



Holy Family Elementary School



School Growth Plan

2016-17

Last Updated : May, 2016

PART 1: Context, Priorities, Response to School Review, Recommendations, Processes and Connections

Holy Family Elementary School is a K – 7 school located in the Porter Creek area of Whitehorse, Yukon. This neighbourhood encompasses a wide socio-economic and cultural community. Currently, the 172 students enrolled at the school reflect this diversity.

Holy Family is a community school with a strong sense of “family.” In developing the minds, bodies and spirits of each student, we are proud of our academic, faith-based, sport and social justice initiatives. Furthermore, we take great pride in fostering a positive school culture. We believe it is very important for our students to feel that they are a part of our community and have a sense of pride that Holy Family is their school.

School Profile

At Holy Family, our Catholic faith is the foundation of all that we do – from treating each other with respect and dignity, to our classroom Religion programs, to our more formal liturgical celebrations. Our student population is 70% Catholic, with our non-Catholic parents choosing a Catholic faith-based education for their children.

At Holy Family, 8% of our students are of self-identified First Nations ancestry. In conversations with our First Nations parents, one of the reasons Holy Family Elementary School has been chosen is due to its Catholic faith-based focus. First Nation Spirituality and Catholicism have similar roots with an emphasis on connectedness to and respect for the earth, the sacredness of life consisting of one family, one people, all made by one God, the Creator. Our beliefs, Catholic and First Nations, are handed on through sacred story and ritual. Elders hold an esteemed place. Prayer and service to others is a unique and privileged responsibility, acknowledging the journey of the spirit and the reality of the afterlife, with today’s actions and decisions being seen in the light of their impact on future generations.

At Holy Family, we strive to support all students’ emotional and social development and their ability to strive for academic success. Informal data collection, however, indicates that many of our students (34% - Sept.2013; 30% Jan 2014- 29% May 2014) have social, academic, behavioural or physical vulnerabilities.

The School-Based Team, in collaboration with parents, teachers, and specialists, develops and supports programming that meets the educational and emotional needs of students by providing an environment, resources and personnel that is least restrictive and most enabling. Support for at-risk students includes formal Individual Educational Plans and informal support plans for students requiring modifications and adaptations. Recent trends indicate that there is a greater need to provide extra social-emotional support in our school community. It is very important for these children to bond with an adult in the school. When our vulnerable students feel connected to a staff member we find that there is an increased sense of safety and security. With this connectedness is an increase in the student's amenability to the support we provide and thus we observe an increase in academic engagement from the student.

At Holy Family, parent engagement is high, and there is openness between our staff and families when discussing sensitive information that allows us to assist our vulnerable students.

At Holy Family, we try to act as proactively as possible when dealing with students with behaviour challenges. Each of our staff members is actively involved in all aspects of supervision. Each month, we discuss "special projects" - students who might be struggling in a particular realm, and we, as a total staff, explore ways to support these children. This might be as simple as making sure they are greeted in the hallway to very close monitoring on the playground before negative behaviour takes place. At Holy Family, bullying is not tolerated. Recognizing that the emotional development of a child may not correspond with his/her chronological age, we work towards building supports for students that incorporate the developmental and behavioural aspects of programming.

At Holy Family, Intensive French (grades 5-7), and Pre-Intensive French, (grades 4 and 5) are offered. Intensive French is a literacy-based approach to teaching French as a second language that is incorporated into the Core French program for five months of the Grade 5 school year. It is based on the use of French for authentic communication in the classroom and the development of literacy skills in French. It is also based on a neurolinguistic approach to learning a language, whereby once a language is mastered orally, writing and reading tasks are more readily acquired. Additionally, students in the second half of Grade 5 and in Grades 6 and 7 receive an hour a day of French instruction to reinforce and further develop their French language skills.

At Holy Family, students and staff are active. Daily PE classes are supplemented with class and school wide swimming and skating as well as both primary and intermediate intra-murals. The Holy Family Hurricanes participate in interscholastic team sports including volleyball, basketball, badminton, soccer, hockey, wrestling and cross-country running.

At Holy Family, music is an integral aspect of school programming and of our school celebrations. All primary students receive 30 minutes of music a week. Students in Grades 4-7 make up the Holy Family School Choir; half of our intermediate students are choir members. Choir members performed at the Rotary Music Festival and at Holy Family's Spring Concerts. The Grades 2 and 3 students took ukulele lessons in their music program and could also choose to belong to the Ukulele Club.

At Holy Family, we believe in social justice. Our faith-based programming and social justice initiatives are often intertwined, supporting "The Giving Tree," "Valentines for Vets," an annual Catholic Schools' Food Drive, relief efforts for disasters and a variety of individual classroom projects. An annual Read-a-thon supports a school in Malawi and an orphanage in Peru.

At Holy Family, communication between staff members is open and welcomed by all. Communication, support, and mutual respect form a foundation of teamwork and cooperation that is essential to providing an optimal learning environment for our students. Holy Family Elementary has a staff of eight classroom teachers: a full-time Principal, a Vice Principal, eight Educational Assistants, a Reading Recovery Teacher, a Counsellor, a Learning Assistance Teacher, a Religious Education Coordinator, a Teacher-Librarian/IT Support Teacher, primary PE Specialist; a Core French Teacher; and a Remedial Tutor.

School Growth Plan team members are: Sue Harding (LAT), Ted Hupe (P), Corrie Lalonde (teacher, gr 2), Joe Stewart (EA), Kyla Piper/Debbie Janzen (School Council), Lina Radziunas (VP/LAT.)

Priorities:

Our school priorities focus on the Whitehorse Catholic Schools' Mission Statement which is to educate children in a Catholic learning environment. Through the sharing of knowledge and Christian values and by celebrating our Catholic faith, students are assisted in developing a personal faith and an understanding and appreciation of self and others. Each child has the opportunity to strive for academic excellence and to reach his or her potential as a life-long learner. The uniqueness of each child is celebrated.

Previous School Goals:

As we shift our attention to a new priority, the following school goals (2007/08, 2009/10, 2010/13) will continue to be areas of maintenance at Holy Family School:

- Improve math word problem solving ability of students at all grade levels
- The students in the Catholic schools will be witnesses to Catholic social teachings by developing responsibility for creating a just, peaceful and compassionate society
- Improve reading comprehension of students at all grade levels (most recent goal)

These goals continue to be monitored and revisited on a regular basis, mostly through data analysis (Foundational Skills Assessments - FSAs, District Assessment of Reading Team -DARTS, School Wide Writes -SWW and classroom assessments) to make certain that the higher standards remain status quo.

