

SECTION 1

1:1 Grade level meeting: School Wide Goals

Diana You remember that um, last week we went over these, and I want to review them again because this is the really important process that we've been doing with the um, implementation of our vision. Then we assess, then we set our goals, and we then make our strategies, which we're going to work on mostly today. But remember that our vision is to improve the writing level of our students up to grade level, and above, and that's what we've decided as a whole school. Then we're doing our assessments so that we can see where our students really are. Then we're setting our goals. First we'll go over our overheads of our children's work and see where we want to plug in mostly the four-block building blocks that Mia has been showing us about spelling and uh high frequency words and how we can um make even bigger, bigger improvements.

1:2 Grade level meeting: Indicators

Sandy The one that's up right now is um, beginning of the year writing communication. And as you can see, in the beginning of the year, we had 0% of our kids at 4's. The majority of our kids were falling in the 2 category at 50% and then in the 1 category we had 36%, and that was at the beginning of the year. Now you can see what we've done so far with the mid year. In the 4 category we got 6%. Our 3 category grew; it's now at 33%. And basically the other main thing that happened was the 1 category shrank. And we still have a lot in the 2 category at 47%, so these are our kids that we're really going to want to target to move up. And what we want to think about is why did they not make the 3 category? That's the key thing we have to think about so we can try to move them up. At the mid year now, we got 2% 4's. But look: 39% are now in the 3 category. So if you look at that we've got 41% of the kids that are on grade level.

Gerardo Right.

Diana But we still haven't moved very, we haven't made a big inroad on the 4's. That could be another goal.

Sandy The 4's, though, that's like, that's going to be somebody who's functioning at a first grade level.

Gerardo First grade level.

Sandy Because on the rubric they have to write four sentences. So probably that, I would think that might stay—

Diana But I think they could write four sentences. If they're writing three, they can write four if we help them to—

Sandy Yeah but I think we really need to put our energy—

Diana Well let's work on that—

Sandy On the 2's.

Diana We're going to talk about it.

Sandy Yeah.

Diana Let's talk about it.

Sandy Okay..... For the beginning of the year letter sounds, we only had basically 79% were still in the 2 category that didn't know their letter sounds, and were not gonna, they were not going to be writing, scoring high in their writing assessments if they didn't know their letter sounds. For blending um, that's an area we still have a lot, we have room for improvement on. The kids um, in the beginning of the year, there were 82% in the "few" category for blending. Now we're down to 52% but there's still a lot there and that's such a key for reading. Then for sight words like Diana was saying, that's a school, that's a school goal that the whole school is working on. And we also can, um, there's room for improvement here. We saw 70% of the kids are in the few category for our sight word assessment test. And that's why Mia has been coming to our common planning meetings so she's going to all the grade levels um, common planning meetings so that she can help us work on the sight words and spelling school-wide.

1:3 Grade level meeting: Analysis of learning trends

Tina (Ms. Quezada) We saw that the positive trends that we saw were that as students increased their knowledge in letters and the sounds, then their writing became more apparent. At the beginning of the year, we only had, we had 0% at grade level, and now with the beginning writing assessments, um, the middle year assessments we have 39% at grade level. So once they know their sounds and their letters, they'll start writing more.

Gerardo Mhm. Yeah.

Mona You know I want to mention that, I think that this year since we've really focused on more writing, we focused on creating lessons for the conventions, for learning conventions. Where last year, we were really into reading much more, and you know writing as well,

Diana more of the communication

Mona but as not as serious as you know this year we are, doing writing.

Ts Mhm. Mhm. Definitely.

Mona I think that we make a bigger effort. I mean—

Diana Well, we're seeing the results.

Mona I've seen results in my kids at this point, this year compared to last year. They're much higher.

Yael (Ms. Estline) Um, we saw a huge jump for the positive trends. We saw a huge jump in the alphabet, name sound and word scores. Overall, they improved. The rhyme, and also in rhyming—

Gerardo Mhm.

Yael --which went from 42% putting, meaning all the children were in, almost, half the children were in the 'some' category to only 15% being in the 'some' category. And 75% of our children are in 'most', in the 'most' category when it comes to rhyming--

Gerardo Mhm.

Yael --which is really a big improvement. Um, we saw the improvement um, also in blending but I think we could probably work a little more on that.

Ts Mhm. Definitely. (?) SFA.

Yael Because you know it's an improvement, meaning we're moving in the right direction but we're not there yet. And same with the beginning sound. We improved a little bit. We can still do more.

Diana And I think we ought to maybe you know make a list like from the beginning of the year to the end of the year and develop some strategies and where they would fit in, and--

Gerardo Especially after the beginning assessment because that tells you where the kids are at and what the weaknesses are.

Sandy What we really need to look at now and focus in on is what the weaknesses are so we can pick. Should we pick one or two?

Diana Well, we wanted to focus on spelling and word recognition—

Sandy Because we're doing that schoolwide--

Diana So lets turn the page. And, um, but that's a huge category.

Sandy The blending?

T? Blending.

Diana Well let's say sounding out because you've got to have an ending on it. You can't just have a beginning.

Gerardo Mhm.

Diana You know saying it fast, all of that is sounding out or ... Spelling is a decoding and encoding process, so it's just the reverse, you know. If they can hear the sounds, then they can spell it.

Sandy Okay.

Gerardo Isn't sp—

Sandy So blending I guess slash spelling.

Gerardo Mhm.

Diana The important thing is that they can hear the sounds.

Gerardo Yeah, the sou-.

Diana And if they can hear the sounds and they know how to write them, then they can spell.

Gerardo Mhm.

1:4 Grade level meeting: Examples of student work

Sandy We'll start with our samples of work that we have.

Diana And we'll just basically talk about them and talk about the strategies that enabled us to get where we are and...

Yael We all brought in our work of children at different levels.

Gerardo Mhm.

