

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING

Primary Goal - To develop proficiency in the essential skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening.

<u>Staff</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Cost Per Student</u>
95.55	5,644	\$6,338,873	\$1,123

Level K-6

NYS Report Card Data

Grade	North Colonie Percentage	New York State Percentage
3	85%	70%
4	83%	70%
5	91%	78%
6	80%	67%

2008 NYS Third Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment

Total Population

	Number Tested		Mean Score		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
District	341	402	686	678	23%	11%	62%	71%	12%	14%	3%	3%
Blue Creek	49	82	669	675	10	12	63	57	22	26	4	5
Boght Hills	68	76	697	698	32	25	56	68	12	4	0	3
Forts Ferry	70	75	672	683	10	19	69	63	16	15	6	4
Latham Ridge	56	55	681	675	18	11	70	67	9	16	4	5
Loudonville	40	40	712	695	43	18	58	80	0	3	0	0
Southgate	58	64	692	685	28	14	59	78	10	5	3	3

2008 NYS Fourth Grade English Language Arts (ELA) assessment

Total Population

	Number Tested		Mean Score		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
District	397	402	677	678	11%	11%	72%	71%	14%	14%	3%	3%
Blue Creek	76	65	676	672	14	11	62	69	22	12	1	8
Boght Hills	77	87	683	684	13	18	74	67	10	12	3	3
Forts Ferry	77	76	672	682	9	13	75	70	10	16	5	1
Latham Ridge	56	75	670	669	4	3	73	72	18	23	5	3
Loudonville	44	48	690	688	16	15	77	77	5	8	2	0
Southgate	67	64	678	674	10	7	75	76	15	13	0	5

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2008 NYS Fifth Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment
Total Population

	Number Tested		Mean Score		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
District	427	411	680	674	11%	11%	80%	70%	9%	17%	0%	3%
Blue Creek	63	71	671	669	5	8	79	66	16	21	0	4
Boght Hills	81	85	687	677	17	11	77	74	5	13	1	2
Forts Ferry	79	76	676	664	8	7	78	64	14	25	0	4
Latham Ridge	84	68	672	670	6	7	86	75	8	13	0	4
Loudonville	51	52	684	691	10	19	88	71	2	10	0	0
Southgate	69	60	690	679	22	15	72	67	6	17	0	2

2008 NYS Sixth Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment
Total Population

	Number Tested		Mean Score		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
District	425	443	670	676	6%	17%	74%	62%	19%	21%	1%	0%
Blue Creek	70	86	668	670	6	14	71	56	23	29	0	1
Boght Hills	88	76	670	682	6	17	78	71	14	12	2	0
Forts Ferry	80	79	662	670	4	9	69	68	26	23	1	0
Latham Ridge	68	68	670	667	4	9	77	63	19	28	0	0
Loudonville	54	58	675	695	9	34	78	59	13	7	0	0
Southgate	65	76	676	677	9	22	74	55	17	22	0	0

The ELA assessments were administered in January of 2008. Again, North Colonie scored the tests in grades 3-6 internally. However, for 2008-2009 we are returning to the BOCES regional scoring for grades 4 and 6. We find this process to be more efficient and less time consuming. Fortunately, Capital Region BOCES, after having eliminated this program, has reinstated it for the current school year. We will continue to internally score grades 3 and 5. On all tests, grades 3-6, our students exceeded the performance of their statewide cohort.

We continue to receive our English Language Arts results toward the end of the school year. This marks an improvement over previous year scoring and makes it possible for us to plan AIS and remedial services for the upcoming school year. Each ELA test measures specific skills and content at the respective grade level. Furthermore, all students, except for the one percent of the population qualifying for the New York State Alternative Assessment, take the ELA test. We continue to note that language processing is at the heart of many of the disabilities of our struggling special education

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING (cont.)

students, and they continue to have difficulty being successful on the New York State ELA test.

This year we are pleased to note that students in grades 3 – 6 showed modest gains in attainment of competency or proficiency at level 3 and 4. Specifically in grade 3, 85% of our students scored at level 3 and 4 compared to 82% in 2000. However, most impressive is the fact that the number of students scoring at level 4 in grade 3 jumped significantly to 23% from 11% in the previous year. Students on the 4th grade ELA remained fairly constant with their performance with 83% achieving at level 3 and 4 compared to 82% the previous year. The dispersal of 3's and 4's remained relatively constant on the grade 4 test. We are most pleased by the gain exhibited by our 5th grade students. In 2008, 91% scored at level 3 or 4 compared to 81% in 2007. The number of students at level 4 remained the same at 11%. We showed a slight improvement at grade 6 in the number of students attaining proficiency and competence with 80% of our students doing so compared to 79% in 2007. Noteworthy is the fact that the number of students attaining level 4 was down from 17% in 2007 to 6% in 2008.