Our most current goal will be discussed in the section entitled "Focus."

Response to School Review Recommendations:

Having had our most recent school review completed in November, 2013, Review Team recommendation have been noted and addressed in the following table:

Summary Review Team Recommendations (November 2013)	Holy Family Team Response
-Continue to move further along the continuum of cultural inclusion	-French inclusion via Intensive French course as well as cultural events within the community -religion is part of our daily routines and also expressed via celebrations, mass, etc. -expanding knowledge of First Nations culture through classroom activities as well as participation in special activities such as Culture Camp, bison hunt, etc.
-teachers are to be able to articulate their own philosophy of Catholic Ed in relation to the school's Catholic philosophy	- through staff religious retreats, parish functions and personal professional development, members are encouraged to extend and share their knowledge of Catholicism with colleagues, students and other members of the community
-develop more of a continuum between primary and intermediate students	-through PLC work and vertical articulation of what's expected of students in each grade, more specifically in Language Arts and Math, this "gap" should close -sporting activities (intramurals, running club, Terry Fox Run/Walk, wrestling) definitely eliminate this gap -"Buddy" activities also close this gap
-communication around large school events needs attention so that all staff are aware of the plans	-large wall calendar so that everyone in the school knows who is doing what; this board will be located in a central area
-a reporting system be developed to ensure that when students encounter bullying, they can follow a protocol	-issue can also be raised through School Council and CEAY as bullying is a social problem, not just a school problem. Utilize the councils to advocate for issues that impact all schools. -research and develop a bullying protocol with built in flexibility to help address individual issues; this is to be shared with both staff, students and school council
-foster more meaningful relationships between school and Parish	-investigate ways of engaging students and families to connect with Our Lady of Victory, Sacred Heart and/or Mary House regularly. Collaborative programming amongst groups. For ex., religion class at the church to learn more about Catholic traditions, invitations to families to attend events at the parish, intergenerational activities such as connecting with older members of the parish who could provide a tour of the church or personal stories about being a member of a parish. Creating awareness among students about the various vocations within the church such as the role and experiences of those who are part of Mary House. -need for discussion about sacramental prep being done in the schools once more; there would be some bridging between the church and the school

<p>-explore more opportunities to incorporate First Nations culture into daily teaching</p>	<p>-many teachers are already doing this, with the support of material that has come from the Education Yukon -at school celebrations, acknowledge that school is on traditional FN land -Gr. 6 Bison camp – visit from FN elder prior to camp -at volunteer fair, request feedback of anyone in contact with FN elders</p>
<p>-school is encouraged to continue support internationally, but should also support local needs</p>	<p>-HFES already supports local groups such as Mary House (Giving Tree,) Food Drive, Sally and Sisters on a regular basis and also supports other calls for action when they arise</p>
<p>-provide more opportunities for intergenerational activities between students and the community</p>	<p>-HFES has activities such BBQ's, Bison Feast and Spring Concert, Christmas Concert that community members can attend -we also have community members come in and read with children, many parent volunteers for the Bison Hunt, wrestling, etc. -we plan to hold a volunteer fair in the fall to tap into our pool of community members -at the volunteer fair, suggest ways that seniors/elders are welcome and how they can participate in the school including: Elder Active Programming at the CGC (e.g. swimming), supervision of school activities (Rendezvous, pizza lunch, story-reading), street crossing for students during busy times</p>
<p>-students wanted more gym equipment and more organized activities on the playground</p>	<p>-in past HFES had a playground group that would facilitate activities for younger students (this should be resurrected) -as for more equipment, there seems to be a sufficient supply to cover the needs of students – not certain where to go on this one - our "big toy" was partially replace in 2015 and an additional section will be added in the summer of 2016</p>
<p>-maximize instructional space through the addition of more storage and shelving</p>	<p>- this has been a constant struggle at HFES – storage has been at a premium -some additional shelving can be installed -addition of our mobile computer program will free up the computer lab</p>
<p>-maximize Promethian board use</p>	<p>- encourage cross training and continual exposure to staff about the advantages of using the Promethian as a teaching tool -we are also looking at different computer display systems (e.g. Epson) -use of Apple TV?</p>
<p>-a process to assess the effectiveness of technology in support of student learning</p>	<p>- HFES now has a "mobile lab". Students engage in coding activities, Mathletics, etc.</p>
<p>-students would like an afternoon snack break</p>	<p>-this is already being incorporated by teachers in the school -we need to make certain this happens in all the classrooms</p>
<p>-HFES needs to future-forecast its demographics in order to anticipate future growth</p>	<p>-we constantly examine demographics, achievement test results, socio-emotional status, classroom activities and reports to determine what direction HFES needs to go in order to address concerns</p>
<p>-need to focus on the reinforcement of basic math skills and problem solving</p>	<p>-HFES staff has recognized the need to address math problem-solving. Because math problem-solving requires a</p>

	good understanding of what's been read, our ongoing goal of reaching and maintaining an appropriate level of reading has been and remains a priority. Now that students are more capable of reading, math problem-solving falls into place
-establish a common language of assessment amongst teachers and students, where benchmarks and a continuum of learning is clear (K-7)	-HFES staff is aware of this suggestion. We will set up a time to invite department staff to work on this continuum, possibly during PLC times -make certain that every class displays samples of a continuum of progress that students can achieve -student-friendly rubrics
-keeping in mind the changing demographics of our school community, explore and respond to the nutritional needs of students	-HFES has snacks, morning and lunch-time meals available for students. When needs arise, we will tap into additional resources to accommodate the needs of the students
-create ways to share important educational information with parents	-get parents more familiar with the school growth plan and the direction that the school is growing, and why through info nights -utilize the newsletters and school webpage to engage parents and students; this would also include regular classroom newsletters -meetings

Processes and Connections:

The following points address the direction of our future focus/goal:

- Meetings were held (2014-2016) with the previous School Growth Plan Team, teachers, school council members and the general public to discuss and address the review that was completed in November, 2013. The Plan was also posted to our website.
- Development of our upcoming goal is a combination of discussions, classroom observations, analysis of collected data by the school and within the school, some department data that displays trends, IEP information (maintaining confidentiality.) This new goal provides a nice transition from our former goal as reading and writing go hand-in-hand.
- Use of vulnerability charts (recorded at least three times per year)
- Statistics such as the DARTS, Running Records, FSAs - formerly known as YATS, teacher rubrics/assessments, and report cards are completed and reported on by teachers throughout the year. This collection of data as well as behavioural and counselling reports helps to formulate our school goal.
- A new School Growth Plan team has been formed (members listed in the first section of this report). This team includes a school council member, EAs, teachers and administrators.
- Meetings are being held on a regular basis to help develop and monitor targets and to communicate information to the school community. These occur by way of PLCs and school community updates in the newsletter, as well as updating the School Council via monthly meetings.