Yael I have here a low and and 2 mediums, so I'm going to start off with one of the mediums that I have. This is actually interesting because this was done in February but it's the same child as the one I'm going to show you next. And here he wrote, I went to the movies with my mom and my brother. I was happy. And he's got some letter reversals here. And he does have punctuation at the end. And some of the words that are red words that we have taught are here correctly. And he also has a grasp on some of the th, ch, sh. And with him I emphasized spaces on the next one he wrote.

T3 Mmm.

Yael This is just March 22nd, so it's just a few weeks later. And here he wrote, I like school. It is fun, very fun.

Diana I saw, Yael, that you have the word 'the' in there. Do you have a chart where they can go and look up words?

Yael We have a word wall, and we put down our high frequency sight words.

Diana Mhm.

Yael And so yeah, they use that a lot. They really do. And we practice, we do games, like around the world and those sorts of things where they're constantly using their red words. I have children who are still um, writing strings of letters and you'll see red words inserted in the middle.

- Ts (chuckling) they're getting them--
- Yael So you have, yeah they're getting the red words, which are sight words.
- Sandy What do you think is um, the main reason for them to start getting the red words? What do you think that you've done that has made them (?)?
- Yael I'm also modeling it. A lot of times when I always write, I always write before it's their turn to write. And always, whenever I get to a red word I stop and I think if it's a red word or not and we decide together if it is. And if it is we'll put it on the word wall and then clap it out. And so I'm trying to model it every time for them to do it in their own writing. And they, also, we also have a little ladybug, a little puppet ladybug, we call her Red. And she hangs out by the word wall and whenever she sees, whenever they're writing, she goes around the classroom and finds red words in their paper.
- Ts (laughing) Cute!
- Yael They really want to put a red word in there because they want a visit from their friend. So a lot of the children are just writing now a lot of red words and they've forgotten communication. So you have to be careful and have to push communication more. Yeah
And then I have, um, a child in low that I brought here. And this is um, a story about him and his dad. And they went to the museum together. And this is what he told me. But I don't, um, I didn't see when he was reading it any connection between what he's saying and the sounds and the letters. So, um, what I do see this child doing is writing in the lines, understanding that there is directionality to writing, he's going from left to right when he's writing. And um, he does have a couple of red words, I, and I see is down here. But it's not connected to what he's saying. So um, and this is someone who has been in my classroom from the very beginning of the school year. And this is also a child who actually does have most of his letter sounds and names. So, when you sit one on one with this child, he can do it. He can write out exactly what he wants to say. But on his own, this is what I (?).
- Diana So it might be a focusing, or an idea about words. What words and letters and how that all goes.
- Yael So these are my examples.
- Sandy Great. Good job.

SECTION 2
2:5 Teachers discuss: How did it happen?

Diana We really took off when we saw where our kids were. Saw that this process really could be valuable, that we really could learn what our kids were doing and really, wow! Then we're going to have a middle assessment and an end assessment and I think that's where we really started to understand the process.

Yael I really think we just keep getting more and more organized. We're getting better and better at doing it so we're becoming more efficient. And each year we see where our kids are and where they need that extra push and we focus more in on that.

Diana The AALT strategy which is very specific about assessing evaluating, developing strategies and then assessing again.

Yael Right.

Diana Which is like a very clear cut step process—

Yael Right, they have helped us a lot in shedding light.

Sandy And when I took over and went to the AALT meetings, the thing that I learned: 1) was I learned the process because I was able to go the AALT meeting with all the kindergarten teachers from ten schools—

Interviewer Mhm.

Sandy --and I found that the, one of the common problems that people were having was collecting the assessments in a timely manner. And the more I thought about it and when I heard about it in school, I also um realized maybe the teachers didn't really understand why this was so important because at the AALT meeting it became really clear to me why it needed to be done. So what I did then, I went and I put it in graph format so when we shared it in the meeting it wasn't just numbers we could look at, we could really have a picture.

Interviewer: yeah those pie charts are just... beautiful.

Sandy And as soon as we did that, I think, I mean, I've never had a problem since then now. Everybody gets their things in on time.

Diana They understand the process.

Sandy It made a big difference and it has saved us time in our meeting as well.

Gerardo Yeah because everybody buys into the importance of assessing and evaluating everything that we need to strategize for, like the specific strategies for sight words we were talking about; the sounding out. I mean, we've gotten data from looking at our children. This is where they need to go.

2:6 Teachers discuss: Impact in the classroom

Gerardo And then we implement it. A lot of times, something we didn't see in the video is that we come back and how did that strategy work? We talk about that and then we go from there and, you know, modify it.

Yael We all had different types of tests before.

Gerardo Mhm.

Yael Now we're doing the same tests.

Mona I think it helps us re-organize the way we teach in the classroom. Like I knew before when I first started teaching our first year, there is a lot of things that we never did that first year at kindergarten.

Gerardo yeah.

Mona And uh now that this is the third year, we kind of know what we need to focus on. The way we plan our lessons are completely different from when we first started three years ago. You know we're really focusing a lot more on um, we're looking at concepts more and I think I did-- we did away with a lot of things that we did the first year.

Ts Mhm.

Mona --that were, you know, just not really helping the children. And um, our lessons are becoming much more, um...

Diana Focused.

Mona Focused (nodding)

Ts focused.

Gerardo Mhm. And we have more uniformity.

Yael Exactly. They're all the same that's the main thing too.

2:7 Teachers discuss: Advice to teachers and principals

Interviewer What advice would you offer to an AALT rep or a principal who wants to get, what they just saw on the video now going on in their school, but they've not been able to get off the dime. What advice would you give them?

Diana Try to build trust between the members of the group. You know, build the trust and between the administration that this is not a way being critical, it's a way of working for the good of the children and everyone involved.

