

**Implementation of the Wireless Writing  
Program: Phase 3. 2003-2004**

**Prepared for:  
Peace River North (SD 60)**

**by:**

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# Highlights

In September

# 1. Background

In September, 2003, Peace River North (SD 60), implemented the Wireless Writing Program (WWP),

## **2. Writing Achievement**

Results in this section are based on four assessments of student writing:

- District assessment of a random sample of impromptu writing from October and June
- District assessment of impromptu writing from all students in the Wireless Writing Program in June 2003
- Teacher judgment of student overall writing achievement level in June 2004.
- Provincial Foundation Skills Assessment of Grade 7 writing in May 2004.

### **2.1 Highlights**

#### **District Assessment**

- Student writing improved between October and June. According to district assessment data, this improvement was approximately what might be expected without wireless technology.
- Gains were much greater— —nearly double— -- in classrooms with teachers who were experienced in using wireless technology 1:1. In these classrooms, gains were substantially greater than what might normally be expected. This results suggests that, first, there is, as expected, an ‘implementation bump’ as new processes are introduced, and, second, that instruction and learning are affected in complex ways, as teachers become comfortable with the technology.
- On the district assessment, both girls and boys made similar gains. Girls began and ended the year with greater writing proficiency.

results were similar for the province, where 11% more students met expectations in 2004 than in 2003.

- Peace River North student performance is equal to the provincial performance overall, and for male and female students considered separately. Aboriginal students in Peace River North, for the first time, appear to have performed better in writing than the rest of the province.

## **2.2 Data Sources**

Student writing achievement was assessed in a variety of ways

## **2.3 Considerations in analyzing writing achievement**

Each of these assessments contributed important information. The following points are important in considering the results:

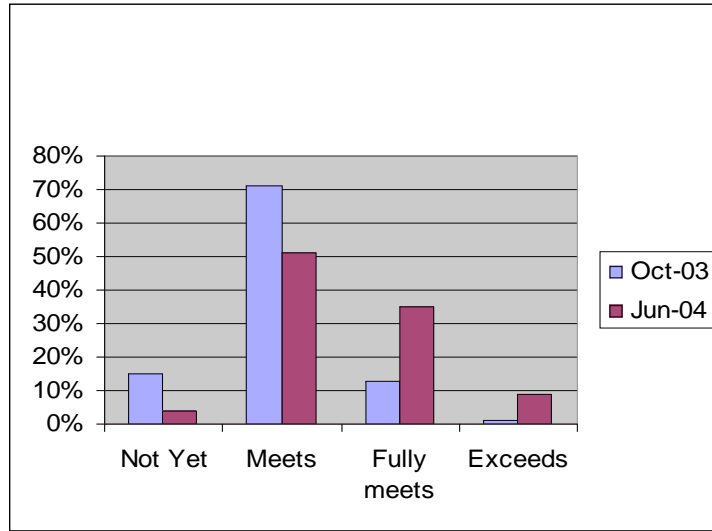
- There were marked inconsistencies in individual teacher scoring of the October 2003 impromptu writing. In some cases, scores were atypically high or low. Scores were considered in the light of previous assessments (e.g., FSA), district records, and consistency across classrooms.
- The most valid comparisons are those from within the validation sample: here, teacher scoring was carefully monitored, with extensive training and calibration; further, the two samples were collected under similar conditions.



