

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING**

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

<b><u>Staff</u></b>	<b><u>Students</u></b>	<b><u>Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Cost Per Student</u></b>
105.74	5,648	\$7,266,250	\$1,287

**Level K-6**  
**NYS Report Card Data**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>North Colonie Percentage</b>	<b>New York State Percentage</b>
3*	87%	**
4*	84%	**
5	89%	**
6	92%	**

\*Percentages vary from the charts on this page due to the impact of rounding percentages.

\*\*As of the printing of this Annual Evaluation Report, this data was not yet available.

**2009 NYS Third Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment**  
**Total Population**

	<b>Number Tested</b>		<b>Mean Score</b>		<b>Level 4</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 1</b>	
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
District	386	341	679	686	15%	23%	71%	62%	12%	12%	2%	3%
Blue Creek	70	49	674	669	13	10	71	63	13	22	3	4
Boght Hills	66	68	683	697	18	32	68	56	14	12	0	0
Forts Ferry	60	70	671	672	8	10	73	69	17	16	2	6
Latham Ridge	67	56	678	681	19	18	67	70	10	9	3	4
Loudonville	53	40	691	712	19	43	74	58	6	0	2	0
Maplewood	10	13	675	688	20	8	70	92	10	0	0	0
Southgate	60	58	678	692	13	28	75	59	10	10	2	3

**2009 NYS Fourth Grade English Language Arts (ELA) assessment**  
**Total Population**

	<b>Number Tested</b>		<b>Mean Score</b>		<b>Level 4</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 1</b>	
	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
District	370	397	678	677	14%	11%	69%	72%	13%	14%	4%	3%
Blue Creek	56	76	671	676	7	14	70	62	20	22	4	1
Boght Hills	72	77	687	683	24	13	64	74	11	10	1	3
Forts Ferry	72	77	669	672	10	9	68	75	17	10	6	5
Latham Ridge	57	56	676	670	16	4	68	73	9	18	7	5
Loudonville	39	44	686	690	21	16	77	77	3	5	0	2
Maplewood	11	20	687	677	27	10	55	80	18	10	0	0
Southgate	63	67	676	678	8	10	76	75	13	15	3	0

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

**2009 NYS Fifth Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment**  
**Total Population**

	Number Tested		Mean Score		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008
District	413	427	685	680	20%	11%	69%	80%	10%	9%	1 %	0%
Blue Creek	78	63	679	671	13	5	72	79	15	16	0	0
Boght Hills	78	81	689	687	24	17	67	77	9	5	0	1
Forts Ferry	75	79	683	676	21	8	64	78	15	14	0	0
Latham Ridge	58	84	676	672	14	6	72	86	12	8	2	0
Loudonville	45	51	688	684	24	10	71	88	4	2	0	0
Maplewood	12	16	680	662	8	6	83	57	8	37	0	0
Southgate	67	69	694	690	25	22	70	72	4	6	0	0

**2009 NYS Sixth Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment**  
**Total Population**

	Number Tested		Mean Score		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008
District	433	425	675	670	15%	6%	77%	74%	8%	19%	0%	1%
Blue Creek	58	70	669	668	10	6	78	71	12	23	0	0
Boght Hills	81	88	679	670	16	6	77	78	7	14	0	2
Forts Ferry	77	80	672	662	10	4	82	69	8	26	0	1
Latham Ridge	85	68	670	670	12	4	74	77	14	19	0	0
Loudonville	47	54	685	675	23	9	74	78	2	13	0	0
Maplewood	11	21	671	665	9	0	82	81	9	19	0	0
Southgate	74	65	679	676	23	9	74	74	3	17	0	0

The last January administration of the English Language Arts and Mathematics assessments will be in 2009. In 2010, these tests will be given in May. This past year, we moved the scoring of the grade 4 and grade 6 tests back to Capital Region BOCES for regional scoring. We did this because we found the process to be more efficient and less time consuming and are intending to continue this process for the upcoming school year. We continue to score our tests in grades 3 and 5 internally and noteworthy is the fact that on all tests, our students continue to exceed the performance of their statewide cohort. In fact, this year witnessed an overall maintenance of our achievement on the state benchmark with one exception, where at grade 6 we substantially improved with 92% of our students achieving proficiency compared to 80% the previous year. Also at grade 6, the number of students achieving mastery at level 4 jumped from 6% to 15%. As English Language Arts represents the combined effort of the district at improving the

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

literacy skill and knowledge of our students, we congratulate all our elementary teachers on this outstanding result at grade 6.