Yael I think staying firm because a lot of us, we're going in different directions saying, well I don't know if I can do this. I don't know if my children can do this—

Ts Oh it's to hard (Multiple agreements)

Yael I have model B. I have-- yeah, everyone felt like because of some situation to, personal to themselves, it may not work. And because administration was really firm with us and said, look this is what you need to do. So like it or not, do it. (Various agreements among the others.) You know and I, I was in the beginning giving my own exams and the exams that they were doing and then suddenly I went, wait a minute. As I saw the results, I was like wait, okay. I put all my results, all my exams away and now we're all using the same ones. So you're going to have rebellion in the beginning a little bit.

Diana Exactly.

Sandy I think too, the fact that we all are working as a group, like all the statistics are kindergarten, the whole team and that's how it's presented. We all want all of our kids to improve and so that's been a focus. It hasn't been broken down by track. It hasn't been broken down by teacher. It's been the K (emphasis) teachers, A, B, and C track.

Diana Yeah, that's a big key.

Mona We have to give a lot of things to our writing coach, Mia Robinson

Ts (multiple agreements)

Mona because she really comes into our meetings, um, weekly and she helps guide, she helps, you know, gives us guidance—

Diana Gives us ideas and strategies.

Mona --and gives us ideas and she presents strategies to us through videos, through paper forms, anything that she can do. Modeling. And I think she has been a tremendous help—

Gerardo Yes she has.

Mona --to organize us and to build that trust and to lead us in the right direction.

Tina And I think we learn a lot from each other because we have the, we have like model A teachers working with model B teachers which makes it, I think, easier to see like you know maybe they understand our children better and we understand their children better and the way we can use different strategies too. (Various agreements.) Because I think it would be working only with the model B teachers and it would be 2 model B teachers. Maybe we're not trying as much or maybe we're not grasping as much as they _ do. And then we're not getting the opportunity to do so.

Yael Even though we have different opinions, I think teachers probably (laughing) are the most opinionated people there are. But um—

Diana Everybody wants to boss everybody. (laughs)

- Yael Everybody wants to have their say. So I think that you know one of things is just making everyone realizing it and staying firm. Saying, this is what we're doing, try it, and you can always change it, but let's try it.
- Diana But to administration I would also say, it's the same as in the classroom. It's the balance you've gotta pull and push at the same time. But not be too negative, you know. Because that shuts everything down, but not just let everything slide either because then it does slide. So it's kind of that real, delicate balance.

2:8 Teachers discuss: Changes in Kindergarten Achievement

- Mona And I remember the first year that I taught. The first grade teachers, oh my goodness!
- Ts (laughter)
- Mona Our kids were not where they were supposed to be. And so we asked them, you know, what is that you need us to teach them? Where do they need to be when they go into first grade? Boy, we got an earful. And so that also helped us to you know, figure out what our goals were. And um, you know it never ends there. You just keep plugging along and you know, when the kids went to first grade last year, we got a lot of compliments from the first grade teachers. And they were saying, incredible! You know your kids came to first grade in a totally different light, and they were really excited about where they were. And so that I think that we seem to, first grade helped us to understand what we needed to do also.

SECTION 3

3:9 Classrooms: Ms. Quezada's and Ms. Estline's classrooms

- Student (Reading from journal) I like to dance of the raspa because it is fun.
- Interviewer Where did you learn to write all those words?
- Student I just, I just um, sound it out.
- Interviewer Really?! You are such a good writer and a speller. Do you like to do that?
- Student Yeah.
- Student (Reads from journal)
- Student (Writing and reading from journal)

3:10 Classrooms: More extensive visits

- Yael The grade level meetings really help us to clarify what sorts of concepts the kids need based on how they're doing in the assessments.

We know what areas they need to strengthen. With the past assessment, we realized that the kids needed more practice with sight words, with red words. And so we really practiced "say-spell-say" a lot. We fit it in to our morning message. We fit it in to our modeling when we do our journal writing.

- Students Today is Tuesday.
- Yael What's missing?
- Students Is.
- Yael Is. You know how to spell is? Lets do say spell say. Ready?
- Students Is. I – S. Is. We will publish.
- Yael Are we missing something right here?
- Students We.
- Yael We. The word we.
- Students We. W – E. We.
- Yael Very good. (?) remember that that's a capital.
- Students W- E We, we. Lower case e
- Student Hooray for Kevin P!
- Yael Hooray for Kevin!
- Yael We um, go around, for example, in my classroom with a red ladybug and we make sure that they have those red words somewhere in their writing. That they realize that they're important and they get a little bit of help from the puppet.
- Yael And (?)
- Student My hat.
- Yael Aha! I see a my. Good job.
- Yael In addition to that, we try to tie that, I, my classroom tried to tie that to the Star Story, which was Big Mama today. And in Big Mama, there was a man reflecting on his childhood. So, the children had to think of something that they really enjoyed from when they were younger or even yesterday for them, they are young, and write that into their journals.
- Student I thought after (?) we were going to do journals.
- Yael Yeah, we are going to do our journals now.

Student What are you going to write about?

Student About you!

Yael I'm going to write about my good memories. Everybody has memories of things they once did with their family that they really, really liked. And when I was little I would walk with my grandpa to the market and we would always buy my grandma flowers.

Student What color were the flowers?

Yael You're going to find out. How do I spell "I"?

Students Capital I, I

Yael Always a capital. Right, even, it's in the beginning of a sentence, but even if it's not, I need a capital. I remember. What do I have to put here?

Students R.

Yael (?) Remember. Rrrr Re-m-m-m. eh-eh-eh-emmmm. b-b-b-b. er.

Ss (Call out letters as Ms. Estline articulates their sounds)

Yael My grandma. My.

Students M-- M-Y. My.

Yael Very good. That's a red word. Okay. I'm going to read and make sure that this makes sense. You ready? I remember my grandma. Stop. Does that make sense?

Students Yeah.

Yael Yes. My grandpa and I would.

Students Would.