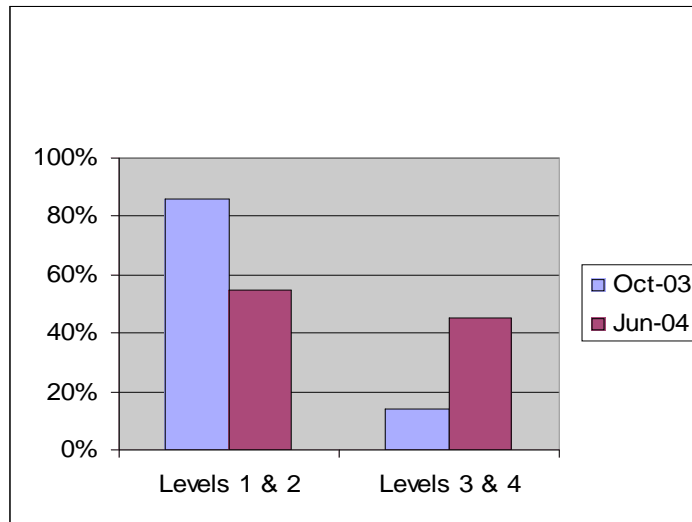


## **2.4 Results**

### **2.4.1 Validated Comparisons: October to June**

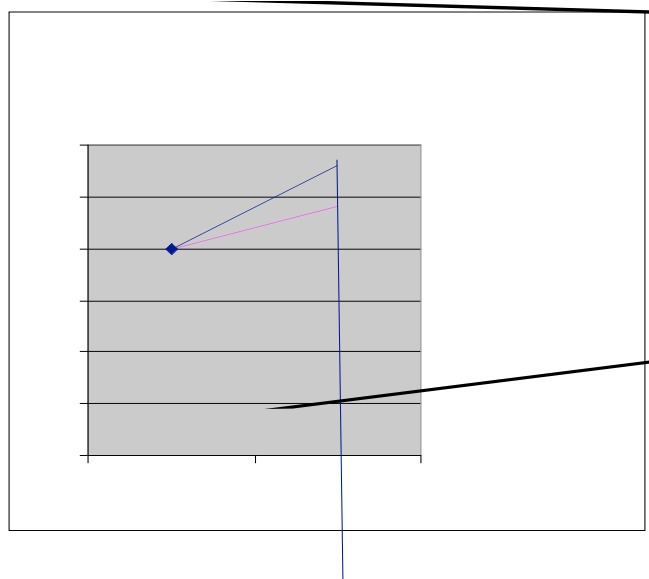


**Graph 2.1: Validation Sample: Change in Percent of Students at Each Performance Level: Impromptu Writing**



**Graph 2.2: Validation Sample: Change in Percent of Students in Bottom and Top Half of the Performance Scale: Impromptu Writing**

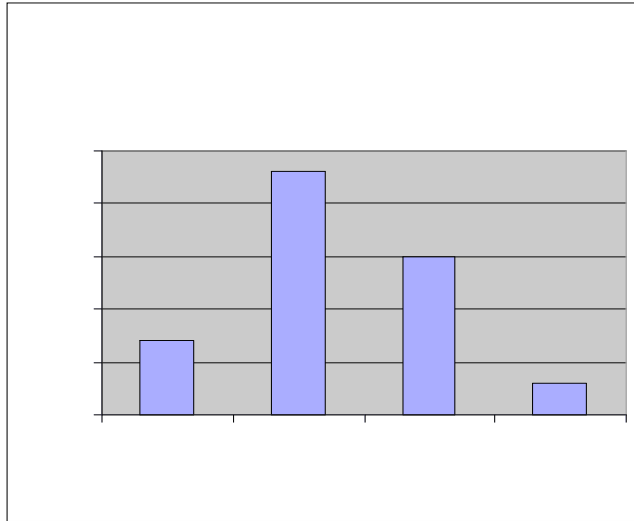
**Graph 2.3: Validation sample: June 2004 Comparison of Percent of Students in Bottom and Top Half of the Performance Scale Top by Teachers' Years in WWP**



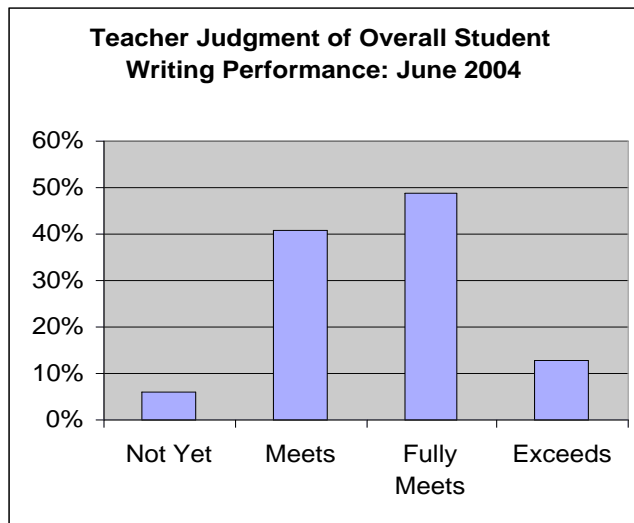
**Graph 2.4: Validation Sample: Change in Average Performance Level (4-point scal**