PART 2: Focus

Progress and Evidence:

Examination of school data along with the fact that reading was our former goal suggests that a writing goal is in order. In addition, we continue to address the Review Team's suggestions, some of which need a bit more time to be put into place (e.g. "volunteer fair" – better conducted at the beginning of a school year) and then monitored for effectiveness. The 2014-15 school year focused on the training of teachers on Writing Power strategies. We are currently in the 3rd year of our school growth plan calendar.

Looking Back at 2014-2015:

The 2014-15 school year focused on the training of teachers on Writing Power strategies. Teachers also gathered student writing samples in an effort to create a writing continuum for students.

In 2015-16, PLCs were formed and focused on AFL (Assessment for Learning) practices. Students began to practice self-assessments by comparing their work against a continuum. In addition, written work was celebrated via an activity called "Writer's Café;" here we invited community members to share in the celebration of students writing. Students also contributed to the monthly newsletter, reporting on such things as sporting events as well as activities such as the Bison Hunt. Student work was also read over the PA system and shared with "buddies." PD on assessment took place.

Looking Forward

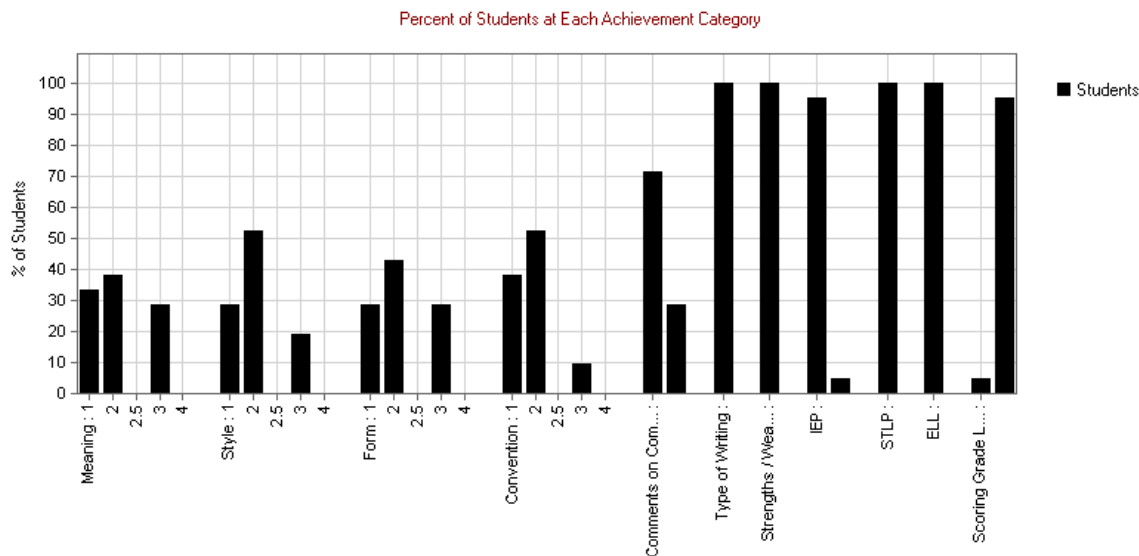
We will:

- continue to look at results from the DARTs, FSAs, School Wide Writes, and report cards.
- continue with Writing Power strategies in the classroom
- use writing continuums (using HFES student writing) in each classroom
- initiate and practice self and peer evaluation of writing, based on continuums
- use data, stored in the portal, to determine trends (successes and challenges) in writing
- continue to share the successes achieved in writing, with the larger community
- set up writing folders that contain individual student writing; these folders will follow the students through the grades

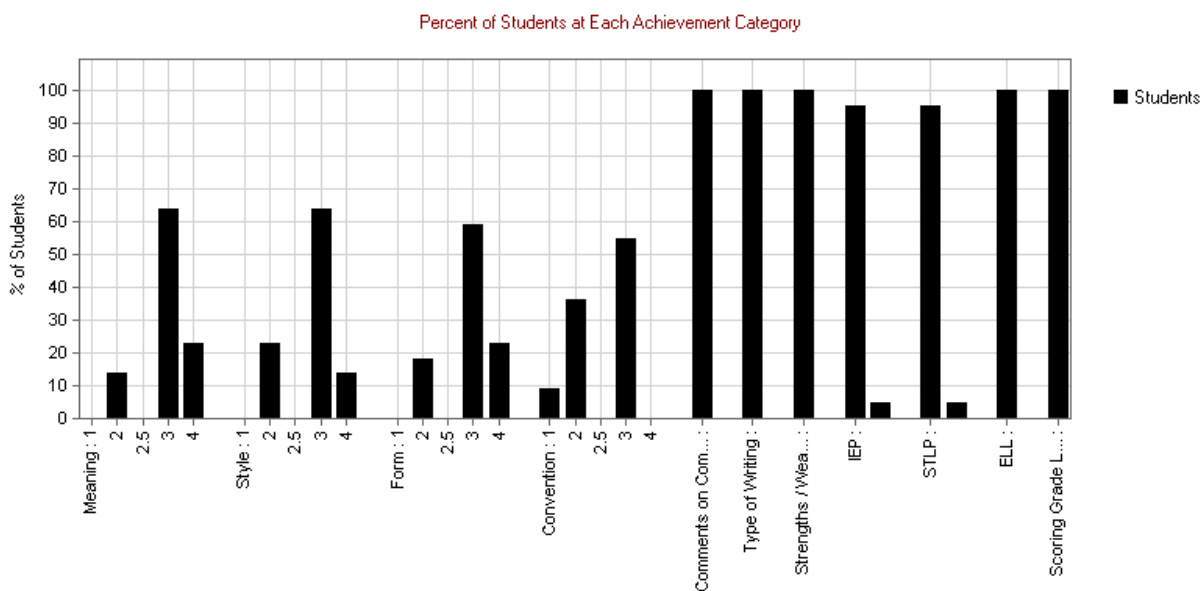
The following graphed data is just one example of where students "stand" in our School Wide Writes (SWW). We are still in the process of charting FSA results which, in the raw number format,

suggest that our gr 4 and 7 students are weaker in writing, when compared with math and reading results.