Yael Did I forget a word? I did. Good writers always go back and

Students Read.

Yael Read. That's why because I forgot to write would. My grandpa and I would buy her flowers.

Yael Also when I'm modeling my writing before they go and write into their journals, I stop at the red words and I think about where I'm going to use my red words and I remind them more to look at the red word wall. They also get mini word walls on their desks while they're writing.

Yael Where do I find red words in the classroom?

Students (Pointing) There!

Yael That's right.

Student Mini word wall.

Yael They are right behind Ms. Estline. Right here on the red word wall. And where else can you find red words?

Student Mini word wall.

Yael On your mini word wall that I pass out to you when you're writing.

Yael In order for them not to just give you a list of red words, we have to know that communication is a big part of it. They scored lower on communication and we really wanted to get that up. And that's where they're getting across an idea when they're writing and not just a bunch of words.

Yael Put your finger on your head, and think about something that you really loved that you did once with your family. That you really loved and you'll remember forever. Because you're going to write in your journal today about something you did that you really, really have a good memory from. And we're going to write about that today.

Student (sounding out as she writes)

Yael Something that you did yesterday even. Anything that you did before today that you really enjoyed doing. Something you've done before, with your family...

Yael Mia Robinson is our writing coach. Every week Mia shows us something else that we do. And she's had us, for example, do a um, practice a um predictive sentence building. And that's something that we started yesterday that we're going to complete today after our rotations. And when I did that first time, this isn't the first time I've done it. I took it back to the grade level and I showed them how it worked in my classroom. And every one of us um gets the presentation done by Mia. We usually bring it back the next time and share it and tell everyone how it worked.

Student (writing, sounding out). Thanks!

Yael Everybody stop. That was ten minutes of writing.

Student (re-reads what he wrote) Goody, goody, goody!

Tina I noticed that my children, they needed more site words than more um daily oral language, which they were putting some words, some sight words but they weren't putting them in the right place. Not only did I see this with my group, but I also saw it in the grade level and we were sharing our journals and our papers and our assessments. We noticed that the children were site words but maybe not making complete sentences out of them. So this is what we're trying to do with the

journals and the daily oral language so that the children get the strategies so they could go back and independently do their work and using the room environment.

Tina Now read it and make sure it makes sense ok? Or do you want to take out a word?

Student No.

Tina No? Okay read it back to yourself.

Tina So what I'm having them do is actually sound out the words, listen to the sentence and make sure it makes sense. So that's what we're doing right now with daily oral language and then incorporating it into the journals.

Student Ms. Quezada, I'm using "has."

Tina Good job! Did you just used a word that we learned? Good!

Students (writing, sounding out words).

Tina Remember the word "the"? the?

Student Th.

Tina Th. Right? (?) What (?)

Student (?)

Tina That's right. Okay. (?) You got it. You got it.

I saw a tyrannosaurus. That's what you wrote! And look, I like the way you left a space between your words. Right here you just put it all together. You need enough space. What did you write there?

Student Little (pronounced 'liddo')

Tina Little. Okay. What was your sentence? What was your sentence?

Student (reading and sounding out)

Tina T, right. (student writes) That's better.

SECTION 4

4:11 Academic Achievement Leadership Team (AALT): Purpose

Principal --edit it, so what we want to do is then do a second go around because at the staff meeting on Monday our little celebration meeting, we want to take about two minutes thru grade level because if I'm in 5th grade I really don't have a clue or know what kindergarten's worked on this year and I would like to know or visa versa. I want to know what they are doing on 4th, 5th and 6th grade, so in addition to sharing these results and tallies and graphs with them, we want to take about two

minutes per grade level to share, so then once we shared out will do some edit, do some comments, to help you guys, then will do a second share and see if we can get it done in about two minutes.

4:12 Academic Achievement Leadership Team (AALT): Grade Level Representatives Report

- Principal OK, so we'll go ahead a listen to first grade and then we'll go ahead and give them feedback. (To someone off camera) Sandy is right there.
- T Question one about student needs, ... talked about conventions, so we talked about punctuation, word wrapping, spacing, spelling using the word wall and using spelling patterns. A little bit about indentation and writing quote marks. Under communication we talked about vocabulary and we tried to work in some, we tried to work on some ESL themes but really did not get too far with that. And the writers process, writers workshop and general writing was what we focused on greatly... (reading from paper) "What specific instructional strategies and approaches?" All of the above and then the last few months we've had A and C tracks were given instructions by Mia and then A track is training B track, which has been helpful to us all for A track to go back and revisit and also for B track to learn exactly how to do some of the working with words block. (reading) "What did your grade level do this year that helped make your meetings focused and productive?" Everyone really enjoyed and got a lot from Mia's training on the 4 blocks and samples of lessons, trying lessons and then discussing them, doing the demo lessons and watching them, having the videos and having and sticking to an agenda.
- In discussing our specific expectations with our students we want to develop kid language rubrics, which can be added on to as the year and as the scale level progresses. We're focusing on content while plugging away at conventions. We want to teach color coding editing to the students early during the year and referring it to it often and do the AALT sequence more often, bringing samples, analyzing them, deciding what the next step is, trying it, and doing that whole dance over again. And that's what we are.
- Principal I like to mention that the Getting Results Model because that's basically what this is all about. And you never can hear too much about analyzing student work, modifying, coming up with strategies, doing the lessons, and coming back, and looking at student work again. That cycle is never-ending. So I like how you threw that in there.
- T There is a lot more buy-in about that after this year when they can really see that that's what we had done.
- Principal Third?
- T Ok, um... (reading) "What specific student needs did your grade level focus on this past year?" We focused a lot on paragraph writing on main idea and supporting details and we did an awful lot work on teaching what a topic sentence is, we had word wall instruction and

accompanying activities. The specific instructional strategy and approaches that our grade level used to address the needs were modeling, direct instruction, interactive spelling strategies, word wall, cooperative learning. Specific instructional strategies, approaches that our grade level used in the classroom that successfully addressed the needs was relatively the same as in number 2. We did modeling, direct instruction, and again interactive spelling strategies.