No longer does the state report similar schools' data. We tend to compare ourselves to the Suburban Council as an ex officio similar schools group. This year we noted slight movement to move exactly to the middle or slightly above the midpoint on these assessments. We also continued to point to the fact that as our students progress through the academic program at 8th grade and again on the Regents exam level at grade 11, they then moved to either first or second in the Suburban Council.

Iowa Test of Basic Skills - Performance standard = 70% above Nat'l 50th %ile

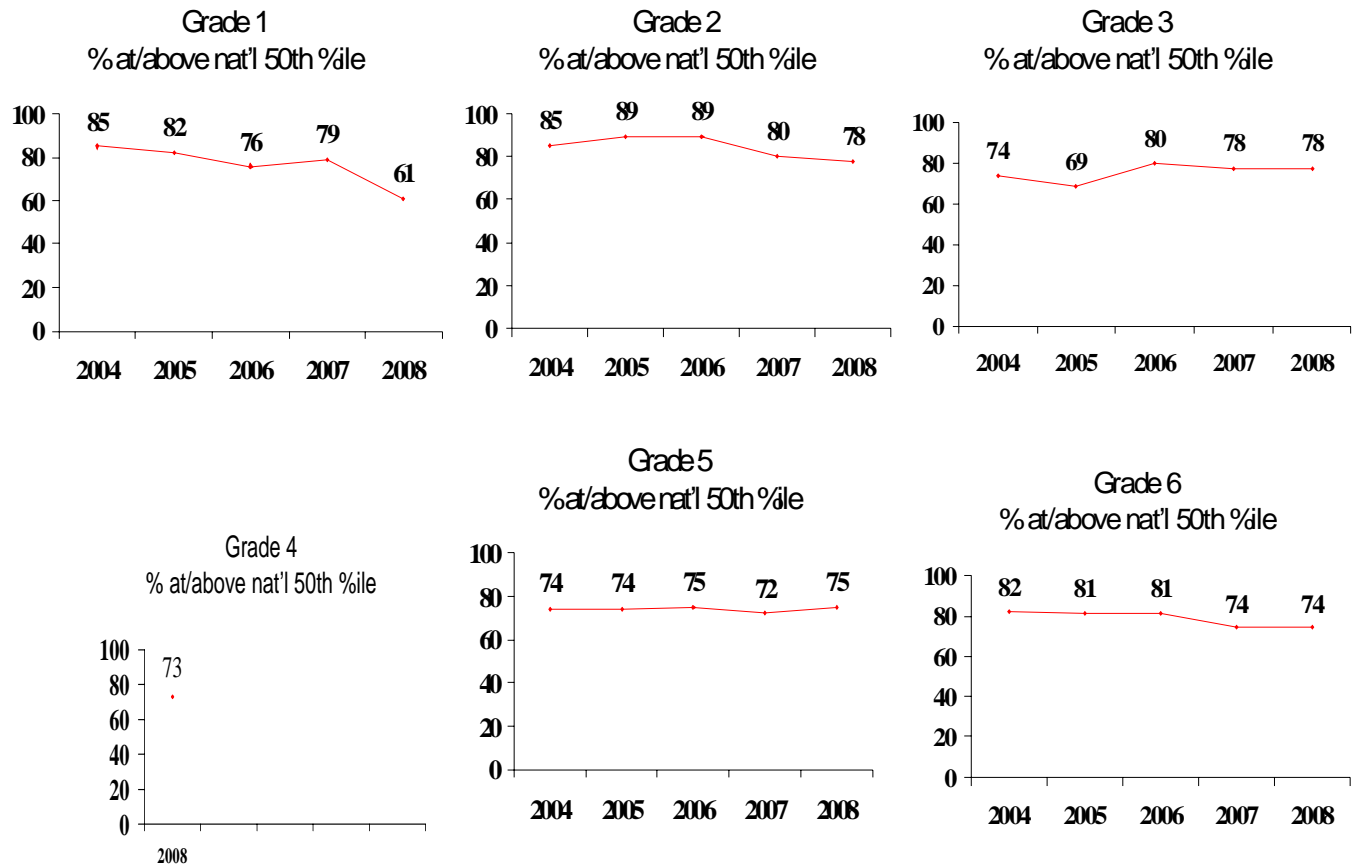
The data in this report will compare standardized testing with performance standards which are derived from the Cognitive Abilities Test and district expectations.

