

## 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 be very beneficial.