We really were very well organized this year because of the AALT meetings and because of bringing up, making the agendas ahead of time. I myself as a grade level chair knew exactly what I wanted to accomplish and it allowed me not to waste time but to make it more productive. And I wrote um that--or WE wrote--that agendas provided were provided ahead of time a, specific guidelines were provided for each meeting. The agendas were relatively were written like a formula in the same way, where for instance when we would look at assess, identify what we did, what weaknesses and strengths we found, how we were going back again and improve the situation and what new assignments we were going to bring up for the next following week and bring back to grade level for the next grade level meeting.

Section 4:13 Academic Achievement Leadership Team (AALT: Kindergarten Report

Sandy

K's turn. Ok.... Diana Cady would normally be here, so I am filling in for her and I did the best I could with filling out the sheet. Diana, you guys know, had hurt her shoulder so she couldn't be here today.

So anyway, for -- (reading) "What specific student needs did your grade level focus on this past year?" One of the main things we did, we sent out at the beginning year, beginning of the year, a letter-sounds tape and we explained to the parents how important it was for the kids to know their letter sounds and that's a little different that differs a little from what SFA suggests which is one letter a week. But we all felt that was going to be really important and so all of us did it.

Second, we worked on phonemic awareness. After we did our first results, we found out that our kids were weak in that area so we started addressing that in our common planning meetings. And then after we did our first writing assessment we saw that most of our kids were at 2s and 1s because they couldn't use their sounds to spell. So we started really, we already sent out the tapes we kept reminding them they needed to work on it, we reviewed it in class and then we did a lot of modeling for them, so they would get the connection that the words are made up of the sounds that you hear.

Then, we noticed too that a lot of our kids were writing in letter strings, and we wanted to start getting them to do spacing, so we found a really good lesson from one of the books called "Teaching the Youngest Writer" and Mia had kind of helped us with that.

Next... "What specific strategies or approaches did your grade level identify to address these needs?" I kind of went over that already, we sent home the tape. For phonemic awareness lessons, I guess SFA somehow got word-- I don't know if they had seen our agendas or what, but it was either a real coincidence or they had they knew that it was a need we had because all of a sudden we got a new a phonemic awareness book, kind of like middle of the year they

brought us a phonemic awareness book, which some of us started doing lessons from, but one of our focuses for next year will be to use the book from the beginning of the year because it's real sequential.

We shared at our meetings we shared high, medium, and low papers and that was that was crucial. Once we started doing that we did it on the transparencies you could see exactly what we needed to work on. I mean, it just really stood out because you could see the trends as each person brought out their transparencies, so that really made it a lot easier for us to focus what kinds of lessons we wanted to teach. And kind of a progression that started from that was you know we would come up with a lesson but then teachers would do other lessons so when they come back to the next meeting we weren't only talking about "Oh how did that lesson go?" that we were going to teach, but people were bringing in a lot of other ideas as well. So, it became really a rich learning environment for everybody in that way.

Instructional strategies that we used... We were all really kind of nervous in the beginning, especially when that anthology was becoming due, we were kind of using journals but we were like HOW can we get an anthology for kindergarten kids, how are they going to take it through the process and a lot of us were having a lot of anxiety at that point. And Myra, who had come from first grade, did a class lesson for us at that point, and that really helped. And also Mia had brought in some samples of anthologies, which really lessened the anxiety, because you can get paralyzed by the anxiety and not be able to start and then start getting behind you know and missing your deadline. So that those were the things that really helped.

We also, we also came up with mini lessons to do before the journals that was something Myra had brought back from a conference that she had went, she had gone to in San Diego, with-- who was the name of the person? With Lucy Caulkins and she brought that information back and shared it with us. And we kind of highlighted lessons that would be good for K. A lot of us were doing morning message, and I don't know who started it but somebody had started integrating editing because it became too easy, the kids, our kids this year were really much more advance than they have been in the past, so we started doing editing in our morning message, and so they would start seeing like the basic editing. And that ended up getting shared, shared somehow kind of everyone start doing it.

We did word, a lot of people were doing word wall and really focusing more on it after Mia had done her lessons. We did some predictive charts at the end of the year and class book was another thing, and then ... We started trying go back and focus on dictation because our kids, um as their conventions improved their communication decreased. So we needed to like pull out more dictation from them because even though they could write it right, we still wanted to see if they were able to communicate it and to be able to you know to tell us more of a lengthy story when they can only write like really basic small sentences. And we also did making words.

And then... (reading) "What did your grade level do that helped make your meetings more focused and productive?" Again, we did the agendas like everyone else and we passed them out before the meetings, giving instructions to people for what they needed to bring to the meeting. We tallied our results and presented them in graph format, which really helped people see the importance of the

assessments early on. We used people's strengths in our group. I think we kind of look for what strengths people had in our kindergarten group and if we and if we found a strength we had them be a presenter, so we kind of shared. It wasn't always Diana and me that was doing, doing all of the work, like Blaine was, she kind of became known as "the ELD folder person," and she had the instructions on it and none of us have, a lot of us were going like "Huh? what are we supposed to do?" so she lead one of our meetings that was on the ELD folder and on a phonemic awareness assessment we could do. And again we began using those transparencies middle of the year which really helped focused our group by bringing in the high, medium, and lows.