ITBS - Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Grade	Total Reading	Difference over 70%
1	61	- 9
2	78	+ 8
3	78	+ 8
4	73	+ 3
5	75	+ 5
6	74	+ 4

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(2004-2008 Results - ITBS Total Reading)



With the exception of our first grade students, all grade levels achieve the district performance standard of 70% of our students scoring above the national 50th percentile. Our first graders scored at 61%, above the 50th percentile. However, it is important to know that this is a nationally normed test and all our students still continue to exceed the results of their peers nationally. This year marked the return of administering the test to students in grade 4. Previously, when the English Language Arts assessment was only offered at grade 4, we did not offer the IOWA Test of Basic Skills. Also noteworthy is the fact that we elected to use the most recent addition of the IOWA, an edition that had been significantly re-normed from the 12 year old version we were using prior to 2007– 2008. Any time a test is re-normed, results continue to be lower than they have been in previous years.

The IOWA Test of Basic Skills represent yet another tool in our assessment toolbox to measure students progress and also to use as a means for determining placements in AIS services for remedial math and remedial reading. In this past year we noted the difficulty receiving our scoring information from Capital Region BOCES. In 2008 we

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contracted with Riverside, the publisher of the IOWA Test of Basic Skills, and had them score the test directly. This proved to be a very successful match and the data received was complete and accurate. We intend to use Riverside for the scoring of both the IOWA test and the Cognitive Tests offered to students in grades 3 and 6.

HIGHLIGHTS

- At the district level, the Turnkey Trainer program for grades K-2 and 3-6 continues to be both valuable and effective in sustaining professional growth of faculty members and moving the reading program forward. In addition to serving as a resource to staff members, the Turnkey Trainers were given the task of planning, preparing, and presenting staff development sessions to their colleagues on the March Workshop Day. Each of the Turnkey Trainers worked diligently to thoroughly and thoughtfully prepare for the presentation. It has been very satisfying to see these individuals assume a leadership role and positively support the district's reading program. The Turnkey Trainers in K-2 also prepared and presented to teachers new to the district as well as ESL teachers during July 2007 reading in-service sessions. Further, during Spring 2008, the Turnkey Trainers for grades 3-6 piloted a new reading assessment, the Benchmark System II. It was determined by these Turnkey Trainers and the administrators responsible for ELA that this assessment would be adopted as the new reading assessment during the 2008-2009 school year.
- As an extension of the work being completed with Writing in the district, three half-day sessions were provided to K-6 teachers who were interested in creating a unit of writing instruction entitled "The Writerly Life". The purpose of this unit is to establish an atmosphere of students as writers in the classroom. At each grade level, teachers worked collaboratively and with the guidance of a consultant, Sue Burke, to develop this particular unit of writing instruction. These units will be implemented during the first semester of the 2008-2009 school year by the members of the Writing Committee. The teachers who participated in this work displayed much enthusiasm and excitement while sharing their knowledge and expertise with one another.

OBJECTIVES

- Sustain the K-6 balanced literacy program. Meet with the turnkey trainers at least once per quarter to problem solve district-wide issues related to reading instruction. Utilize the turnkey trainers to provide district-wide and building level staff development for new and returning teachers and teacher assistants. Utilize turnkey trainers to develop a program of classroom visits within and across schools. Analyze K-2 reading data collected through EXCEL program and adjust

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING (cont.)

benchmarks as appropriate. Continue to update materials and resources for teaching reading and for assessing reading progress.

Evaluation: In what ways was the K-6 balanced literacy program sustained throughout the 2007-2008 school year?

Meetings with turnkey trainers were conducted throughout the school year. Topics addressed included the RIGBY and WRAP assessment, reading benchmarks for K-2, time allocation in grades 3-6 and training for the administration of an alternate reading assessment for grades 3-6. The turnkey trainers planned and presented staff development for new and returning teachers and teacher assistants as well as for all teachers of reading K-6 at the March workshop day. The K-2 reading data has been analyzed and the benchmarks adjusted. Additional reading materials and resources were obtained.