At grade 3, 86% of our students achieved proficiency compared to 85% the prior year. The number of students scoring at level 4 dipped from 23% to 15%. On the grade 4 assessment, results were also consistent with 83% of our students achieving proficiency. The number of students scoring at level 4, however, increased slightly, 14% to 11%. Our results on the ELA test in grade 5 dipped somewhat with 89% achieving proficiency, compared to 91% the previous year. However, the overall mean score jumped from 680 to 685, a result of the fact that 20% of our students scored at level 4 compared to 11% the previous year.

Each ELA test measures specific skills and content at the respective grade level. All our students continue to take this test except for the 1% of the population qualifying for the NYS Alternate Assessment. We continued to work diligently with our Balanced Literacy program at all levels and look forward as we phase in Writers Workshop and our new spelling program. Also noteworthy is the fact that similar schools data is no longer reported by the State of New York. As stated in previous annual evaluations, we continue to compare ourselves to the Suburban Council and find that we generally fall at or near the midpoint on these assessments. We also note that the percentage of our students who pass the English Language Arts Regents exam in grade 11 (a requirement for a Regents diploma) remains at the top or near the top of our Suburban Council cohorts.

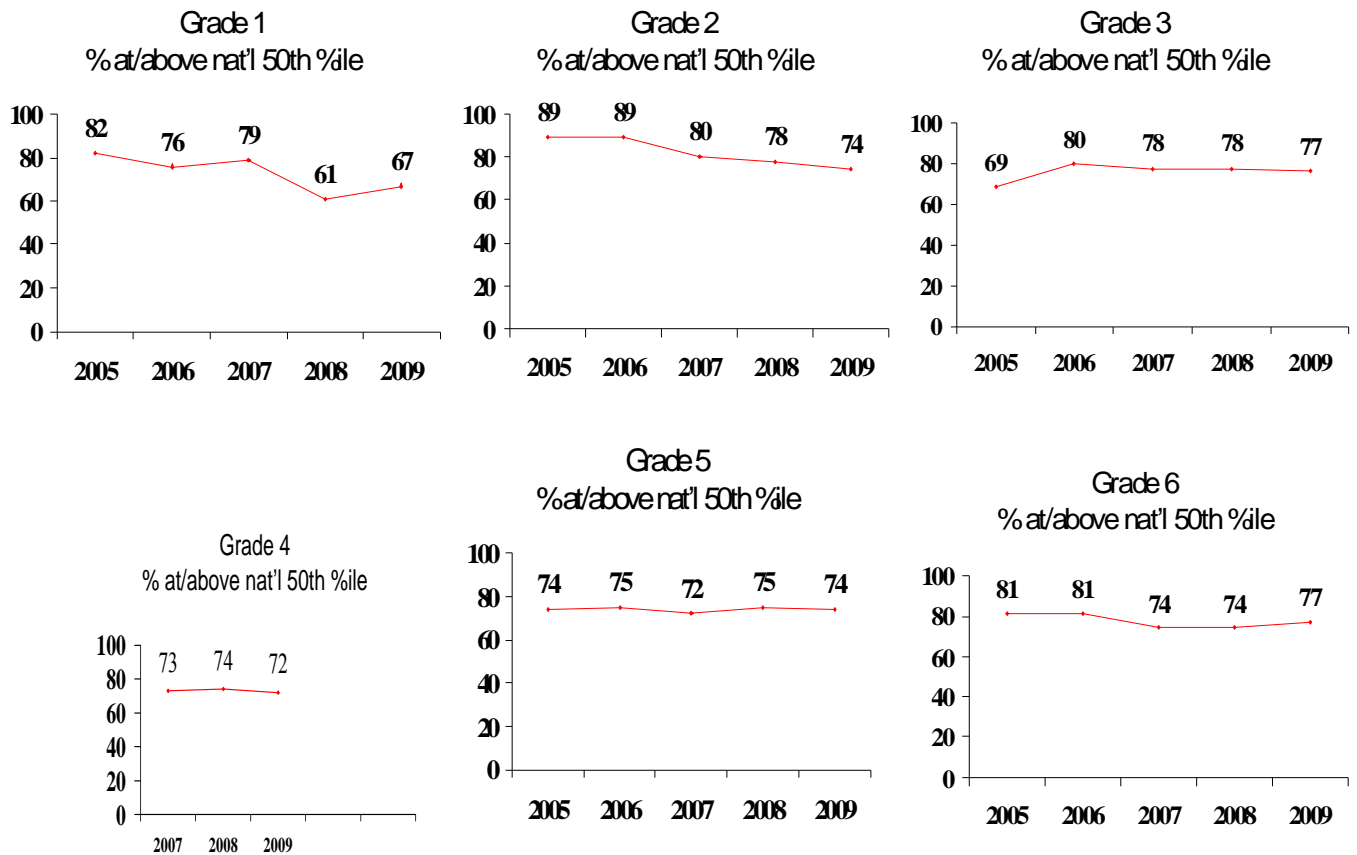
**Iowa Test of Basic Skills** - Performance standard = 70% above Nat'l 50th %ile

