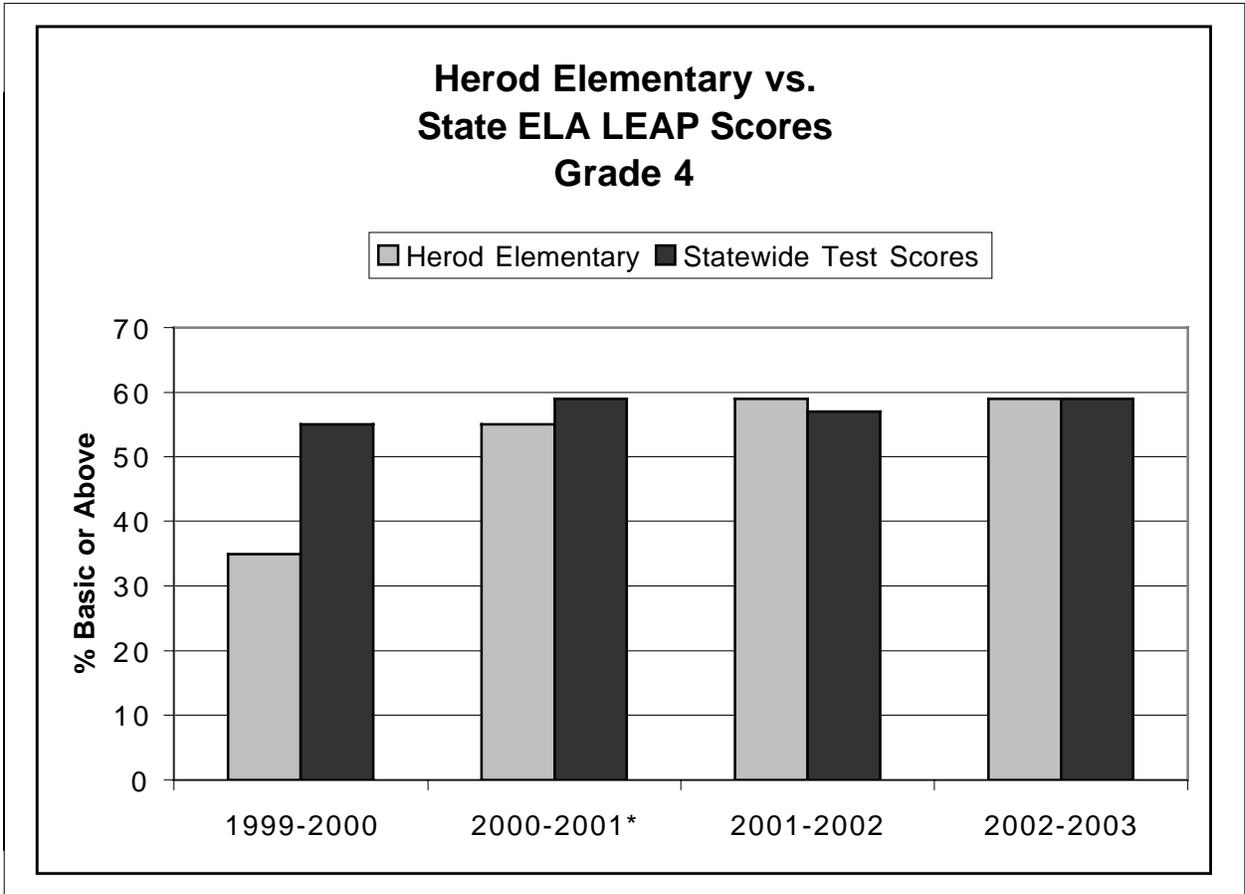
Ethnic: Asian 3%, African American 22%, Caucasian 74%

About James A. Herod Elementary School:

Grades: Pre-K-5

Enrollment: 541

Ethnic: Asian 1%, African American 65%, Caucasian 34%

Herod Elementary is a rural school with 86% of students on free or reduced lunch. They have been using the Write Source series daily with grades 1-5, since implementation during the 2000-2001 school year.