- Through the K-12 Language Arts Steering Committee/ District Writing Committee, continue the study of writing in grades K-6. Implement and revise the units of study written during the spring of 2007. Provide support and feedback for teachers who are implementing these units, including feedback within their classrooms. Begin curriculum mapping across grade levels. Expand participation in in-service sessions and developing units of writing instruction to include a greater number of elementary teachers. Include all principals in the in-service sessions.

Evaluation: What steps were taken to improve writing instruction in classrooms at the elementary level?

The study of writing in grades K-6 continued with the members of the Writing Committee. This group met to develop a new unit of study entitled "The Writerly Life". Members of this group presented the units of study developed during the 2006-2007 school year to grade level colleagues during the district grade level meetings. Also, presented at grade level meetings to teachers in grades K-6 was an overview of the work the K-12 Language Arts Steering Committee/District Writing Committee has completed for the previous two years.

- Investigate current approaches to teaching spelling in the elementary grades with an emphasis on alignment with word work in the reading program and some degree of compatibility with the writing program. Make recommendations for formalizing agreed upon approaches to teaching spelling in elementary classrooms.

Evaluation: Was spelling instruction investigated and were recommendations made?

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A group of teachers representing grades K-6 and all six elementary schools met to begin the discussion about spelling instruction in the district. The discussion will continue as materials, resources and information are collected and reviewed.

- Analyze results of and improve performance on the NYS grades 3-6 ELA assessments.

Evaluation: Were the results of the grades 3-6 ELA's analyzed? How did 2006-2007 results compare with the results from the previous year?

At the time of this review, the results of the New York State ELA assessment for grades 3-6 have not been received in district. Once the results are available, the data will be analyzed and compared to the previous year's results.

- Begin the process of developing an electronic elementary report card that reflects the changes in reading and writing instruction.

Evaluation: Was the district wide process of developing an electronic report card for grades 1-6 begun?

This objective has been placed in a holding pattern until the investigation of the spelling program is completed.

Level 7 - 8

2008 NYS Seventh Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment

Total Population*

	Number Tested		Mean Score		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
	472	447	676	672	6%	12%	78%	66%	14%	19%	1%	2%

2008 NYS Eighth Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment

Total Population*

	Number Tested		Mean Score		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
	451	426	677	675	13%	14%	64%	64%	20%	19%	2%	3%

*includes students with disabilities

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING (cont.)

District Tests

The results of the district end of the year examinations were as follows:

Grade 7 English

Grade	Number of Students/Percentage 2007-08	Number of Students/Percentage 2006-07
A	155/35%	179/43%
B	174/39%	150/36%
C	77/17%	68/16%
D	30/7%	17/4%
F	10/2%	1/1%

Grade 8 English

Grade	Number of Students/Percentage 2007-08	Number of Students/Percentage 2006-07
A	92/21%	93/23%
B	159/37%	133/33%
C	128/30%	119/30%
D	33/7%	27/7%
F	21/5%	30/7%

HIGHLIGHTS

- The January 2008 New York State ELA Assessment results were strong. The percentage of students earning scores in levels 3 and 4 combined on the grade 7 assessment improved significantly with 85% of students meeting at or above proficiency benchmarks. The percentage of students earning scores in levels 3 and 4 combined on the grade 8 assessment stayed consistent with the January 2007 results with 77% of students meeting at or above proficiency benchmarks. On both the 7th and 8th grade assessments, our students exceeded New York State standards (7th 85% vs. 70% and 8th 77% vs. 56%).
- While students with disabilities in grade 7 met with more success in meeting with proficiency, students with disabilities in grade 8 continue to have challenges meeting with proficiency on this assessment. The success in grade 7 may be due, in part, to the implementation of a pilot LRA English program at that grade level. However, more time is necessary to assess the success of this program.

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING (cont.)