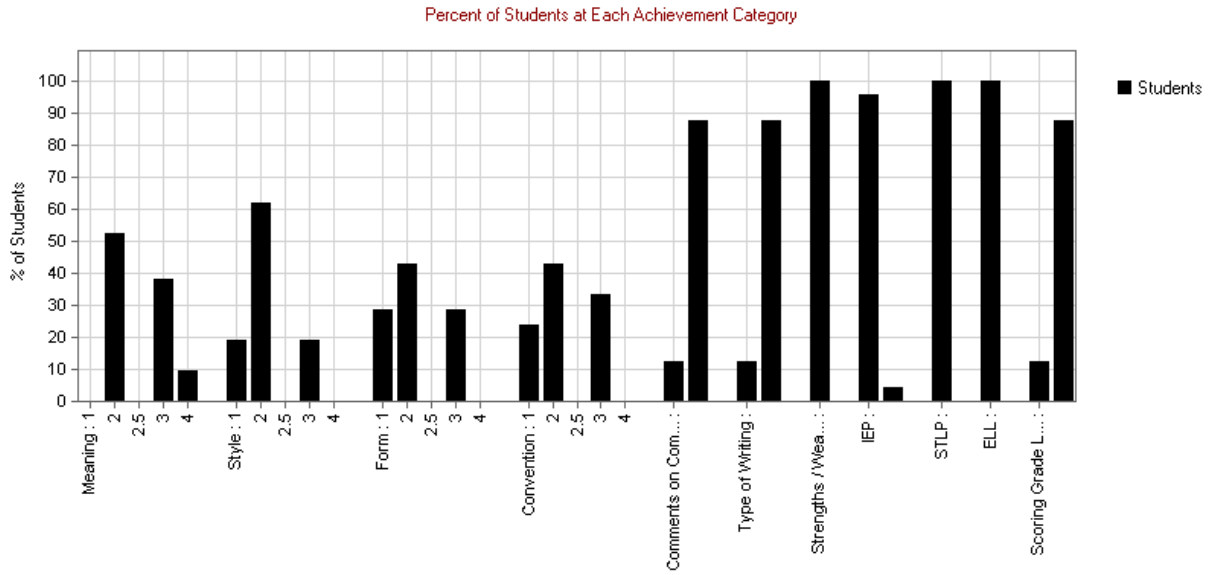
In the graphs provided below (data from 2014-15 is graphed, data from 2015-16 is unavailable at present,) it is evident that while there has been noticeable progress in the writing from the fall to the spring, there is still room for improvement in all areas. Numbers along the x-scale indicate the following expectations in the areas of meaning, style, form and conventions: 1=not yet meeting: 2=minimally meeting: 3=fully meeting: 4=exceeding.