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**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Total Reading</b>	<b>Difference over 70%</b>
1	67	- 9
2	74	+ 8
3	77	+ 8
4	72	+ 3
5	74	+ 5
6	77	+ 4

**(2005-2009 Results - ITBS Total Reading)**



We use the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills primarily as another assessment to identify students for additional services. We are particularly pleased by the fact that we showed a substantial increase in the percentage of our students who achieved above the National 50th percentile in grade 1, 67% vs. 61%, and grade 6, 77% vs. 74%. In grade 3, 77% vs. 78%, and in grade 5, 74% vs. 75%, scoring at or above the National 50<sup>th</sup> percentile remained relatively consistent with the previous year's performance. In grade 2, 74% vs. 78%, and in grade 4, 72% vs. 74%, students scoring at or above the National 50<sup>th</sup> percentile declined slightly. This marks the second year that we elected to use the most recent edition of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills.

As previously mentioned, the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills serves as one of the array of assessments we use to measure student progress and most importantly, as a means for determining placements in AIS services for remedial math and remedial reading. We continue to contract directly with the publisher, Riverside, and have them score this test directly. We are using this data more substantially and are working towards archiving it in Infinite Campus so that we can do a more thorough analysis. We also use Riverside to score the Cognitive Tests offered to students in grades 3 and 6.

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

## **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 District Grade Level Meetings and March Workshop Day. Each of the Turnkey Trainers worked diligently to thoroughly and thoughtfully prepare for the presentations. 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 and 3-6 also prepared and presented to teachers new to the district during July 2008 reading in-service sessions. As a result of the 3-6 Turnkey Trainers piloting a new reading assessment, 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, five half-days were provided to K-6 teachers who were interested in beginning the process of curriculum mapping for writing instruction. During these five half-days, the teachers were able to develop a list of recommended units of instruction for writing spanning grades K-6. In addition, they identified the writing, speaking and listening learning standards for each unit of instruction as it aligns with the New York State Education Department Learning Standards document. The "Writerly Life" units developed the previous summer were implemented during the first semester of the 2008-2009 school year by a group of teachers who developed these units. All teachers who implemented this particular unit expressed enthusiasm and excitement regarding this introductory unit of instruction.
- Several meetings occurred over the 2008-2009 school year pertaining to K-2 spelling. Two individuals from Bethlehem Central School District shared their spelling program with the K-2 group of teachers. Over the summer of 2009, a group of grade 1 and 2 teachers will develop spelling programs to pilot during the 2009-2010 school year.

## **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 the staff development plan for the 2008-2009 school year.
  - Introduce and implement the revised reading benchmarks for grades K-2.

## **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

- Purchase and adopt the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark System II reading assessment program for teachers in grades 3-6. Utilize the turnkey trainers in providing ongoing training to teachers in the administration of and analysis of the data resulting from this new assessment instrument.
- Continue to update materials and resources for teaching reading.

Evaluation: In what ways was the K-6 balanced literacy program sustained throughout the 2008-2009 school year?

- Meetings with the reading turnkey trainers have occurred where staff development of individuals who teach reading has been discussed and planned. Turnkey trainers were instrumental in the planning and presentation during the district grade level meetings as well as on the March Workshop Day.
  - The revised reading benchmarks for grades K-2 have been introduced and are being implemented.
  - The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System II has been purchased for use in grades 3-6. All faculty who are involved in the teaching of reading were trained in the administration of this assessment in December 2008. The turnkey trainers are instrumental in this extensive training. This new assessment tool was administered to students in grades 3-6 for the end-of-the-year reading assessment.
  - Materials and resources for the teaching of reading are continually updated in each elementary building.
- Through the K-12 Language Arts Steering Committee/ District Writing Committee, continue the study of writing in grades K-6. Implement and revise the writerly life units developed in the spring of 2008. Provide support and feedback for teachers who are implementing these units, including feedback within their classrooms. Begin the process of 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. The focus on a K – 6 perspective continued and was extended to K – 12 in curriculum work which included the final survey of writing units taught across the grades and review and revision of the grammar curriculum. This group piloted the units of study entitled “The Writerly Life” and then shared them with their colleagues for implementation by all in Fall 2009. A presentation regarding the current status of the writing program was given to elementary teachers at the November Workshop Day. The Writer’s Workshop model is currently being

investigated. As part of this, interested members of the Writing Committee have been provided with the opportunity to participate in a conference with Lucy Calkins of Columbia University's Teachers' College. The potential for the role of Writing Turnkey Trainers also continues to be discussed.

- Continue to 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?