## **2.4.2 District Assessment: Impromptu writing, June 2004**

- In June, all participating st



**Graph 2.5: All Grades 6 and 7 Students: Percent of Students Attaining Each Performance Level on the District Assessment of Impromptu Writing June 2004**



**Graph 2.6: Percent of Grades 6 and 7 Students at Each Performance Level: Teacher Judgment of Overall Student Writing Performance, June 2004**

### **2.4.3 Teacher Judgments of Overall Student Writing Performance in June**

- Teachers submitted ratings for each student's overall writing achievement. Teachers were instructed to consider all available evidence—portfolios, various writing assignments and activities – in order to determine which level best de

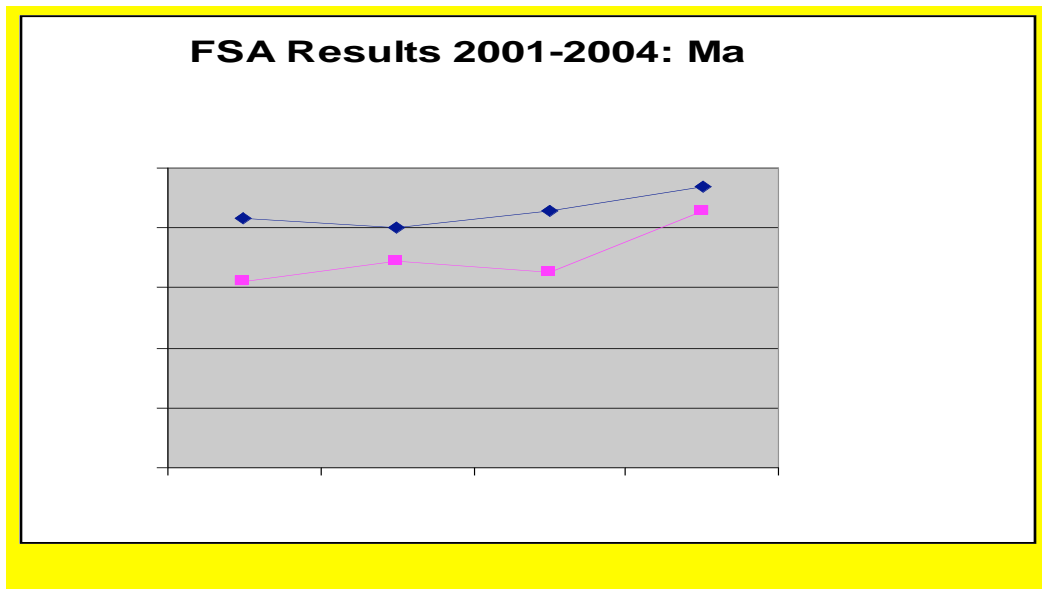
- Overall, 14% more grade 7 students met or exceeded expectations in 2004 than 2003. Performance of all subgroups also increased dramatically: male students from 65% to 86%; female students from 86% to 94%; Aboriginal students from 59% to 85%. Comparisons with previous years should be viewed with caution:
  - Relative to provincial results, both 2003 results and 2004 results for the overall population fall within the margin of error: that is, in both years results from Peace River Nor





**Graph 2.7: FSA Results: Change in Percent of Peace River North Students Meeting and Exceeding Expectations (May 2003 - May 2004)**

**Graph 2.8: FSA Results: Change in Percent of Peace River North Students Meeting and Exceeding Expectations for Peace River North Compared with British Columbia**



**Graph 2.9. FSA Results. Change in Percent of Peace River North Male and Female Students Meeting and Exceeding Expec**

- two teacher surveys conducted in September, 2003 and June, 2004 (n=45, 36)
- teachers' written reflections and action research reports
- an administrator survey completed in June, 2004 (n=17)
- three students surveys conducted in September 2003, May 2004, and June 2004 (n=791, 761, 721)
- parent surveys from June 2004 (345)

Approximately 25% of students, teachers, and schools had participated in the Wireless Writing Project during the 2002-2003 school year, on a least a part-time basis.

Detailed results are provided in Appendices A and B.