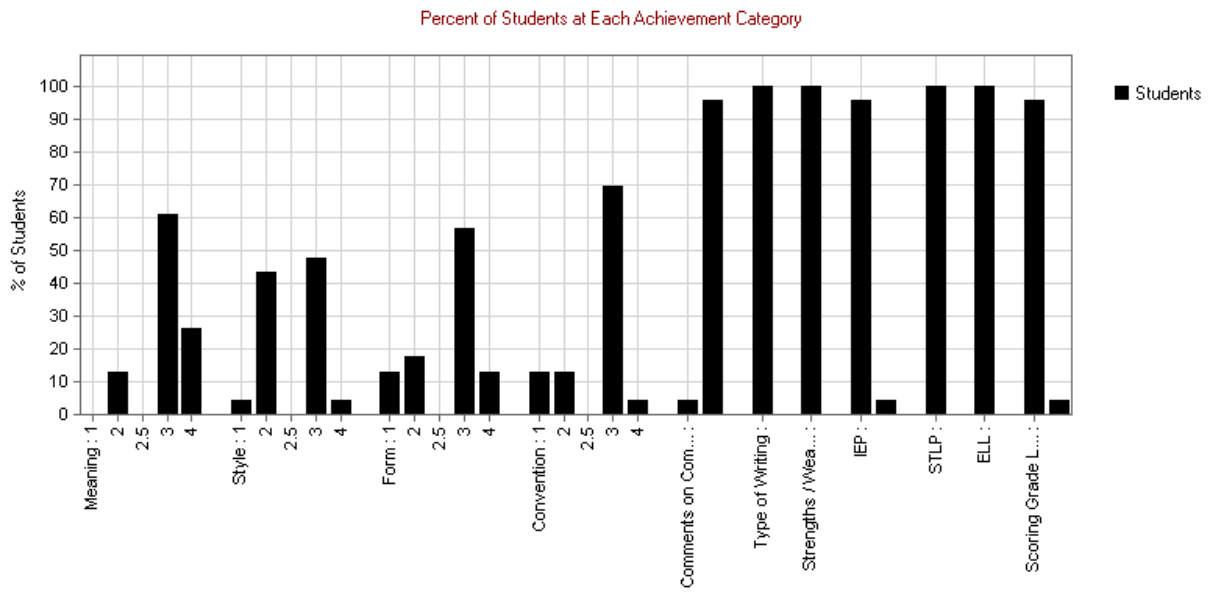
School Wide Writes, Grade 2, Fall 2014



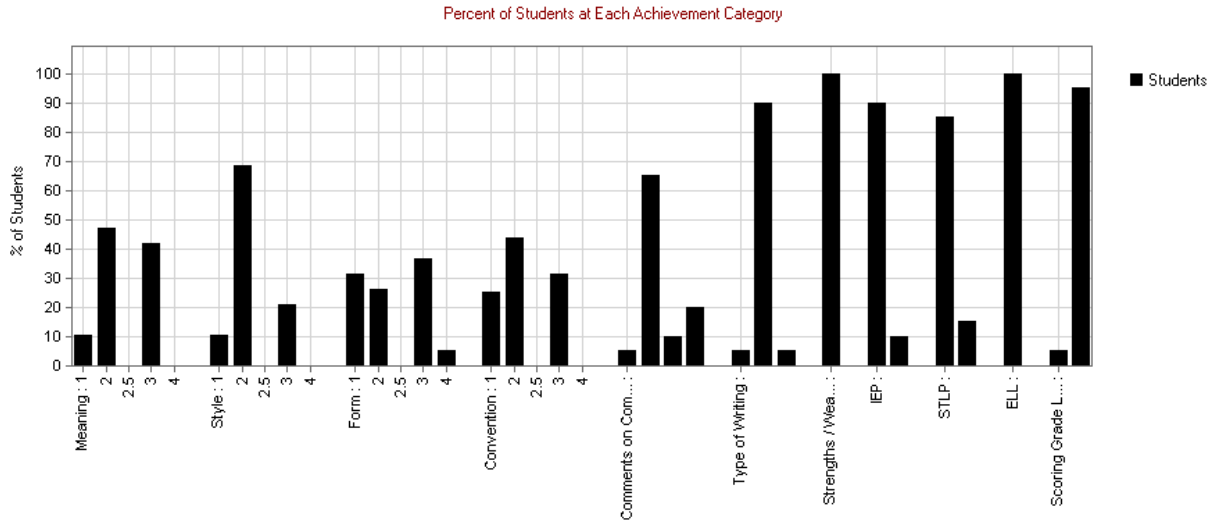
School Wide Write, Grade 2, Spring 2015



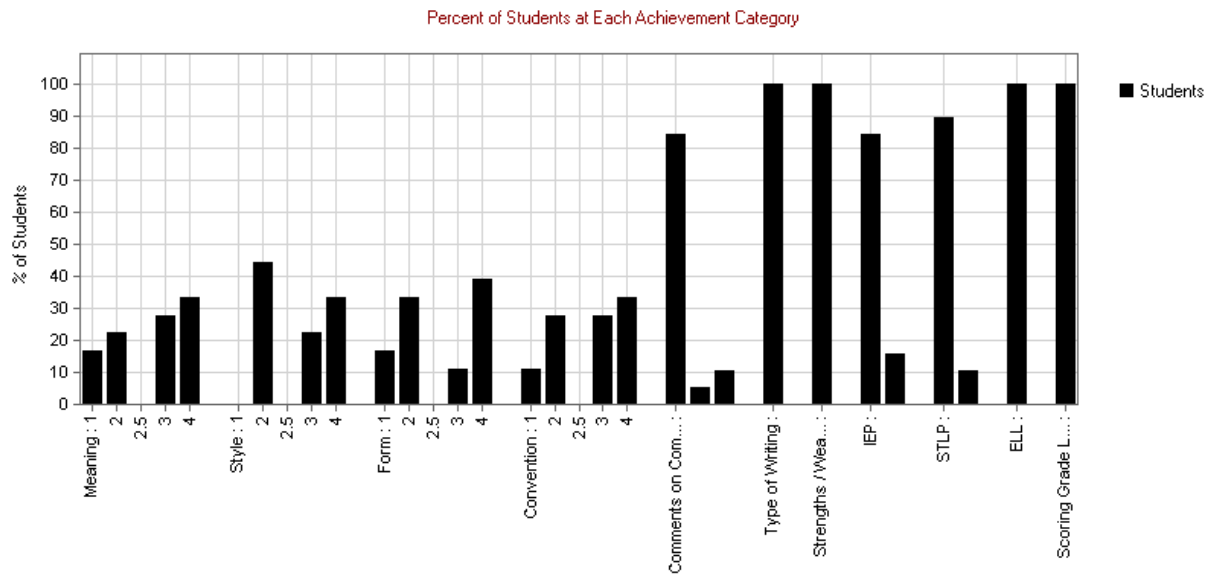
School Wide Writes, Grade 3, Fall 2014



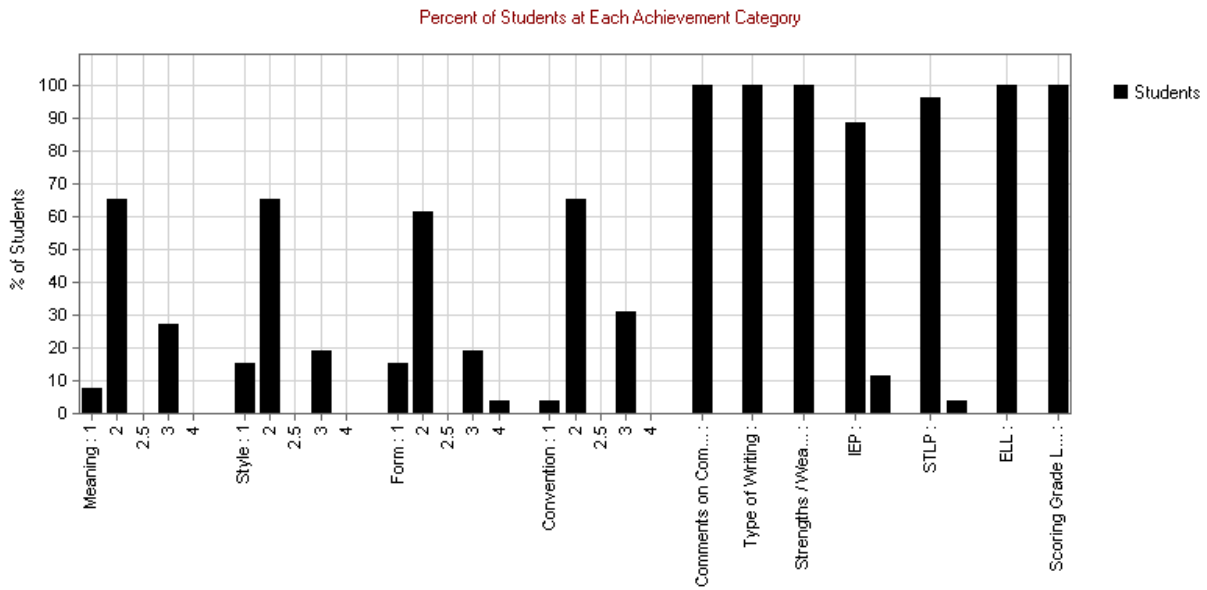
School Wide Writes, Grade 3, Spring 2015