**Herod Elementary vs.
State ELA LEAP Scores
Grade 4**

☐ Herod Elementary ■ Statewide Test Scores

% Basic or Above	1999-2000	2000-2001*	2001-2002	2002-2003
Herod Elementary	35	55	59	59
Statewide Test Scores	55	59	57	59

*First complete year with *Writers Express*.

A.E. Phillips Laboratory School
Ruston, LA

About A.E. Phillips:

A.E. Phillips has been using Write Source, K-8 since 2000.

About Using Write Source:

"We have used this program to strengthen our knowledge in all content areas. I believe that writing solidifies students' knowledge in all content areas. If they can effectively write about concepts and make connections to previously known information, their knowledge base is enhanced. The students have used this program to write plays, as a response to literature selections in reading, and to reflect on historical concepts in social studies. Students have also used the handbooks to help them write poetry, descriptive essays, personal narratives, and book reviews in reading, as well as report writing in social studies. My students have found the graphic organizers to be particularly helpful in all subject areas. I particularly like the gathering grids to aid the students in their research efforts.

Through its use my students have been able to better synthesize information…Because the writing samples are written by children their own age, the students feel that effective writing is within their reach. The students also appreciate the step-by-step instructions on how to achieve a finished piece of writing. They are shown work throughout the process and can use this for a model in their own writing, emphasizing that writing is indeed a process."

Libby Manning, Ed.D., Teacher
A.E. Phillips Laboratory School

A.E. Phillips vs. State Grade 4 ELA LEAP Scores 2002-2003
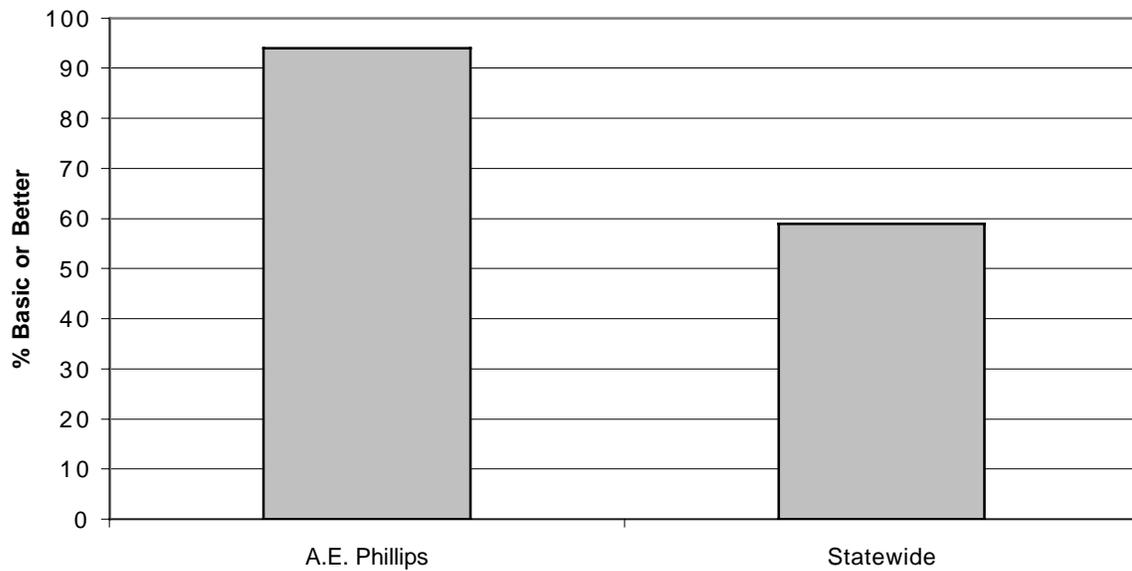
Lafayette Parish
Green T. Linden Elementary
Youngsville, LA