- Continuation of the programs and interventions listed below assists in preparing students to meet with proficiency on these state assessments.
 - Implementation of the Fundamental ELA program at both grades 7 and 8
 - Analysis of areas of weakness as indicated in the 06-07 ELA results and instructional emphasis on those areas
 - Implementation of after school review and practice sessions focusing on students identified to be at risk of not meeting proficiency standards
 - Development of and implementation of practice ELA activities used throughout the year within curriculum
 - Continued implementation of a building-wide practice assessment in November for teacher analysis and instructional direction

- Instructional Faculty
- AIS Programs: Teacher monitoring of students, After School Assistance, Block Aide Support (7th grade), FOCUS Program (8th grade), Reading//writing Program, Fundamental ELA Program
- Summer Curriculum Workshops: Writing Unit and Technology in the English Classroom
- Writing Workshops (ELA Steering Committee) throughout the year with consultant
- Balance of discrete skill instruction and test preparation
- Commitment of the District to the investigation of “Best Practices: for English Language Arts” instruction
- Professional development opportunities
- Alignment of instruction K-12

OBJECTIVES

- Implement current best practices in writing instruction. Instruct and practice various genres.

Evaluation: Were current best practices in writing instruction implemented into classroom programs? Did teachers instruct and provide practice opportunities for various genres?

Teachers at grades seven and eight incorporated current best practices for writing instruction as observed by their supervisor during formal and informal observations and as indicated in their weekly lesson plans. Teachers implemented instructional activities and strategies including, but not limited to: pre-writing discussions, modeling of writing, writer’s notebook assignments, revision process and choice in writing. Teachers at both grade levels addressed a variety of genres such as:

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING (cont.)

creative writing, poetry, editorials, research papers, memoir, literary essay, timed writing, short and extended response writing and journaling.

Teachers at both grade levels provided instruction that addressed sentence structure, paragraph structure, grammar, mechanics and spelling. Teachers submitted writing portfolios to the department supervisor for review of student writing. Portfolios indicated the New York State ELA Standards being addressed and included samples of student work reflecting varied writing skills and abilities. Grade seven and grade eight teachers implemented writing units into their curriculum that had been developed last year through the work completed with the District's Writing Consultant and through Summer Curriculum Workshops. Both units were successful with regard to curricular objectives, student engagement and implementation of effective instructional strategies and practices.

- Investigate the frequency of instances of plagiarism at the junior high. Determine the need for a policy regarding plagiarism. If necessary, develop a plagiarism policy.

Evaluation: How often do instances of plagiarism occur? Does the junior high school need a plagiarism policy? If necessary, was a policy developed?

Few instances of plagiarism have occurred. At this time, it does not appear to be necessary to implement a plagiarism policy at this level. We will continue to monitor and assess the need for a policy during the 2008- 2009 school year.

- Implement current best practices in reading instruction. Instruct and model active reading strategies. Instruct comprehension skills and strategies using text of appropriate reading level.

Evaluation: Were current best practices regarding reading instruction implemented into classroom programs? Were active reading strategies taught and modeled? Were reading comprehension skills and strategies taught?

Current best practices for reading instruction are implemented in the seventh and eighth grade English classrooms. Teachers provide modeling of and instruction of various active reading strategies including but not limited to: making text to text connections, making text to self connections, visualizing, noting questions regarding passages, and noting unknown vocabulary. This instruction is incorporated into reading unit curriculum. Teachers instruct comprehension skills and strategies throughout reading units and as related to assessment preparation. Specific strategies such as rereading passages, high-lighting/underlining

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passages, and identifying textual evidence within a passage are some skills and strategies that are emphasized.

Two 8th grade teachers, two 7th grade teachers and the Department Supervisor attended the Meeting the Challenges of Adolescent Literacy Conference at the University at Albany in November of 2007.

- Through the work of the District English Language Arts Steering Committee, continue our work to begin to develop writing curriculum.

Evaluation: What progress was made toward developing writing curriculum?

Seventh and eighth grade teachers implemented writing units that were developed during the 2006-2007 school year. Seventh grade teachers implemented a poetry unit and eighth grade teachers implemented an editorial unit. Both grade levels found the newly implemented writing units to be successful. Students were engaged in instructional activities and student writing pieces were generally well done and met instructional objectives.

During the 2007-2008 school year, English teachers continued their work with the District's ELA consultant. Teachers continued their investigation of instructional strategies and began developing a "Writerly Life" unit. Teachers participated in two half-day grade level workshops (as of April 2008) and are planning a third workshop in May 2008. Seventh grade teachers plan to develop a third writing unit during the summer of 2008.

- Analyze the 7th and 8th grade NYS ELA assessment data including the special education subgroup in particular. Make instructional recommendations for program revisions/adjustments as appropriate for general education and special education programs.