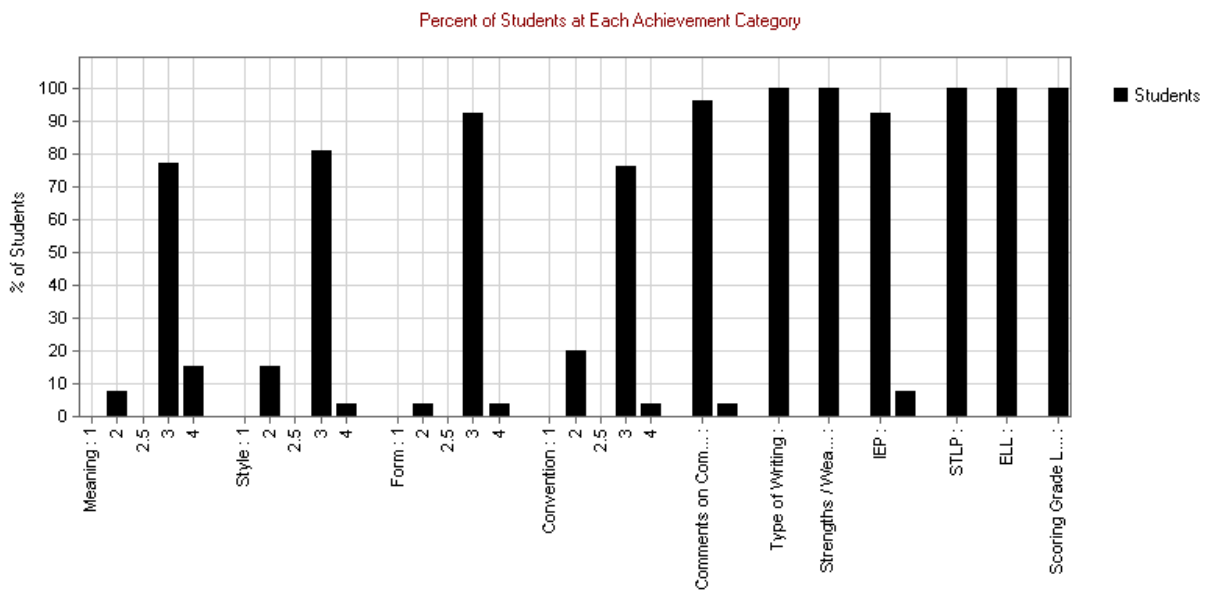
School Wide Writes, Grade 4, Fall 2014



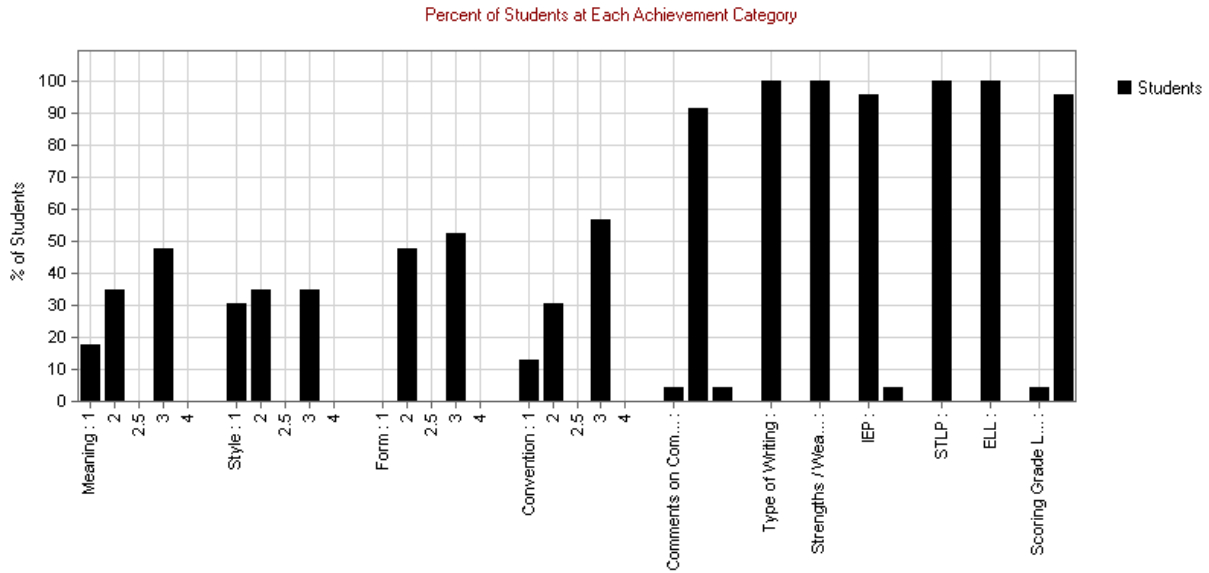
School Wide Writes, Grade 4, Spring 2015