Section 4:14 Academic Achievement Leadership Team (AALT): Cross-Grade Articulation

- T I'm glad to know that you guys were working on paragraphs that is something that we also did.
- T We thought you'd like it.
- T Hopefully, this coming year is going to be a lot better in that sense, we-- that was one of our major things in 4th grade this year. It was the paragraph forming and just the actual structure of a paragraph and so hopefully this coming year will be a lot better and we won't have to focus on paragraphs (?)
- T We hope.
- (laughter)
- T Yeah
- T I just wanted to say that I really like the fact that for my grade level, 3rd. to yours, 4th, that we're in touch with teaching what needs to be strengthened, and after the paragraph writing becomes a lot better, then once they reach 5th grade, I mean, the students that are going to be graduating out of here are going to be able to write decent paragraphs, and that's quite an improvement over, you know, so I am really glad about that. And we're going through a lot of the same-- it's interesting, we going through with the details and everything some of the same situations as you are, and it's just nice that-- and maybe a little bit more of grade level communication back and forth especially like 3 and 4 and maybe 1 and 2 and even the other way would would be very beneficial.

Section 5:15 The GR Consultant: "Something that stuck out in your mind..."

- Bill (GR cons) Larry, one thing that helped us at one of the other schools was if something stuck out in your mind that you remember, just feed that back cause that gives the rep (AALT representative) an idea what you found interesting, which is in part the game when you present to the

staff. Kind of decide what's most important representative of us, but what's most interesting that other folks might want to hear. So as you listen to the other reps, think of what was something that you heard that you remember that was most interesting.

- T I like the journal idea. (??) information that you were giving them, or I'm not sure if you said, like the information that you gave them and they're using it, right?
- T Yeah
- T So I like that a lot because come up 4th grade, and they are going to use that information.
- T That stuck out in my mind too, because it seems like a really valuable way to judge the children's work, because if you judge just a specific lesson that you did, a lot of kids would get that lesson, but is it going to transfer over into their normal everyday writing, that's where you're really going to see results or not results.
- T I like the fact that you guys ended up being at one whole table because I know that we started out that way but we're not anymore (??)
- T We're so big. It's hard, cause we're huge, but
- T And also the overhead looking at things is much better on all grade levels not just (??). And that was helpful in your development.
- T I'd like to mention the very specific strategies like the kinesthetic punctuation and the color coded editing; I think that's something that's really valuable that you can just take it and do it.
- T We like practical (?)
- Principal You like what?
- T Practical ideas.
- T Yeah.
- Principal OK, this process took about an hour, so what we want to do now take a few more minutes and try to condense your little presentation to like two minutes. And then we'll go around and will do one last time.

Section 5:16 The GR Consultant: Year-Long Achievement Data

- Bill (GR cons) Let's take a look at the chart because I can just illustrate a couple of things. First of all, I heard it already, I think it was (?) who said, "Now it gets more confusing." It does, because previously, we had a space between each grade level because the end of the year results were not

in there yet. Now that the end of the year results are in there, it looks like a whole string of bars and people have to focus a little bit to home in on just the beginning and middle for K or just middle and end in first grade, etc. OK?

Here is what I like you to do, we don't have a lot of time, we've got maybe 15-20 minutes at most that we can spend on this right now. But, I'd like you to take just take a look at the results for your grade level. Just pan through the ones. I'm going to give you five minutes to do that and then we'll take maybe 5 minutes just to popcorn things that you notice specific to your grade level. OK?

(Ts start looking; discussing)

Bill Now, the one thing you're looking for, you guys, first and foremost, is Is there any indications of improvement in an area that we focused on? So if you spent a good proportion of your time in your grade level meetings working on a particular thing do we see any results in that particular area?

(Ts look; discuss)

Bill Let's have a quick go around. Sandy, Blaine, anything you noticed at K?

Sandy Ummm.. yeah, I mean we were pretty we were really happy with the results. One thing we noticed was high frequency words, that's an area we can work on next year sooner. We didn't address it until kind of after mid-year when we saw what our results were mid-year, and I think that's an area next year we can aim to get higher. So ... that was one thing. And also we can tell here seeing the Santillana results for the first time, we're like wow, we can really improve in oral language, or we need to work on it, and it's not something we addressed at all during the year this is the first time seeing it, so that that's an area-- We were just talking about how the kindergarten classes really need that. We need to do more of it.

(Bill calls on 5th grade rep)

T 5th grade I think overall we've made many improvements many improvements overall. Umm... I would like to see next year work a lot on our conventions and improve it even more so. We took a little bit of a depth this time around from the beginning, middle, and end, it took a little bit of a dip, and I think we need to stay more focused on that and set structure and all that that we tied in with the conventions. Also I'd like to see, and we made an I think an outstanding improvement in our spelling. We have a lot more 5th graders spelling at the conventional level. So that's wonderful. And in the high frequency words, again a big improvement, we hit the 50% mark, but I think as 5th graders we need to go a little higher than that, I think we need to we need to go a lot higher than that. They're going into middle school, and their expectations are going to be higher, so I think that as 5th grader teachers we need to focus on spelling. And even though we got 50%, we should high at this end of the game.

Bill Good.

Section 5:17 The GR Consultant: Help in Interpreting the Data

Bill (GR cons) In the mid-year the one thing that gets my attention is that we had 10% N/As [not applicable, meaning "not scoreable"]. (Ts: oh; oh that's--). You know what I mean? (Ts: yeah) So that actually that's about 17%, and the same kind of thing happens when you look at conventions. If everybody would just turn the page, you see how it goes from 35 to 16 to 19. But you see the 10% N/A? (T: yeah) Which maybe teachers recorded an N/A for a kid who didn't make an attempt, you know what I mean? which would mean that those N/As are probably 1s [lowest score], so that may be what's going on there as well you're thinking well maybe we got some variations from just one time to the next in terms of the story we're asking them to write about.

T Spelling, there was an increase on, there was a definite increase, a great increase on conventional, so the spelling is improving although, the trend--

Bill Stafford, can you pause just one minute? Can you give me two numbers to ice that point for me?

T OK, 29% going from the mid-year to 44%.