District Demographics:

Schools: 42

Teachers: 1,921

Students: 29,000
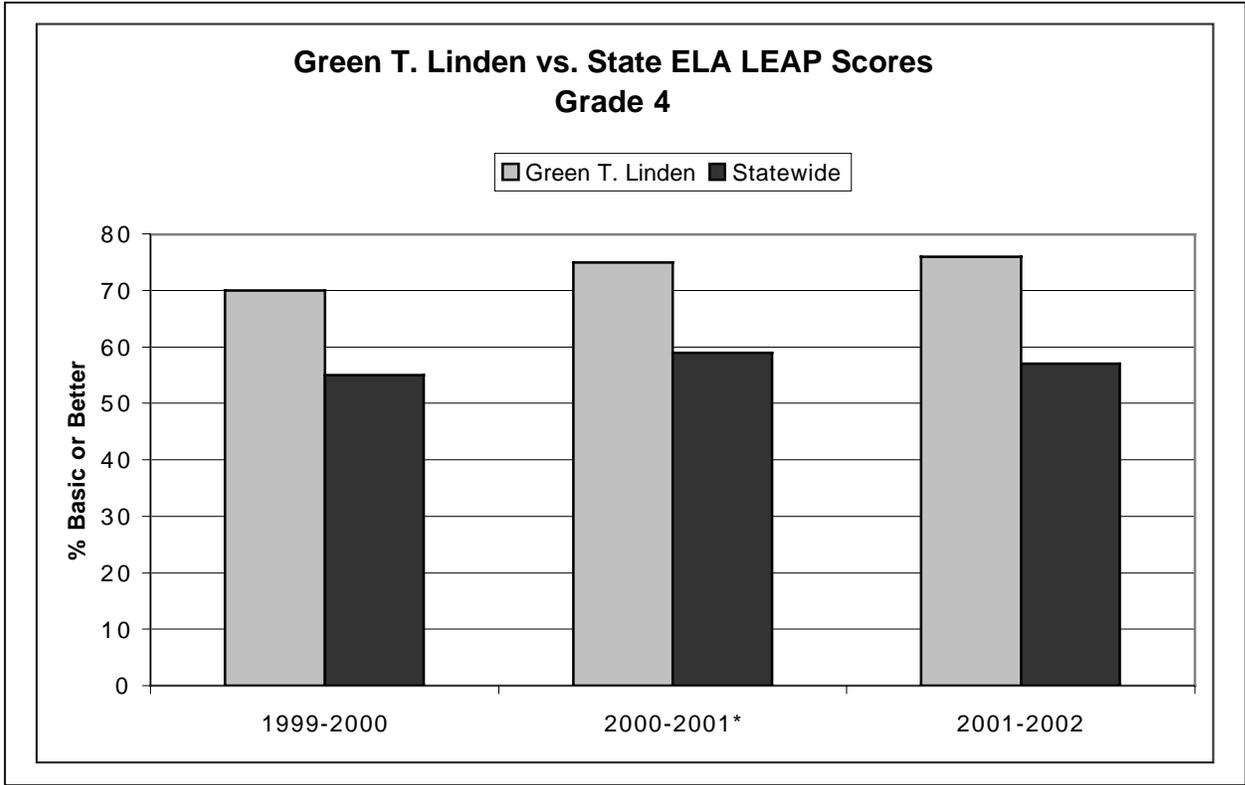
Special Education Students: 3,277

Poverty: 25%

Ethnic: Asian 1%, African American 37%, Hispanic 1%, Caucasian 60%

About Green T. Linden Elementary:

Grades: K-4

Students: 546

Green T. Linden Elementary implemented Write Source in grades K-4, beginning in the 2000-2001 school year.