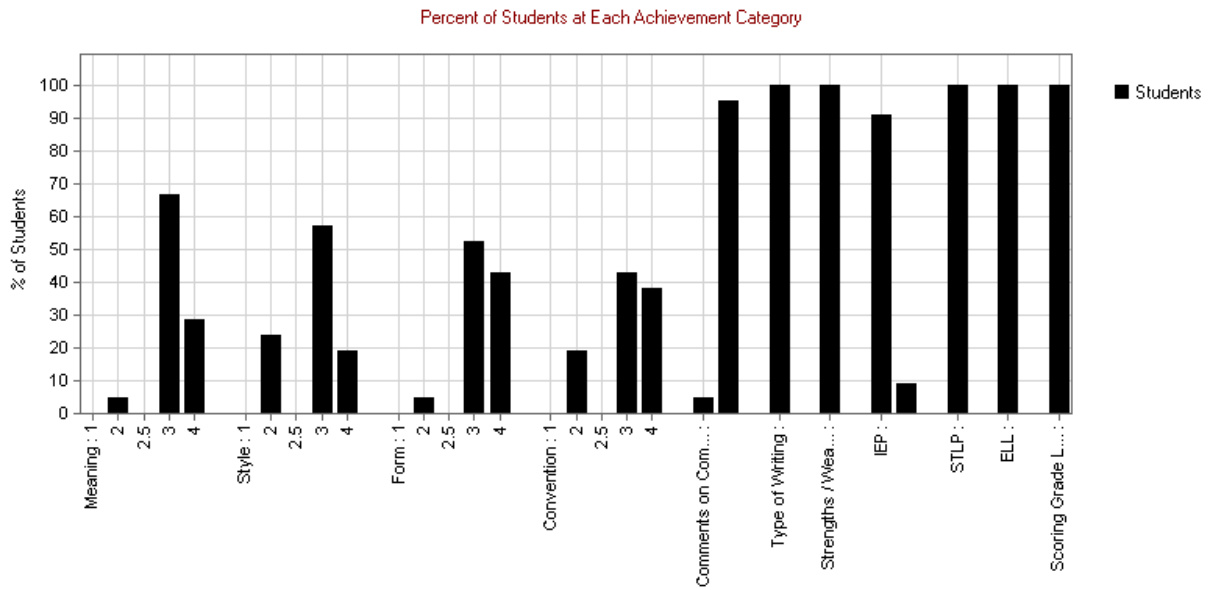
School Wide Writes, Grade 5, Fall 2014



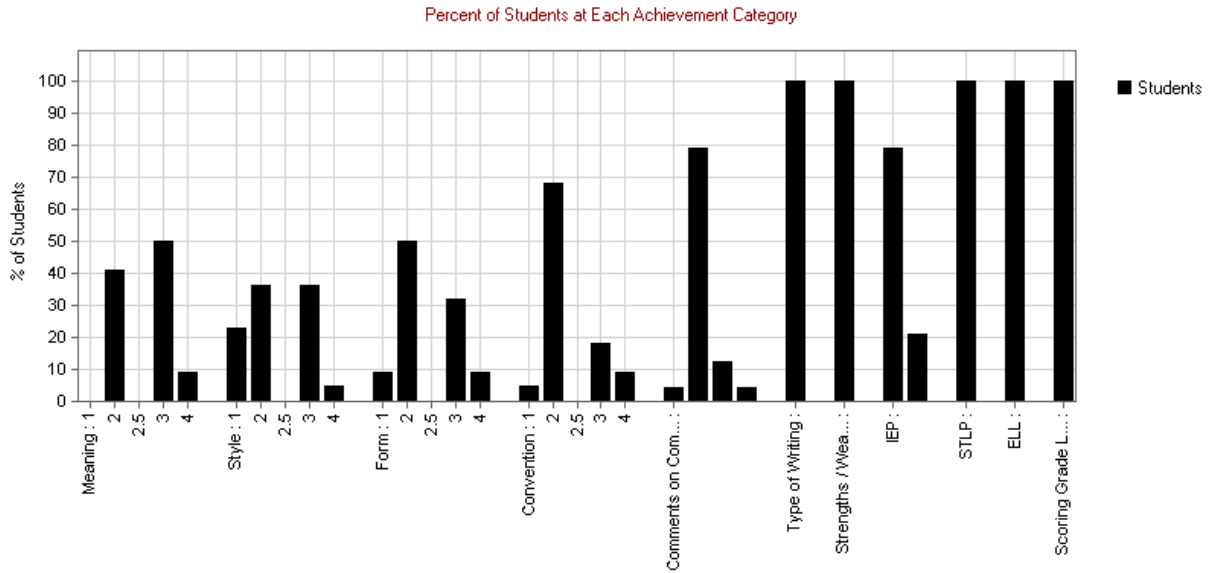
School Wide Writes, Grade 5, Spring 2015



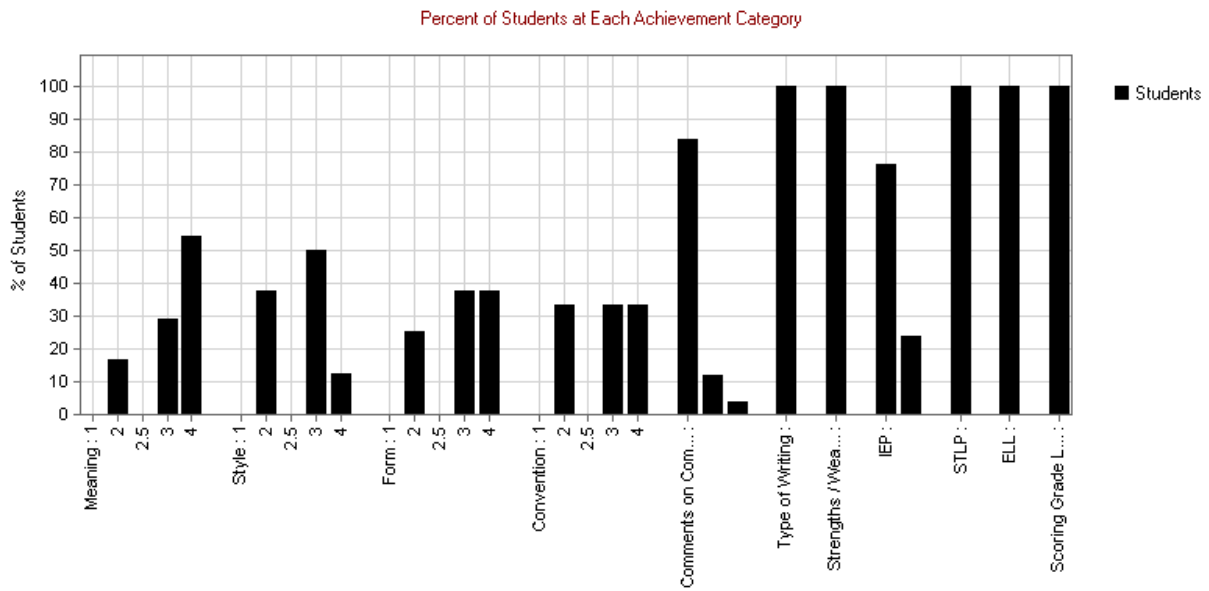
School Wide Writes, Grade 6, Fall 2014



School Wide Writes, Grade 6, Spring 2015



School Wide Writes, Grade 7, Fall 2014



School Wide Writes, Grade 7, Spring 2015

Goal in Question Format:

If the school provides students with an increased opportunity to engage in the structure of non-fiction writing, will we produce writers that fully meet grade-level expectations in writing?

Rationale for goal

We have chosen this goal for the following reasons:

- Preliminary data shows that, overall, students in our school struggle with different components of writing;
- Research (Purcell-Gates, V., N. K. Duke, and J. A. Martineau. 2014) has shown that authentic writing, by way of non-fiction writing assignments, need to be a part of the reading/writing process:

“We now know that informational literacy that engages our youngest learners as readers and writers of nonfiction texts needs to be an integral part of every learner’s school experience from preschool onward.”

A writing goal provides an important and relevant companion to our previous goal which was to improve reading. In addition, understanding the strong relationship between reading and writing further strengthens the need for the integration of writing with, say, our guided reading program; reading responses as well as short writing assignments relating to themes in reading results in meaningful work created by students.

Objective(s) to support the goal:

- **Give students clear objectives when assigned non-fiction writing assignments. Provide story boards, writing frames and templates**
 - Boys time and again appreciate clear instructions and explicit criteria for evaluation of their writing. Boys, in particular, benefit from story structure. They often prefer structures such as heading titles and even the number of lines required for each section. (MacDonald, 2013)
- **Include audience in each non-fiction writing assignment**
 - Student motivation increases when they are aware that their writing will be viewed or listened to by others (meaningful.)
 - Assess and possibly increase writing frequency to a daily activity.
 - Opportunities for self and peer group feedback, and feedback based on instructional criteria and classroom collaborated criteria (also the use of a continuum of writing.)
 - Share student work with the school community by way of a “writing fair.”