Evaluation: Were results analyzed? Were instructional recommendations/adjustments deemed necessary?

Results of the January 2007 assessments were analyzed. Individual students were provided with student data and comparative building grade level data. Teachers reviewed data. Specific instructional guidance was provided, as needed, by the department supervisor and building principal. A pilot English language arts class was implemented to address an appropriate population of students with special needs. Students were enrolled in AIS as needed based upon their ELA assessment results. Services that students may be enrolled in include: monitoring, after school assistance, Fundamental ELA, remedial reading, Block Support, and FOCUS.

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January 2008 New York State ELA assessment results are embargoed at this time.

- Review English Language Arts AIS programs and make recommendations for program revisions/adjustments as appropriate.

Evaluation: Were English Language Arts AIS programs reviewed? Were program revisions/adjustments deemed necessary?

The monitoring and after school assistance AIS services are being implemented and are appropriate for some students requiring additional instructional assistance. The Block Support, FOCUS, Remedial Reading and Fundamental ELA programs provide a higher level of intervention services for students. The Fundamental ELA program has incorporated the BIG 8 English Review Book as an additional resource for instruction. The specific assessment data for the Fundamental ELA program is:

Fundamental ELA 8: 35% of the students enrolled in this program met with proficiency on the state assessment.

Fundamental ELA 7: 58% of the students enrolled in this program met with proficiency on the state assessment.

Level 9 - 12

NYS Regents - Comprehensive English

Shaker HS - No. Tested - 509 (98% of the class) Percent Passing = 96%

English Regents	Passing		Scoring 85% or Higher	
	2007-08	2006-07	2007-08	2006-07
	96%	96%	51%	46%

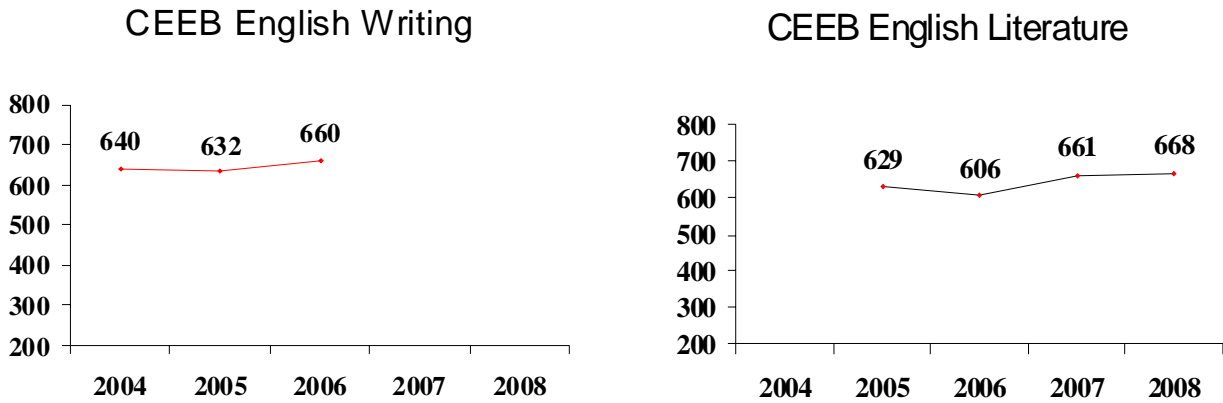
This year the number of students passing the English regents remained constant with 96% of our students passing the test and thus achieving success on a benchmark examination for graduation. We are very happy with the results of students scoring 85% or higher. This level represents mastery and 51% of our students achieved this important goal compared 46% in 2006-2007.

CEEB Achievement Tests - English Writing & English Literature -

Number Tested	Writing	Difference over/under Performance Standard - NA	Literature	Difference over/under Performance Standard - 645
NA	NA			
16			668	+23

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING (cont.)

2004-2008 Results - CEEB - English Writing & English Literature)



CEE B Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) – (Critical Reading Verbal

	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
SHS Mean Score	542	538	531	538	548
NYS Mean Score	488	491	497	497	497
National Mean Score	502	502	508	508	508
Suburban Council	537	538	545	545	543
Percent of 12 th graders taking exam	77%	84%	87%	81%	80%

	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
SHS Mean Score	542	538	535	538	548
SHS Percent over 600	31	30	26	28	29

CEE B Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) - Writing

	2008	2007	2006
SHS Mean Score	548	546	533
NYS Mean Score	481	482	483
National Mean Score	494	494	497
Suburban Council	523	524	519
Percent of 12 th graders taking exam	77%	84%	85%

	2008	2007	2006
SHS Mean Score	548	545	531
SHS Percent over 600	31	31	26

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CEEB Advanced Placement English Performance standard = 90% to score "3" or higher

	Grade 12	Difference over 90%
SHS Percent scoring "3" or Higher	97%	+7
Number tested	39	
NYS Percent scoring "3" or higher	63	
US Percent scoring "3" or higher	60	

*Data from NYS and US from 2008.)