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. As part of the work being done in English – Language Arts instruction, elementary teachers and administrators as well as the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum have continued to review spelling instruction at the elementary level including a review of research. The group has completed its' review of current research in this area. Spelling universals have been developed and will be finalized by a group of K-2 teachers. A group will work to develop a K – 2 spelling curriculum this summer based on these universals. This curriculum will be piloted during the 2009 – 2010 school year.

- 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 2007-2008 results compare with the results from the previous year?

The results of the grades 3-6 ELA were received and analyzed. The results of the 2007-2008 administration of the ELA were comparable to the previous year's results.

- Begin an investigation into the development of 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?

A committee of teachers representing the seven elementary schools and all grade levels met to develop a survey of teachers regarding needs for report card

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

revision. The survey was placed on-line; there were over 120 respondents. The survey results were reviewed by the committee in spring and a listing of recommendations were made by the survey committee. Over the summer elementary administrators will work to develop a template that can accommodate the committee recommendations and that is aligned to the Infinite Campus system requirements. The report card revision process will continue in the fall with one or more ad hoc working groups charged with reviewing and refining the revised template and developing teacher resources to ensure clarity of grading tasks and expectations. Contemporaneously, as a result of the successful limited pilot use of Infinite Campus for quarterly reporting in the spring, each elementary building will be employing the Infinite Campus report card beginning in fall 2009.

**Level 7 - 8**

**2009 NYS Seventh Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment**  
**Total Population\***

Number Tested		Mean Score		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008
470	472	678	676	15%	6%	75%	78%	11 %	14%	0%	1%

**2009 NYS Eighth Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment**  
**Total Population\***

Number Tested		Mean Score		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1	
2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008
485	451	674	677	9.5%	13%	75.7%	64%	14.4%	20%	.04%	2%

\*includes students with disabilities

The January 2009 NYS ELA Assessment results demonstrated continued improvement at both the seventh and eighth grade levels. The percentage of students earning scores in levels 3 and 4 combined on the grade 7 assessment increased by 4.5% over last year’s results. 10.6% of seventh grade students did not meet with proficiency in 2009, while in 2008, 15% of the grade level did not meet with proficiency. It should be noted that no students performed at level 1 this year in grade 7.

The percentage of students earning scores in levels 3 and 4 combined on the grade 8 assessment improved significantly from the previous year. In 2009, 85.2% of eighth graders met with proficiency. This is an 8.2% increase over the 2008 results. In grade

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

8, 14.4% of students did not meet with proficiency. This is an 8.6% decrease when compared to the 2008 results.

While students with disabilities in grade 8 met with more success this year as compared to last year, results for students with disabilities in grade 7 were not as successful as last year.

Students enrolled in our Fundamental ELA program at both grade levels showed improvement in their results for the January 2009 administration of the assessments compared to the January 2008 administration. In grade 7, 89% of students performed at level 3 with only 11% performing at level 2. In grade 8, 47% of enrolled students met with proficiency.

Unfortunately, although both grade levels had improved results over last year, our standing compared to other Suburban Council schools dropped. We will continue to explore why this occurred and address areas of weakness.

Implementation of and the continuation of the programs and interventions listed below will assist in preparing students to meet with proficiency on these state assessments.

- Implementation of the English Level G program at both grades 7 and 8.
- Continuation of Fundamental ELA program at both grades 7 and 8.
- Analysis of areas of weakness as indicated by the January 2009 ELA results combined with an instructional emphasis on those areas by classroom teachers.
- Continued implementation of after school review and practice sessions focusing on those students identified as being at risk of not meeting proficiency standards.
- Continued implementation of practice activities that mirror the ELA imbedded within the English language arts curriculum
- Continued implementation of a building-wide practice assessment in November for teacher analysis and instructional direction.

**District Tests**

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

**Grade 7 English**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of Students/Percentage 2008-09</b>	<b>Number of Students/Percentage 2007-08</b>
A	168/38%	155/35%
B	158/36%	174/39%
C	85/19%	77/17%
D	23/5%	30/7%
F	8/2%	10/2%

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

**Grade 8 English**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of Students/Percentage 2008-09</b>	<b>Number of Students/Percentage 2007-08</b>
A	115/25%	92/21%
B	193/42%	159/37%
C	117/26%	128/30%
D	16/3%	33/7%
F	17/4%	21/5%