- **Assessment opportunities**

- Create writing portfolios (samples) that could be passed on from grade to grade.
- Make certain each class has examples of a continuum of writing expectations that students can compare their work with.
- Train students what to look for in self and peer assessments – use student-friendly language.
- Create a vertical continuum between grades, meaning that students will focus on specific aspects of writing in each grade.
- Make certain each class has a continuum of writing, to be used by students to compare their own work.
- Use 7 AFL statements (list to follow) to guide assessment practices.
 - Teachers collect evidence from products, observations, and conversations to use in formative and summative judgments
 - Students are involved in co-constructing criteria in instructionally significant areas
 - Students give specific and descriptive feedback to themselves
 - Students have access to specific and descriptive feedback to others
 - Students set specific goals and collect evidence of their progress
 - Teachers give rounds of specific and descriptive feedback to students with an opportunity for “second chances”

- **Increased collaboration between classrooms**

- Provide opportunities for students to bring their written work into other classrooms for oral presentation (“buddy” sessions, etc.)
- Provide opportunities for teachers to brainstorm writing assignments, share concerns and ideas they have encountered in the classroom.
- School agreement on a common language to use with the students. Comparison of editing and revision exercises in classrooms.
- Use “buddy” time for students to co-create and share their writing pieces collaboratively.
- Use the once-a-month (primary, intermediate) PLC time to review progress and data, as well as to adjust strategies that will support our school goal.

- **Parental and Community engagement**

- Create community awareness and involvement in local newspaper or possible publication in school newsletter.
- Engage parents at the beginning of the year and provide them with consistent writing samples from students.
- Possible increased use of technology, email to improve on our parent communication.

- **Staff Meetings**

- Each staff meeting should have a specific time period set aside where the school provides ideas, evidence, and suggestions on how to improve on the non-fiction writing goal
- By the winter of 2015, staff will have been trained on techniques and strategies outlined in Non-Fiction Writing power. The training will be facilitated by staff members who have already completed Pro-D workshops offered by the Education Yukon.
- PLCs report back to the entire staff, during staff meetings

Target(s):

The following are some of the targets which will help us to focus on our goal. This is by no means a complete list; we are still in the process of discussing our direction.

- Increase collaboration between teachers regarding non-fiction writing goals at various grade levels (creating designated meeting times specific to writing goals)
- Increase the number of PLCs to one per month for each of the primary and intermediate groups
- Provide clear criteria in each classroom that can be easily referenced and viewed by students (writing continuum)
- Increase, by 10%, the number of students who are not yet meeting or minimally meeting to fully meeting (writing outcomes)
- Create once piece of "published" work per month, or term.

PART 3: ACT

Goal:

After addressing the concerns of the External Team from our November, 2013 school review, and having evaluated data specific to Holy Family Students, a writing goal was chosen as our focus, and we have started considering the following:

Objective:

Actions: Strategies/Interventions	Evidence to Track Progress	Person(s) Responsible
participation in a Non-Fiction Writing Power workshop	Completed in May, 2014	Participants from Primary and intermediate
Presentation of Non-Fiction Writing Power strategies to all staff members, through a series of training sessions conducted during PLC times (achieved)	December 2015	Sue H., Corrie L., Nick V., Vanessa S.
Writing continuum displayed in each classroom	Spring, 2016	Classroom teacher
Training of students to self-assess and peer-assess written work, based on criteria used for assessment as well as writing samples provided	Fall 2016	Classroom teacher
Continued data collection	School Wide Writes, DARTS, in-class writing assessments when compared with a writing continuum (based on BC Quick Scales)(Spring/Fall2016-2017, for all grades)	Classroom teachers and administration

Students create classroom newsletter	Fall/Winter, 2016-2017	Classroom teacher. students
Use of Assistive Technology, both during the draft stages of writing as well as when works are "published"	Spring/Fall/Winter 2015-2016 (achieved)	Classroom teacher
Training and practice of students on how to use the continuum	Fall/Winter 2016-2017 Fall/Winter 2016-2017	Classroom teacher Classroom teacher
Revisit 7 AFL strategies, 2-3 times per year		Classroom teacher
Teach self-assessment strategies to students so that they can assess their own learning	Fall/Winter 2016-2017	Classroom teacher, students
Create small working groups or 1-1 assistance for students who struggle	Fall/Winter 2016-17	LAT, SBT, classroom teacher

PART 4: Monitoring and Adjusting the Plan

Dates for monitoring progress:

Dates for monitoring progress are listed in the table above. However, individual class assessments still need to be determined by classroom teachers. However, the following are some times when new information would be made available for analysis:

- Dates for monitoring progress in writing could correspond to proposed deadlines for SWW and DART testing. It's a good time to look at the results and pick out specific successes and struggles with writing in each grade.
- We can also include results from reporting periods.
- Revisit the 7 AFL strategies to see what "shifts" have occurred
- Evidence of at least 1 classroom newsletter generated by students
- Evidence of student written work (via portfolios)
- Sharing in PLCs
- Visual recordings demonstrating classroom practice

Communications Plan:

Parent Communication:

There will be regular communication through our newsletter as well as through classroom bulletins. Public information sessions and updates will be held at the school. This section of the newsletter could be written collaboratively between the school council member and staff member, elaborating on the School Growth Plan goals and strategies. School Growth Plan documents will be posted on the school website. Public information sessions, helping parents to understand the goals and strategies, as well as updates will be held at the school; this may also take place during Parent Information Nights, held by teachers in every grade.

Teacher Communication:

Teachers will share information and progress on a monthly basis, through PLCs and/or staff meetings, when their group-developed initiatives are met.

School Council:

School council will be updated on a monthly basis, at monthly school council meetings. A school council member is part of our school growth plan team. School council members can also be updated by checking the monthly newsletter.

Other Members of the School Community:

The Holy Family E.S. School Growth Plan can be found on our website. Any upcoming growth plan information sessions would be listed in the newsletter and they would be welcome to attend.

Ways to Improve School Community/Parent Involvement:

Making the school community aware of the focus our school growth, even defining what this is, will spark interest and hopefully encourage more participation in the process. Regular monthly updates and information articles in the school newsletter, will help make the community aware of the process. In addition, celebrating student achievement by publishing work in the monthly newsletter is a way for parents to see student progress. Displaying a continuum of writing expectations at each grade level will help school visitors understand what is expected and where students are with their own writing; these could be displayed in classrooms or in the hallways. Members of the school community are always encouraged to participate on the committee and/or provide feedback to committee members. Announcements are made in the school newsletter, at teacher/parent information sessions, and at other school-wide functions. School Council is always supportive of school initiatives and has a member on the committee.

Adjusting the Plan

Our goal, while still focusing on writing, has moved from just students submitting their work to the teacher, to having students assess their own work. (AFL)

Important Acronyms Found Throughout this Document:

AFL – Assessment for Learning

IEP – Individual Learning Plan

FSA – Foundations Skills Assessment

DART – District Assessment of Reading

PLC – Professional Learning Community

SWW – School Wide Write

YAT – Yukon Achievement Test

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