Bill and start with the beginning

T 18

Bill Yeah. So when you can say that and then you can also ice it with "we went from 18 to 44% of our kids, who were evaluated as spelling conventionally," that just brings home the point, it it-- that's what the numbers help you do.

T and then that might have to do why the transitional is less because maybe some of those transitional went up to conventional so

Bill Absolutely, that's why you would see the number of 3s or the number of transitional, or 4s, going down because they are moving into the higher level.

T And then, we went up from, on the high frequency from 53 in the beginning to 63 on the high end. So we are making progress getting the spellers to the upper end. And then, we did well on the ELD levels. We didn't even have, I don't think we had any 5s at the beginning of the year, and yet we have like 18%, oh wait a minute, we had, yeah (confers with colleague)--

Bill you had 21 fours, 21% were fours and then by the end of the year the 13% were fives and 38% were fours (T yeah) That's nice. And 3rd grade's really important for that big jump. It's not that uncommon, 1st grade teachers, you-- for the kids that were coming in ELD level two or three you would want to them to four. If they're starting out at one, at the beginning of the year, you got them in two or three by the end

of the year, you've made really strong progress. But a lot of times even through 2nd grade, the kids begin to plateau and stay at level three. Level four in terms of oral English has a lot to do with more academic oral English, so that's a nice jump.

T It was, I was-- When giving a test it was interesting cause you know when you get to the exit test (Bill: Yeah), it's much more difficult for them to pass the exit test to get into that five. That jump from four to five is a big jump.

Section 5:18 The GR Consultant: Guidelines to Present the Data

Bill The first thing is just to familiarize them with what we have here, just as I did this morning. This is the table with the numbers; this is the conversion to the percentage. And then explain to them how this bar operates. And then, I would leave it either to grade level to common planning time or to individuals to look at the grade by grade results, and I would just draw their attention to the K-5 pattern. And there are two things that I would do; one is you got a nice pattern of increases like, 3's and 4's and increases in 2s and it actually, you see it in every graph, you see that?

T But not there

T No

Bill There's a little different here (laughter); that's the one exception. And so you can clearly make the point that we seem to be making progress. Now we always know that kids are going to make progress, you know what I mean? And if teachers are really on it, kids are going to make progress, so once they see the slope of the line, then you can turn your attention to the last bar because that is the bottom line. Let's look at what we stand at the end of this year. As an example, we had 50% of our kids in communication who are at level 3 or better in other words meeting the grade level standard and a total of 82 percent that were partially meeting or better, OK? So we still have a fair amount of work to do, you guys, to get everybody performing at or close to grade level, but we're definitely getting there.

T Like when we go back to common planning [with] these results, we can give them all out at staff meeting people aren't really going to have time to mull over and think about it. So then you back to common planning. And in the meeting, is it advised to have like a summary that you can present, analyzing the results for your grade level?

Bill Well, two ways to go. If you have a common planning, you know what I mean? If you have a common planning in which you can share these results, I think one possibility is to sort of do what we did and try to come up with a group summary: What did we find for communication, for conventions, you know what I mean? Just have a chart with a little space "what do we know?" And what's been really helpful that chart that started I think in second grade what gains do we see and to what do we attribute it? What lack of gains did we see and what do we have to do next year?

T (?)

Bill You know, plus minus and then to what do we attribute it? Drawing those attributions really important.

T Do some long term planning on your agenda is based on that?

Bill Well, it made just kick off the kinds of things that will start up in July. OK?

Section 5:19 The GR Consultant: The overall concept.

Bill Mark?

T I came right out of the common planning. I left this meeting to go to the common planning and came back to it and I told them what we were doing in here. And they were surprised because they really didn't have an overall concept of what all of these tests, the results were being done with these tests. That was the first thing, so I think maybe explaining this to them before they're given the tests, in advance earlier on in the year so that they know that there's a-- that they're going to get some type of feedback from what they're giving, directly. That was one thing and then the other thing was--

Bill Mark , can I interrupt you, just for one second, cause it's a strange contra-- situation you face, because on the one hand, if you start something like this and you explain too much (T: Right) people will just get more and more confused and it's almost like-- I don't know that they'll ever understand it until Tuesday when they see-- (Principal: Monday) Monday when everything kind of comes together they see the results and they can look at the progress over the year. It's hard, you almost gotta get down and do it (T: Right), before people-- and then-- but you got to have something like this; you have to bring it to closure.

Principal Yeah, but I think even us in here. We knew what we were doing all along, but we never dreamed that we'd see something like this, today. We all knew we were assessing beginning, middle and end and we know that Mia was getting tallies and Bill was helping us out, but I think that we were all beyond pleasantly surprised seeing this. I mean, we're all going to go out and party (laughter). So-- and we who are the AALT who are dealing with it, I can just imagine what you know the teachers (?). I think Tuesday-- Monday (laughter) I think Monday this will really drive it home for everybody.

T I wanted to piggy back on that because (?) same grade level and knowing how our people might feel at our grade level, I think that it's very important we as AALT members or grade level chairs or whatever, we need to maybe give them an idea of what the assessment is doing for them, not so much to look at in the document, but that it is a valuable tool for you as a teacher to know where you need to go next. If you don't see the value of assessment and all it is to you is a final product, then I don't see-- I can see why you would be frustrated

in having to give it (?). If we can spin it in a way, if we can get them to see that oh, you can use this to help you guide your instruction, if the focus is there, and I don't how you would say that, to get that message across, but, I am thinking if they saw that, then they wouldn't be as uptight about doing it.

Section 5:20 The GR Consultant: Why are they waiting months later?

T Well, I asked them, I said, if we gave immediate feedback for you and how your kids perform in your classroom, if there was a way to do that, like, we had talked about being able to tabulate it quickly and get it back. I said, would you find that information valuable? They said, Oh, yeah, you could do that? so it was kind of like well, I'm giving the test but I'm going something right away that I can use in my classroom to make a decision about how many kids I am going to teach differently and modify, as opposed to something that's going to be given months later that--

Bill Well, but, Mark, why they are waiting months later? I mean, why aren't they looking are their rosters, you know what I mean?