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- This year's final exam results for 7<sup>th</sup> grade are consistent with last year's results.
- This year a 7<sup>th</sup> grade ELL exam was developed to best assess the skills, strategies and texts that the curriculum implemented with these students addressed
- This year's final exam results for 8<sup>th</sup> grade improved. The percentage of students earning As and Bs increased by 9%, as compared to last year's results, with an overall 67% of eighth graders earning As and Bs. The English 8 teachers have worked over the last three years to revise the essay question and the administration procedures for the exam. As a group, we believe that the essay question and administration procedures were effective.
- Instructional Faculty
- AIS Programs: Teacher monitoring of students, After School Assistance, REACH Program (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades), FOCUS Program (8<sup>th</sup> grade), Reading/Writing Program, Fundamental ELA Program (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades)
- Spring/Summer Curriculum Workshops: 7G and 8G Curriculum Development and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Writing Units
- Balance of discrete skill instruction and test preparation
- Implementation of differentiated reading texts into curriculum at both grade levels
- Commitment of the District to the investigation of "Best Practices: for English Language Arts" instruction
- Professional development opportunities
- Visiting author writing workshop and presentation

## **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

- Two Scholastic Book Fairs
- Alignment of instruction K-12

### **OBJECTIVES**

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

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

Classroom English teachers have been implementing current best practices in writing instruction. Teachers implemented a beginning of the year introductory writing unit (Writerly Life Unit). Teachers have incorporated the use of Writer's Notebook, Literature Logs, Conversation Logs and

Journals into their curriculum and instructional practice. Students have been provided with opportunities for choice in writing topics. Teachers instructed a variety of writing genres. Some specific genres taught were: memoir, personal response/reflection, poetry, limerick, literary essay, letters and creative short story. Teachers modeled writing skills and strategies within direct instruction and have included conferencing opportunities with students for direct feedback, re-teaching and reinforcement of writing skills. Writing experiences are often connected to classroom reading. Additionally, teachers instruct grammar skills, spelling, vocabulary, sentence structure, parts of speech and paragraph development.

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

Evaluation: How often did instances of plagiarism occur? Does the junior high school need a plagiarism policy? Was a plagiarism policy developed?

Teachers tracked the instances of plagiarism in their classes. Fewer than ten instances, in English classes, were noted building wide. Most instances that did occur appeared to be a result of students not understanding the concept of plagiarism and/or was related to the availability and access to Internet essay topics. Teachers are providing instruction about plagiarism within the classroom especially when research is being assigned. As a department, we will continue to track instances of plagiarism and assess the need for a policy.

## **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

- Continue to develop writing curriculum through the work of the District English Language Arts Steering Committee.

Evaluation: What progress was made toward developing writing curriculum?

During the summer of 2008, three seventh grade English teachers developed a writing unit addressing the introduction of Writer's Notebook and Writer's Workshop. Activities addressing expository writing and creative/reflective writing is included. The unit includes how Writer's Notebooks will be introduced and used in classes, various prompts and assessment procedures.

Four eighth grade English teachers and three seventh grade English teachers have been approved to work two days during the summer of 2009 to develop writing curriculum for these grade levels.

- Analyze the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade NY State ELA assessment data including the special education subgroup. Make instructional recommendations for program revisions/adjustments as appropriate for both general education and special education programs.

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

Assessment data has not yet been received from the state for the January 2009 ELA assessments. The data will be analyzed upon receipt from the state and recommendations made as appropriate.

Based upon the results of the November 2008 Building Practice assessment, teachers addressed areas of weakness within the classroom. Teachers also implemented after school review and practice sessions prior to the state assessment for those students who they had identified as being at risk of not meeting with proficiency.

During the 2009-2010 school year, General Level English classes will be implemented. Students who have been identified as having weak English language arts skills will be recommended for this course. This course is designed to address grade level skills, strategies and standards while at the same time providing instructional materials at a level those students can better access.

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

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

Evaluation: Were English language arts AIS programs reviewed? Were program revisions/adjustments deemed necessary?

Specific data will be analyzed when the results are distributed by the state later in the spring of 2009.

During the first semester of the school year, students enrolled in the Fundamental ELA course were given direct instruction addressing those ELA skills and strategies assessed on the New York State English Language Arts assessment. Students were also engaged in activities that reflected the format of this assessment. During the second semester, the focus of this course shifted from test format to specific English language arts skills.

**Level 9 - 12**

**NYS Regents - Comprehensive English**

Shaker HS - No. Tested - 475 (95% of the class)      Percent Passing = 94%

English Regents	Passing		Scoring 85% or Higher	
	2008-09	2007-08	2008-09	2007-08
	94%	96%	49%	51%