Green T. Linden vs. State ELA LEAP Scores
Grade 4

% Basic or Better

Legend: □ Green T. Linden ■ Statewide

Year	Green T. Linden	Statewide
1999-2000	70	55
2000-2001*	75	59
2001-2002	76	57

*First year with Write Source.

Collier Public Schools
Naples, FL

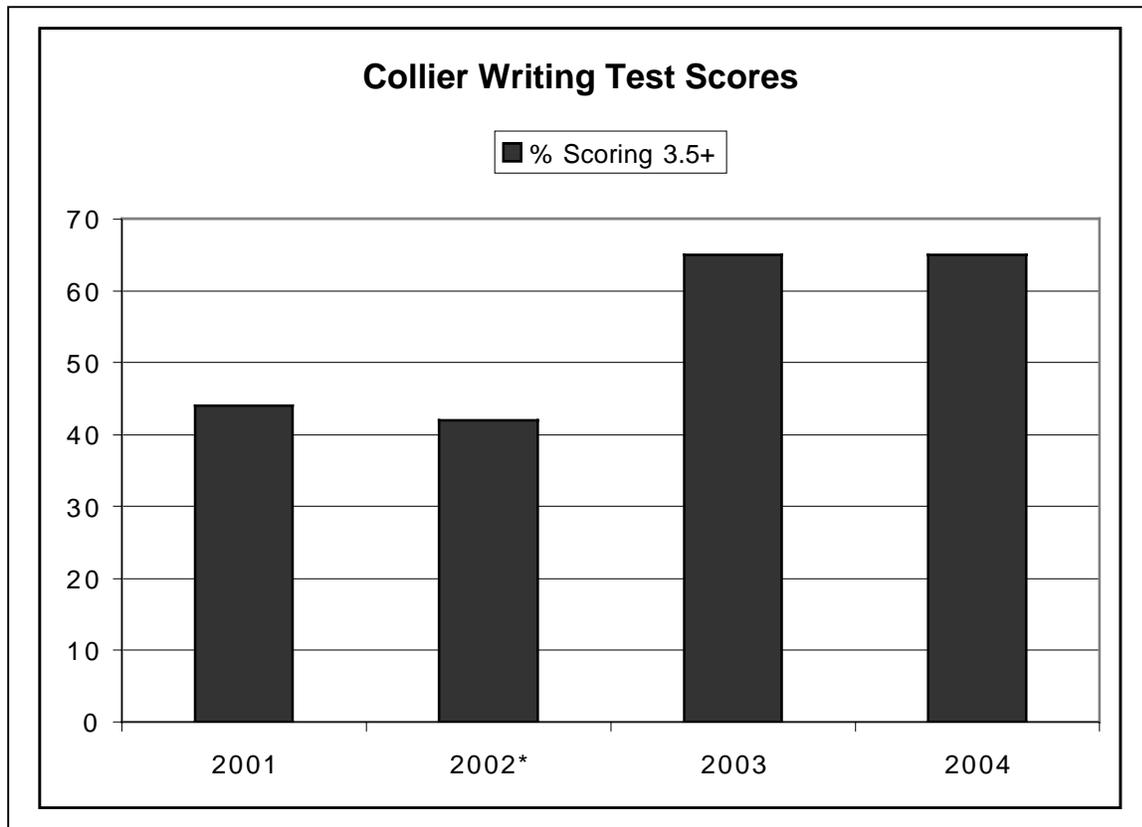**District Demographics:**

Schools: 42

Teachers: 1,952

Students: 37,700

Special Education Students: 5,665

Poverty: 17%

Ethnic: Asian 1%, African American 11%, Hispanic 32%, Caucasian 55%

Note: Scores are rated on a scale of 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest possible score.

Collier Writing Test Scores

■ % Scoring 3.5+

Year	% Scoring 3.5+
2001	44
2002*	42
2003	65
2004	65

*First year with Write Source.