T I can't answer that question, I can't answer, I'm just saying that,

Ts (talking)

T What was that?

Bill Cause I've talked to a lot of teachers who say, you know, independent of what AALT does in tabulating school-wide, who basically do the assessment, record the results (T: Yeah) before they tally, and then they start scrutinizing (T: Right), you know, which of my kids move from 1 to 2 and 2 to 3.

T Yeah, I am not arguing, I am stating a fact

Bill But, they're probably not doing that

T It's possible

Bill Ok, fair enough, I'm just...

T One thing I noticed, was C track finished their, you know, their results earlier, so we kind of had to tabulate C track results so we could show them how they did and then B and A finished more at the same time. It was I think it was like B and C finished at the same time and then in the beginning of the year because when they are on track together, and then, at the end of the year, B and A finish at the same. But if you don't, if you don't, show them how they did like right after the results were done, like we did show C track before they went off track and finish their year, it was helpful. Also by doing it that way throughout the year you could-- the other tracks even if though they haven't done their testing yet saw what was happening and then it kind of drove what lessons we were going to pick all along.

Bill So, what, if I am hearing you right

(they start speaking at the same time)

T The AALT chairperson did it

Bill --coming together as a grade level to look at the results (T: mm hm) probably--

T Right after they were due.

Bill --is really important for getting individuals teachers go back and look at the individual results for that class.

T Right.

Section 5:21 The GR Consultant: Too much testing going on?

Bill Are you guys picking up rumblings from the grade level that there is just too much testing going on. Or is it probably a matter of them not quite yet having the big picture yet and seeing where it all comes--

T It's managing doing the testing and managing their classrooms at the same time. (Ts: Yeah, uh-huh) It's a management thing. They're overwhelmed because-- I, I believe some of the teachers are having trouble just managing the classrooms, period, and then when they're given something else to do now of another set of things, and they get flustered and then it falls apart.

T I don't know if it's much of a management but more of a-- at first it did seem overwhelming, for a lot of the at least in the 4th grade level it seemed overwhelming for us, that there were all of these different tests and a lot of like the Santillana are very individual tests that you can't take whole groups. And that management came came right away, and Mia was really nice enough to go to a lot of the different classrooms and help us out with that so I really thank you for that because you really helped a lot of 4th grade teachers who were having problems with that. But I think that they're getting that sense that there was a lot in-- on top of teaching and doing the four domains of writing, not just, you know, summarizing and then comparing the rubrics. And it just really felt overwhelming for a while.

T 4th grade had the Stanford9, the writing component of it, and then we had performance assignments for the ELL kids (Bill: Yes, yes), and it was just like, I remember one comment, (?) what else?? It was just like a stack of tests and it was where are we supposed to teach? And I think that maybe it was that by the end of this year we kind of you know, like this year is kind of like an experimentation figuring it out, how you are going to manage everything you need to do along with administering the test and not just focus on one thing. I think that this was like the trial, the practice and next year it's going to be a lot better. (T: Yeah, sure) And we have this for like new teachers, maybe, and show that this is why we are doing this, they will be more accepting of

it and they won't you know put up the front where, you know, I don't want to do all of these tests.

T You gave us the Hazeltine writing (Bill: Yeah) guidelines things. I introduced them in common planning today, and they were like, oh, this will, ok I could it this way. So it was like having like a little bit of guidance and a map of what should be done and when and the best to go about doing it, seemed to alleviate a lot of anxiety.

Section 5:22 The GR Consultant: Display of Anchor Papers

Bill At our last AALT meeting Diane Cady was saying, you know, I wish for this writing assessment that we could see like a display of the writing across the grade levels. As it turns out we have that display, you guys, and if it's not been something that's been brought to your attention, Larry has a binder. It looks like this, OK? and for each grade level-- if your grade level hasn't seen this and then it's just one of those things. For each grade level, like grade level 2, there's a packet of papers that show what does a four look like, what does a three look like, what does a two look like what does a one look like? This maybe be completely familiar to you, but at the same time at the last meeting we realized that some people didn't know about this resource, OK?

T Anchor papers (?)

Bill Anchor papers. Example papers. The other thing is then I took papers from those and we made a display so that you can see, well, here's kindergarten, here is what a four looks like, here's the criteria for the rubric, here's what a three looks like, here's what the two looks like, here is what a one looks like. And you can actually walk across and then see the same thing for 1st grade, four, three, two, one. 2nd grade, 4, 3, 2, 1, 3rd grade, 4th grade, and 5th grade, so the people could get a sense of the continuum that's at play here. And also know that these exact examples are also contained within that binder, OK? so if you-- with your own grade level or maybe at a faculty meeting at the beginning of next year, you might want to display that in some way so people can see how that all works out. OK?

T Also when we're grading our papers, it'd be nice if we each had like a reference.

Bill That's right, that's right. One of the first things that you might do when you get into your scoring session at the beginning of next year is just take out the set of example papers and say, you guys, let's just look through some of these example papers and see if we all agree with the score that was given. It just primes the pump and gets people ready to score their own papers.

T Yeah, I know what you're talking about, displaying and teaching your children what's expected of them. This is what a three looks like, and this is what you need to do if you want a three; this is what you need to do if you want a four (Ts: various comments; right, right). Right, and show then actual examples of it, so that they know what they look like.

Bill For teachers scoring for kids to learn to write, seeing examples. Can you imagine writing anything if you never had a chance to look at an example?

Section 5:23 The GR Consultant: Importance of Follow Up

Bill OK, so I just wanted to before we got off of that I just wanted to share that that's the resource that's available. And Mia if you wouldn't mind maybe what we'll do is make sure the grade level rep has a master copy of the anchor papers for every grade.

Mia Ok.