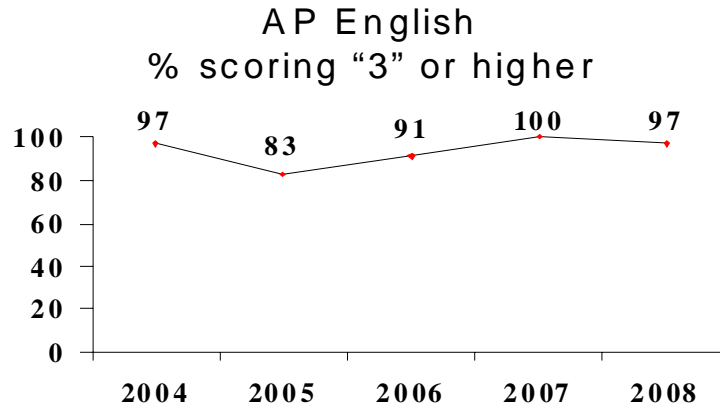
Our results on the AP exam in English Literature continued to move in a positive direction. This year 97% of our students achieved a grade of 3 or better on this exam. Although 100% of the students earned 3 or better in 2006-2007, it is noted that two years ago this achievement was 91% and three years ago 83% of our students attained level 3. Also noteworthy is the fact that Shaker High School students substantially achieved higher than their New York State and national cohorts.

Results on the CEEB Achievement Test in English Literature were outstanding. We continued our upward trend with a mean score of 668 on this assessment. This represents the highest mean score in the past five years. Students no longer take the CEEB English writing exam with the advent of the writing portion of the SAT writing test. Previously, many colleges required the English Writing Achievement Test. They no longer do this because they can measure writing ability through the SAT aptitude test writing portion. The results are also very positive for the CEEB Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in critical reading and the CEEB Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in writing. On the critical reading section we continued our solid performance with our students achieving a mean score of 542. This was better than mean scores in the Suburban Council, in New York state and nationally. Our SAT writing scores are also outstanding and exhibited a slight increase over the previous years. Again we substantially exceeded norms for the Suburban Council, New York State and the nation. We are also pleased to note that on both aptitude tests, nearly a third of those students taking the exam scored at 600 or above.

Results on these important national tests, both of which are gatekeepers to admission to colleges, continue to improve and are strong. The English department is to be commended for its fine work in preparing our students for success at the post secondary level.

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2004-2008 CEEB AP English



Our special education students qualify for graduation by passing the Regents Competency Test. In North Colonie, we focus on preparing our students to pass the Regents exam. Working in conjunction with the special education department, our English teachers in the lab settings provide our students with instruction in helping them to gain this important graduation milestone. The number of 11th graders failing the reading and writing assessment is down substantially, and on the writing exam ten students failed in 2006-2007 and no students failed in 2007-2008. Likewise, on the reading portion, there were eight failures in 2006-2007 and only five this past year. Our grade 12 students also did well. We recorded no failures on the writing assessment and only two on the reading portion.

RCT INFORMATION

Grade 11

Subject	Number Failing		Percent of Class	
	2007-08	2006-07	2007-08	2006-07
Reading	5	8	1%	2%
Writing	0	10	0%	2%
Number Exempt				

Grade 12

Subject	Number Failing		Percent of Class	
	2007-08	2006-07	2007-08	2006-07
Reading	2	0	1 %	0%
Writing	0	0	0%	0%
Number Exempt		12*		