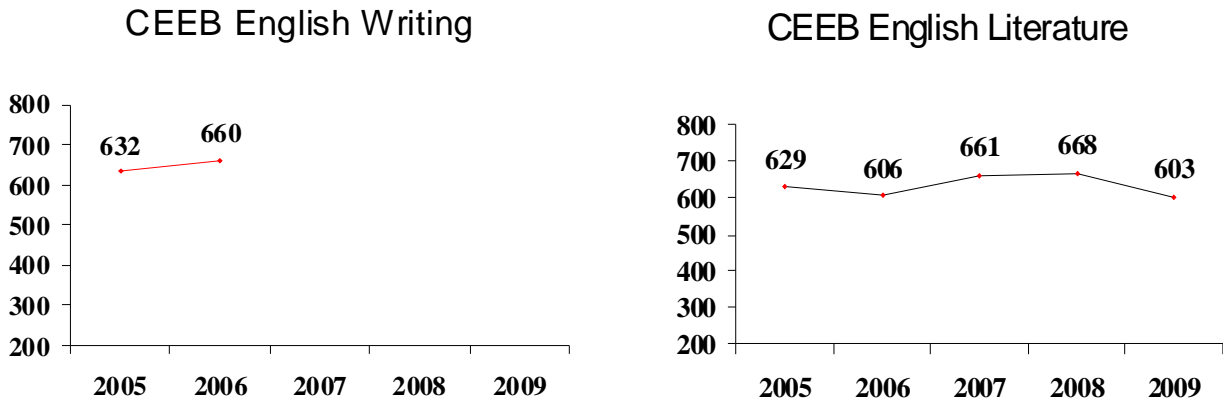
The number of students passing the English Regents exam for the 2008-2009 school year remained approximately the same with 94% of the students passing the test compared to 96% the previous year. This is a benchmark test needed for graduation. The number of students achieving mastery also remained relatively the same, with 49% scoring 85% or higher compared to 51% the previous year. These results are very consistent with the last six years of testing results, as our passing rate on this Regents exam has ranged from 93% to 96% over this time period. Likewise, the percentage of students achieving mastery has also been consistent. This year's mark of 49% achieving this target compares very favorably with the results over the 6 year period which shows our students attaining mastery at the rate of 45% - 53%.

**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			
21			603	-42

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

**2005-2009 Results - CEEB - English Writing & English Literature)**



**CEEB Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) – (Critical Reading Verbal**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2004</b>
SHS Mean Score	537	542	538	531	548
NYS Mean Score	485	488	491	497	497
National Mean Score	501	502	502	508	508
Suburban Council	533	537	538	545	543
Percent of 12 <sup>th</sup> graders taking exam	72%	77%	84%	87%	80%

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2004</b>
SHS Mean Score	537	542	538	535	548
SHS Percent over 600	31	31	30	26	29

**CEEB Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) - Writing**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2006</b>
SHS Mean Score	529	548	533
NYS Mean Score	478	481	483
National Mean Score	493	494	497
Suburban Council	519	523	519
Percent of 12 <sup>th</sup> graders taking exam	72%	77%	85%

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2006</b>
SHS Mean Score	529	548	531
SHS Percent over 600	27	31	26

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

**UNIVERSITY IN THE HIGH SCHOOL (UHS)**

	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2006-07</b>
No. of Students Enrolled in University in the High School Program	30	48	49
Percent of Total Senior Class Enrolled	6	11	8
No. of Students whose SHS Final Mark Qualified them for college Credit	100	100	100
Percentage of students scoring 85 or better	84	86	N/A

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

	<b>Grade 12</b>	<b>Difference over 90%</b>
SHS Percent scoring "3" or Higher	96%	+6
Number tested	45	
NYS Percent scoring "3" or higher	59	
US Percent scoring "3" or higher	58	

\*Data from NYS and US from 2009.)

We continue to show solid performance on the AP exam in English Literature. This year, 96% of our students achieved a grade of 3 or better, compared to 97% one year ago. This represents achievement that is significantly higher than our New York State and National cohorts.

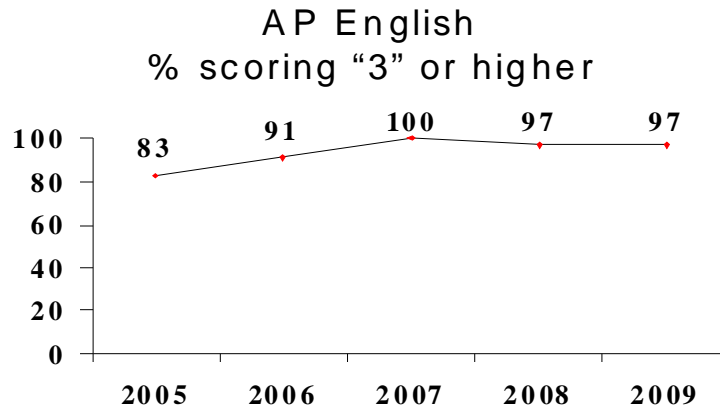
Our results on the CEEB Achievement Tests in English Literature dipped significantly from the 668 mean achieved the previous year. This year, we had 21 students take the test, the highest number in the past five years. Also noteworthy is the fact that although the mean score of 603 represents a substantial drop from last year's mean of 668, it is not the lowest in the past six-year period, which has witnessed a range of 566 through 668 as a mean performance on this test. This year, also, saw a decrease in student performance on the CEEB SAT verbal assessment. Our critical reading portion was taken by 355 students, or 72% of the total grade 12 tested. This year's mean was 537 compared to 542 the previous year. Performance over the past six years has ranged from a low of 531 to a high of 553 five years ago. This also represents the fourth administration of the writing portion of the SAT test. A writing score of 529 represents the lowest in the four year administration of this test and is a decline from last year's high of 548. Ms. Skeals is working intensely with the English department on improving and strengthening student writing. Teachers are working on the development of integrated