### **3.1 Highlights**

#### **3.1.1 Teacher Perceptions**

- Most teachers' viewed their participation in the Wireless Writing Program very positively. They



## **3.2 Overall response**

### **3.2.1 Teachers**

- In September, over 75% of teachers reported that they were enthusiastic about participating in the WWP. In June, 84% of teachers expressed similar levels of enthusiasm. These data are supported by teachers' written reflections. While teachers described many challenges, most indicated that











question), reported that the iBooks had contributed ‘extensively’ or ‘a great deal’ to student change in these areas.

- Most administrators also saw the iBooks as helping students with attention problems (13/17 chose ‘extensively’ or ‘a great deal’) and those with weak organizational skills (10/17.)
- Most administrators did not see the iBooks as having a major impact on schools climate and community (11/17 chose ‘somewhat.’)

### **3.4.3 Students**

- In June, over 70% of student

### **3.5.1 Teachers**

- 91% of teachers indicated that their students used iBooks for their writing assignments, including in content areas, often or most of the time. Two teachers said their students us



provide feedback to students; and provide choice and responsibility to students.

- Most administrators reported that

they used computers ‘never’ or ‘once in a while.’ There were obviously some variations in implementation from one classroom to another.

- Students in both September and May reported frequently editing and revising their first drafts, with over 75% reporting that they ‘sometimes’ made changes; and over 50% reporting that they ‘often’ or ‘most of the time’ tried to improve their first drafts. Over 90% reported that they ‘often’ or ‘most of the time’ fixed mistakes.

The percent of students who reported making changes ‘often’ or ‘most of the time’ increased between September and May in terms of: adding new ideas and information (46% to 64%); changing words or sentences to improve them (60% to 64%); and moving or deleting parts (55% to 60%.) As noted above, an overwhelming number of students reported in both September and May that they fix mistakes; this number increased very slightly (81% to 83%.)

- Analysis of individual school data produced some interesting results. Because of the relatively small number of students at any one school, changes can be due to random error and need to be interpreted with caution. Often, even modest changes (e.g., 10%) are not statistically significant. However, it is possible to draw some conclusions based on patterns of results:
  - Students’ reported use of editing skills and strategies varied substantially from one school to another in both September and May.
  - Students in five schools showed consistent, positive changes in the amount of editing they reported. This group of schools included three of the four schools that participated in WWP in 2002-2003.
  - The pattern for most schools was inconsistent or indicated no change.
  - For one school, the pattern was both substantial and consistently negative. Although there are relatively few students, the magnitude and consistency of the change indicates that students in May do not appear to edit their work as much as they did in September.

### 3.5.4 Parents

- Parents were asked a series of questions about their children’s use of specific applications and tools, when doing homework or using the iBook for leisure. In parents’ views:
  - Students were most likely to use editing tools (71% ‘extensively’ or ‘a great deal’); word processing (59%); and PowerPoint (47%.)
  - A substantial proportion also frequently use Inspiration (40%), access the Internet (39%) and iPhoto or iMovie (33%.)
  - A smaller proportion frequently use the Performance Standards/Quick Scales at home (29%.)







Teachers offered a great deal of advice about the type of support they would like in 2004-2005, including: continued opportunities to meet, in order to share and discuss strategies, issues and trouble-shooting; inservice focusing on writing; classroom visits from mentor teachers; and in-classroom tech support. Some teachers were also interested in learning new applications.

### **Recommendations**

- Continue a program of inservice sessions where teachers are able to meet with others at the same grade level. Consider including optional opportunities outside of school hours.
- Provide ongoing classroom support and follow-up from mentor teachers. Create a schedule or system for this support so that teachers can plan accordingly.
- Create a planning team to develop strategies for writing inservice and support. Consider focusing on writing as this is consistently the weakest area of student writing.
- Continue dedicated technical support.
- Provide optional after school or Saturday sessions on technology applications.
- Ensure that, as new initiatives, programs, and resources are introduced in Peace River North, explicit attention and inservice focuses on how these initiatives can be integrated with the WWP.

### **4.3 Parent involvement**

Most parents are very positive about their children's participation in the WWP. However, there are ongoing issues about insurance and financial responsibility that need to be dealt with.

As the WWP becomes consolidated, the potential of the technology for increasing parent's involvement in their children's learning, and enhancing communication is a



**Recommendations**

- Develop consistent personnel practices and policies regarding teacher and student participation.
- Provide opportunities for teachers who do not wish participate in the WWP to transfer to other grades.