This number represents students who earned IEP Diplomas.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- The English department continues to work in the area of literacy and reading instruction. Teachers continue to provide instruction in active reading and vocabulary development. In addition, during the March workshop, the department specifically addressed the issue of reading skills needed for standardized tests such as the SAT and the Comprehensive English Regents.
- At the senior level, the University in the High School program remains strong with 100% of the students earning University at Albany credit. This year, the program was revised and given approval by the University at Albany.
- The department instituted two new electives, Exploring Cultures through Literature and Contemporary Literacy. Both of these courses were popular with the students and have enrolled for 2008-2009. Focusing on the literature of Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and Native American cultures, Exploring Cultures through Literature addresses the multicultural interests of students. Contemporary Literacy is designed to provide instruction in modern forms of communication. The focal point of this course is to examine genre, conventions, and purpose of a variety of texts including the graphic novel, the internet, the news media, and advertisements.
- This year the English Department held its third annual Poetry Out Loud Competition. Over five hundred students in grades 9 through 12 participated in classroom competitions which involved memorizing and reciting selected poems. Fifteen finalists competed in an evening competition before an audience of about two hundred, and that evening, a school winner was selected. Our school winner, Genevieve Mailloux won the state competition and represented New York State in the national event in Washington.
- Two English teachers, Mr. Brian Desmarais and Mrs. Hope Dils, revised and revamped *Visions*, the literary magazine. Seventy-nine students were featured in the full-color, artistic endeavor.
- The department worked together to develop a plagiarism policy that was ultimately adopted by the Principal's Council. This policy, which recognizes different levels of plagiarism and assigns appropriate consequences, was presented to the faculty in September 2007.
- The entire department worked actively on the North Colonie Writing Initiative. As the result of several workshop days, teachers discussed approaches to improving instruction in writing. In addition, they worked at grade level to develop lesson plans that included a variety of writing activities and that

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integrated instruction in literature and grammar with that of writing.

OBJECTIVES

- Continue to provide for additional work in the area of literacy and reading instruction. The emphasis will be on active reading in particular literal comprehension skills, inferential comprehension and rhetorical awareness.

Evaluation: What activities did English teachers participate in to advance their work with reading comprehension?

The English department consistently works to advance the reading objective. At both the September and November Workshops, we reviewed strategies for developing active readers. In addition, this year teachers are including as part of their monthly reports a listing of specific pre-reading, active reading, and post reading activities for one piece of literature covered during the month. This fall four English teachers attended the conference on literacy at the University at Albany. On the March Workshop day, we again addressed reading with a focus on strategies for taking reading comprehension exams.

- Develop a departmental plan to involve students in opportunities to write frequently in a variety of genres. Continue to work with the ELA Steering Committee on the district writing plan.

Evaluation: What plan was developed?

The department has been working on a plan which will ensure that students experience writing frequently and in multiple genres. A variety of writing activities are integrated into major literature units.

- Design a major unit in 9R, 10R and 11R that focuses on a particular genre of writing and includes a variety of mini lessons as well as exposure to several models of professional writing in that genre.

Evaluation: What units were developed?

This summer teachers designed three units (one for the short story, one for mythology, and one for Of Mice and Men) for grade 9. These units, which can be used at the AP, Honors, and Regents levels, integrate reading, writing, and grammar. They include multiple writing opportunities and use modeling to teach writing. Grades 10 and 11 have begun work on similar units.

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING (cont.)

- Monitor the two new senior electives, Exploring Cultures Through Literature and Contemporary Literacy.

Evaluation: What curriculum was developed for these courses? How many students enrolled? Did students successfully complete the courses?

Both of the new elective courses have enrolled for the 2007-08 year. A total of 53 students selected Exploring Cultures and a total of 41 students chose Contemporary Literacy. The students were surveyed at the end of the first semester and were very positive about both courses.

- Continue to work on SAT preparation.

Evaluation: What department activities occurred to better prepare teachers for SAT preparation activities?

This is an ongoing English Department objective. Teachers at all grade levels provide regular instruction in reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and writing. The work done on the March Workshop day was designed to address reading comprehension preparation for standardized tests.

- Implement the new Plagiarism policy.

Evaluation: How was Plagiarism policy put into effect?

The Plagiarism Policy was developed by the English Department and adopted by Principal's Council. It is in place this school year. At the end of the year, the Principal's Council will look at necessary revisions.

- Develop a subcommittee within the English department to develop a proposal for a Writing Lab at Shaker High School.

Evaluation: What recommendations did the subcommittee make for a Writing Lab?

A department subcommittee was formed and has had discussions about establishing a writing lab. Since the department plan involves an additional staff member, a space in the building for the lab, as well as furniture and equipment, we have designated the writing lab as a long-term goal that will have budget implications.