Pinellas Co School District
Largo, FL

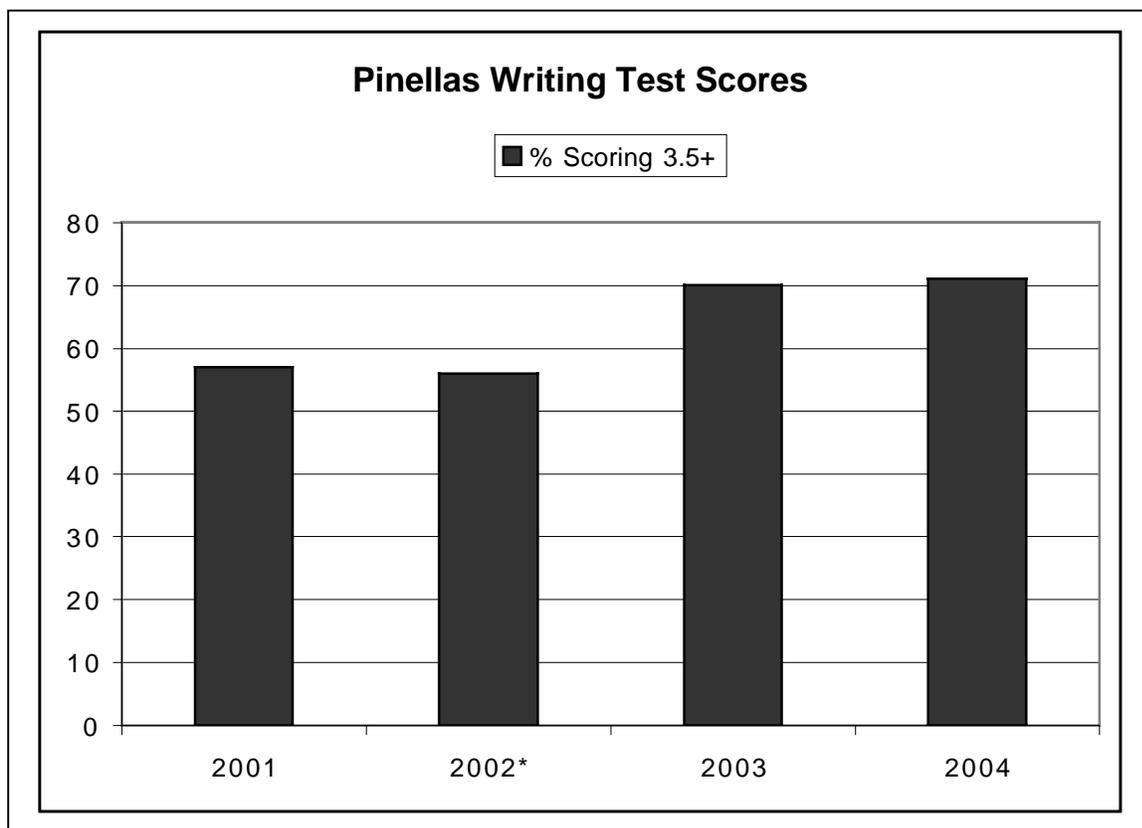## District Demographics:

Schools: 136

Teachers: 6,670

Students: 120,000

Special Education Students: 20,347

Poverty: 14%

Ethnic: Asian 3%, African American 19%, Hispanic 6%, Caucasian 72%

Note: Scores are rated on a scale of 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest possible score.

Pinellas Writing Test Scores

■ % Scoring 3.5+

Year	% Scoring 3.5+
2001	~57
2002*	~56
2003	~70
2004	~71

*First year with Write Source.

IV.   REFERENCES

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In source, only comments to describe what's happening within the function; loops, condition, etc. That is what I know for sure. Are there more comments needed in either main, source or header ? Should I add the comments I usually only put in the header in the source too, like that : foo.c or foo.cpp. Â C files should contain the usual comments you write anywhere when you write code. What does it do and why. Usually at the end of each line unless there is a need for more extensive comments.