**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

grammar lessons and the use of the tenets of the National Writing Project to improve students' thinking and writing capacities. We should also note that Shaker High School students continue to outperform their Suburban Council, New York State, and National counterparts on both the critical reading and writing portions of this exam, as student results are above the Suburban Council mean on both tests. Furthermore, nearly a third (31%) of the students who take the SAT verbal scored at or above 600. Twenty-seven percent of our students scored at or above this benchmark on the SAT written test.

Ms. Skeals and the department are clearly addressing the issues of reading and writing and fully recognize the importance of solid performance on these national tests, both of which are gatekeepers to college admission.

**2005-2009 CEEB AP English**



Our special education students use the Regents Competency Test to qualify for graduation. Although we work diligently to get all our special education students to pass the Regents exams, some ultimately do use the Regents Competency Test as their graduation gatekeeper. This year, we are pleased to report that no students failed the RCT in grade 12. Our number of failures on the reading portion in grade 11 was down to 4 from 5 the previous year and the writing failures were up to 3 from 0 the previous year. Both figures represent less than 1% of the current senior class. These low numbers reflect the solid efforts expended by the department in working with some of our struggling students.

**RCT INFORMATION**  
**Grade 11**

Subject	Number Failing		Percent of Class	
	2008-09	2007-08	2008-09	2007-08
Reading	4	5	.08%	1%
Writing	3	0	.06%	0%
Number Exempt				

## ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING (cont.)

### Grade 12

Subject	Number Failing		Percent of Class	
	2008-09	2007-08	2008-09	2007-08
Reading	0	2	0%	1%
Writing	0	0	0%	0%
Number Exempt				

## HIGHLIGHTS

- In November, Shaker High School welcomed back one of its own, Billy Lyons, as a stop on the national tour of his one-man play based on Tim O'Brien's novel *The Things They Carried*.
- In conjunction with the Media Center, the Shaker High School English department hosted a day of assemblies and writing workshops with author Chris Crutcher.
- As an extension activity for students in the Sports in Literature elective, Shaker High School seniors welcomed Siena athletes, Kenny Hasbrouck and Katelyn Dooley, for a discussion of Title IX and gender equity in sports.
- Three Shaker students (Irina Mukan, Janaya Williams, and Peter Molinaro) had poetry published in *The Elm Tree* newsletter.
- This year, the English department brought back the annual Shakespeare competition. Senior, Jackie Bouchard, went on to represent Shaker High School at the regional competition held in March.
- After winning the school's Poetry Out Loud competition, three Shaker High School students (Arielle Ray, Adah Hetko, and Genevieve Mailloux) represented Shaker at the regional competition. Genevieve was a finalist in the regional competition and moved on to represent Shaker at the State Level.
- Five members of the English department attended the Teacher Leadership Luncheon and Seminar organized by the Greater Capital Region Teacher Center.
- Two members of the Shaker High School English department applied and were accepted as participants for the Capital District Writing Project.
- All Advanced Placement teachers, from grades 9-12, participated in an in-house conference to share best practices and discuss vertical articulation in the Advanced Placement program.

## OBJECTIVES

- Department members should review Regents level curriculum in grades 9, 10, and 11 with a goal that students will be exposed to a wide range of genres, both print and non-print, in order to be prepared for the demands of a twenty-first century society.

## **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

Evaluation: Was the process to adjust curriculums begun in 9R, 10R, and 11R? How were these curriculums adjusted?

Currently, English 11 teachers are reviewing a broad range of titles for inclusion in the English 11R curriculum. Teachers in grades 9 and 10 are reading *The Book Thief* and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* as companion texts for books currently being taught. Additionally, we have worked on vertical planning to increase student exposure to a variety of poets with the goal of creating poetry anthologies by grade level. Finally, teachers are incorporating more technology into their lesson planning, allowing students to communicate with Wiki spaces, blogs, and shared writing sites.

