# LEARNER-CENTERED WRITING INSTRUCTION

**CAMPUS**
Eagle Mountain Elementary School
*Recognized 2005–06*

**DISTRICT**
Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD

**INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION**
2002–03

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

The **goal** of Eagle Mountain Elementary's program is to improve student performance in writing.

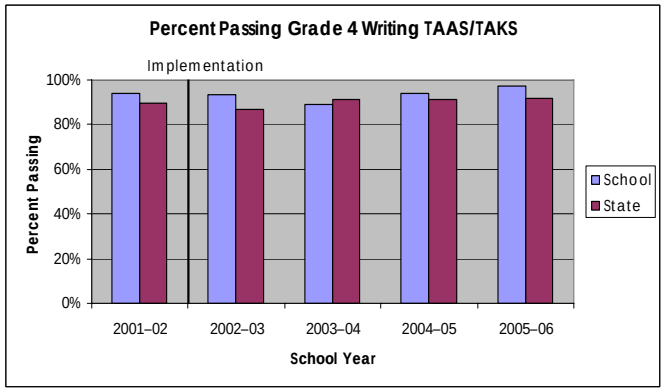
**Key strategies** include personalized journal writing, teacher modeling of writing techniques, and interdisciplinary assignments.

**Outcomes** include an increase in the percentage of students passing writing TAKS and performing at the Commended level.

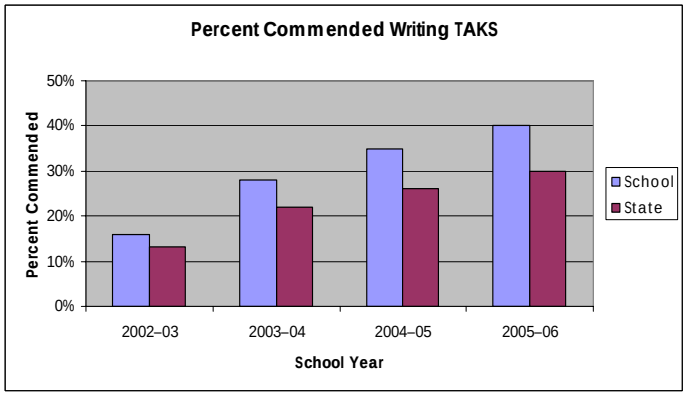
## EFFECTIVENESS

*Before*
Prior to program implementation, in 2001–02, 94% of grade 4 students passed the writing TAAS, compared to the state average of 90%. In 2002–03, the first year in which Commended-level performance on TAKS was reported, 16% of grade 4 students performed at the Commended level, compared to the state average* of 13%.

*After*
After implementation, writing performance on TAKS remained high, with 97% of students passing in 2005–06, compared to the state average of 92%. In addition, the percentage of students performing at the Commended level increased to 40% in 2005–06, compared to the state average of 30%.




*Source: AEIS*




*Source: AEIS*

* *State averages of Commended-level performance reflect all grades tested (3–11).*

## CONTEXT/IMPLEMENTATION

*Demographics (2005–06)*

| Grade Levels Served | KG–5 | Campus Enrollment | 732 |
|---|---|---|---|

| Ethnic Distribution | | | Economically Disadvantaged | 103 | 14.1% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| African American | 24 | 3.3% | Limited English Proficient (LEP) | 6 | 0.8% |
| Hispanic | 96 | 13.1% | At-risk | 69 | 9.4% |
| White | 597 | 81.6% | Mobility (2004–05) | 97 | 15.4% |
| Native American | 11 | 1.5% | | | |

*Source: AEIS*

*Background*

- In 2000–01, campus staff were concerned that unsatisfactory passing rates on grade 3 TAKS in reading and mathematics could have implications for performance on grade 4 writing TAKS, especially as the rigor of the writing test increased.
- Staff decided to focus on developing students' enjoyment of writing to improve performance.

*Procedures*

- Some of the campus's grade 4 teachers participated in professional development and shared techniques and strategies with other teachers.
- Teachers introduced daily journal writing (10 minutes) into instruction with music and lighting designed to create a calm and reflective atmosphere.
- Students were encouraged to integrate personal artifacts into their journals as writing prompts.
- Protocols were established to encourage student respect for others during writing practice.
- Once a week, students were invited to share their writing with classmates.
- Teachers assigned six major essays during the year with a focus on different compositional strategies.
- Teachers modeled all new writing techniques as they were introduced.
- Teachers integrated lessons from other subject areas into writing assignments.
- Teachers designed a 1–4 grading scale, and the class collectively graded narratives from a published series of compositions written by students in grades 2–6. TAKS practice tests were also integrated into instruction.

- Students peer-edited essays using a state-approved rubric. Teachers also graded essays with two positive comments and one improvement comment.
- Teachers assigned to each grade 4 student a grade 3 "writing buddy" to tutor in introductory writing objectives.

## CAMPUS/DISTRICT STAFF

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*The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is seeking feedback about the best practice summaries.*

*Please take one minute to answer the feedback survey (six questions).*

Best Practices Feedback Survey