- After reading and discussing best practices in the teaching of writing, the department will begin to delineate the kinds of writing experiences that we want our students to have in grades 9-12. With guided instruction, modeling, and an emphasis on process, students will have a variety of daily in-class, informal writing activities and weekly writing opportunities which will allow them to hone their craft.

Evaluation: Has the department articulated writing experiences for students in grades 9-12? What steps were taken to align writing instruction with knowledge of best practices?

During the March workshop day, the department reviewed the plan put forth by the writing subcommittee at our January meeting. From that point, department members participated as writers in a workshop session modeled after the tenets of the National Writing Project. At the conclusion of the lesson, department members discussed strategies they could take from the experience to the classroom to improve students' thinking and writing abilities. The department was genuinely interested in pursuing the exploration of methodology. To that end, two teachers from the department will be participating in a six week Capital District Writing Project this summer and five teachers will be participating in a one week institute to be held at Shaker High School. The work will continue next year through a "Teachers as Writers" group designed to promote teacher sharing, conversation, and critique about writing instruction.

- With a focus on improving and strengthening student writing, teachers will continue the development of integrated grammar lessons. Such lessons will be created with two purposes in mind: the application of stylistic options to develop voice and the understanding of conventions necessary for formal writing. Using model texts (both literary and informational), teachers will emphasize how sentence construction, fluency, detail, and rhetorical devices create voice, and will design activities which encourage students to apply such grammatical insights to their own writing. Second, teachers will provide targeted instruction focused on

## **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

the most critical concepts that need to be understood in order to eliminate the most frequently occurring and most serious kinds of conventional errors.

Evaluation: What new units were designed at each grade level? What critical concepts will be taught and reviewed at each grade level?

The English department has developed additional grammar activities which require student independence. Student groups focus their inquiry on one of the most commonly assessed grammar topics on the S.A.T. and then design lessons to teach classmates. Students present information, models, and then provide practice for their classmates. Additionally, the department has shared model lessons showing how texts currently included in the curriculum can be used as mentor texts for writing instruction.

- Teachers should continue to employ active reading strategies during literature instruction.

How are active reading reviewed in the department? What specific strategies have teachers used?

The English department continues to use the work of Cris Tovani, Kelly Gallagher, and Jeff Wilhelm in designing lessons which focus on the process of making meaning rather than the product. Lessons focus on pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading activities to promote engagement and reflection.

- Teachers should develop lessons that promote reflective and critical thinking skills.

Evaluation: What specific classroom activities have teachers devised to promote critical thinking?

As we continue to dialogue as a department, we are evaluating our offerings from a 9—12 perspective rather than a yearly perspective. We continue to work toward the goal of “less is more” by examining our curriculum, considering our choice of texts, and discussing our pacing. We are currently in the process of formulating a list of essential skills and experiences which students should have upon graduation. That list will become our reference point as we begin to articulate a vision for the English department for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

- Teachers should use a variety of technological resources to communicate knowledge.

Evaluation: How have teachers used technology as part of their regular instruction?

## **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS/READING** (cont.)

The installation of a Smart Board in one of our classrooms has allowed the teacher to try various writing lesson plans and share them with department members who informally observe her classes. With the installation of projectors in almost all of the English classrooms and the purchase of the department Elmo, teachers are utilizing technology frequently in their classrooms. Several teachers have established Wiki pages and are using them for revision groups beyond the classroom.

- Since the plagiarism policy has now been in place for a year, the Principal's Council will review the document and procedures. A specific focus of the review will be to determine if the consequences delineated are aligned with the philosophy regarding the distinction between accidental and intentional plagiarism. Following a review by the Principal's Council, the policy will be discussed with the full faculty in order to increase awareness and elicit feedback.

Evaluation: How was feedback received by members of the Principal's Council and the faculty incorporated into the policy?

In continued discussions with the English department, we have considered the options of my presenting the plagiarism procedure to all 9<sup>th</sup> grade English students in the fall. In addition, we have looked at revising the language to include projects as well as papers. These suggestions from the English department will be brought to the Principal's Council for review. Any amendments to the procedure will need to be included in the next version of the Shaker High School Research Guide.

- A subcommittee of the English department will meet to discuss the creation of a Writing Lab at Shaker High School. The committee will review the writing center philosophy and tutoring theory to create a vision of the Writing Center and a proposal for implementation.

Evaluation: Has the committee reviewed models for the Writing Center? Was a proposal developed?

A subcommittee of the English department is charged with developing a short and long-range plan for our Writing Center. The committee is planning to use the Center as an English computer lab (both for classes and clubs) next year, and is reaching out to local universities to work with their pre-service teachers as volunteer writing tutors. The committee is currently considering options for the long-range goal of training our students to be peer tutors. As of this point, the necessary computers and classroom furniture has been included in the budget and a classroom has been designated for the Writing Center.