

# LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM EVALUATION

## Secondary Level (9-12)

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2001-2004

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*This document has been aligned with the  
New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards*

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## Changes Since 1998

In 1998, the Language Arts department at Ridge High School consisted of ten full time teachers. The department had a curriculum supervisor, who was responsible for kindergarten through twelfth grade language arts. Among the high school department members, seven had Master's degrees; no one had earned a Doctorate. Four of the ten teachers were non-tenured.

Since 1998, the number of language arts teachers has increased proportionally with the student population. The department has a curriculum supervisor, who is responsible for kindergarten through twelfth grade language arts. Currently, there are fourteen teachers in the Language Arts department at Ridge High School; five have Master's degrees and one teacher has a Doctorate. Nine teachers are non-tenured. The Department will fill a new teaching position for September 2004.

In 2000, the high school formally evaluated the Language Arts as part of the Middle States Evaluation. At that time, the Visiting Committee put forth three recommendations. First, the Visiting Committee recommended that class sizes remain small to promote effective writing instruction. Unfortunately, the average class size has steadily increased over the last five years due to increased school enrollment and an initiative that sought to expand elective course offerings. As more teachers assumed elective assignments, the class size of academic sections necessarily increased. Academic/Honors required courses increased in average class size from 18 in 1998-1999 to 24 in 2002-2003. The average AP class size has increased from 15 in 1998-1999 to 16 in 2002- 2003. And the average elective class size has increased from 13 in 1998-1999 to 20 in 2002-2003.

Second, the Visiting Committee recommended that more preparation and common planning time be provided across the department as resources permit especially for team teachers. While same grade level articulation remains difficult, common planning time for in-class support teams and American Study teams has been provided; currently, all teams have at least one period a day of common planning time.

Finally, the Visiting Committee recommended that whenever possible teachers should be assigned to a single classroom for instruction. With the new addition to the school completed for the 2000/2001 school year, more teachers have been assigned to a single classroom for instruction than in the past. However, as the school enrollment continues to grow, and the faculty correspondingly expands, classroom utilization has become a concern. While some teachers have their own classrooms, 36% of the department teach in more than one room each day. Some of the multiple room assignments occur because teachers instruct in a computer lab some periods or they team-teach in a large room as part of the American Studies program.

### Current Status 2003

The Language Arts program offers twenty-one courses which are composed of required and elective courses. These are divided into seventy sections with an average class size of twenty-three students. In order to complete language arts graduation requirements, students must take a minimum of one language arts course per year. To meet this requirement, students select from the courses listed below.

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Semester/Full Year</b>
Literary Experience 9	9	Full Year
Honors English 9	9	Full Year
American Literature	10	Full Year
Honors American Literature	10	Full Year
American Studies	10	Full Year
Honors American Studies	10	Full Year
British Literature	11	Full Year
Honors British Literature	11	Full Year
AP Language and Composition	11	Full Year
Contemporary Literature	12	Full Year
World Literature	12	Full Year
Postmodern World Literature Honors	12	Full Year
AP Literature and Composition	12	Full Year

All required courses are offered at either the College Preparation level or the Honors level. Students must meet pre-determined criteria to be enrolled in honors or Advanced Placement and Honors courses.

In addition to the required courses, students have the option of taking several language arts elective courses.

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Semester/Full Year</b>
Theatrical Experience	9-12	Semester
Writer's Workshop	9-12	Semester
Women in Literature	9-12	Semester
Journalism	9-12	Semester
Public Speaking	9-12	Semester
Creative Writing	9-12	Semester
Forensic Speaking	9-12	Semester
Excel/Humanities	9-12	Semester

## **Review of Current Program**

### **Instructional Strategies**

Over the past five years, the language arts staff has explored several instructional strategies via department meetings, staff development, in-service, and teacher-supervisor conferencing. Such strategies, which have become standard practices include

- Literature Circles
- Cooperative Learning exercises
- Socratic Seminars
- Writing Workshops
- Sustained Silent Reading
- Technology-based Strategies (i.e., Inspiration, E-Mail, Web Quests)
- Portfolio Assessment
- Viewing Standards (using art and film)
- Poem Workshops
- Questioning Strategies
- Test Construction

### **Interdisciplinary Provisions**

The American Studies course continues to promote the interdisciplinary nature of the Language Arts and Social Studies curricula. Although separate American Literature and American History courses have been established as options for tenth grade students, current enrollments continue to illustrate interest and viability in the interdisciplinary approach. During the 2003/2004 academic year, the enrollment for American Studies included 140, while 71 students registered for Honors American Studies.

In addition, our Language Arts courses continue to integrate the historical, social, and cultural contexts into the study of literature and students' experiences as readers and writers. This presence of world cultures and social studies within the curricula promotes greater understanding of the overall significance and impact of literature within our environments, past and present. Also, visual and performing arts continue to provide an exceptional experience for students to ponder, investigate, reflect, and evaluate all the language arts.

### **Remediation, Enrichment, and Acceleration Provisions**

Several opportunities currently exist to meet the diverse needs of the Ridge student population. In order to meet the remedial needs of students, Language Arts teachers maintain the use of tutorials for writing and learning conferences. In addition, Language Arts teachers have increased their use of in-class writing conferences to help meet the needs of all students throughout the writing process. Students needing specific assistance with the High School Proficiency Assessment are enrolled in the Literacy Support program in order to help identify specific concerns and provide specialized assistance to students.

Accelerated students have a wide variety of opportunity via our honors and Advanced Placement programs. Recent additions to the Language Arts Program of Studies include

the following: Advanced Placement Language and Composition, Honors British Literature, Honors Postmodern World Literature, and Honors American Literature.

Multiple opportunities exist to help students enrich their language arts experiences via outside writing programs including REALM, the literary magazine; The Devil's Advocate, the school newspaper; and writing contests including the New Jersey Council Teachers of English. In addition, the department offers EXCEL: Humanities Research as an elective to students.

Additionally, the increased use of the literature circle strategy provides teachers with opportunities to differentiate instruction. The multiple titles at varied levels help teachers match readers to text.

### **Curricular and Co-Curricular Offerings**

Over the past five years, several courses have been added to the Language Arts Program of Studies at Ridge High School.

- American Literature–Grade 10
- Honors American Literature–Grade 10
- Advanced Placement Language & Composition–Grade 11
- Honors British Literature–Grade 11 (Reinstated 2002)
- Honors Postmodern World Literature–Grade 12
- Forensic Speaking–elective
- The Theatrical Experience–elective
- Women in Literature–elective

Co-curricular opportunities exist within the following student organizations:

- REALM
- The Devil's Advocate
- The Ridge Forensics Team
- The Ridge Drama Club

### **Facilities, Equipment, and Resources**

Housed primarily in the 400 wing of Ridge High School, the language arts department enjoys easy access to the staff offices in 613, the department book room, the Media Center, and three computer labs.

### **Technology**

Technological resources are available for classroom use through the media center or departmental resources including computers, monitors, overhead projectors, television/VCR units, CD players, and LCD projectors.

The individual teachers, the department, and the media center also house a variety of instructional resources including videos, overhead transparencies, primary/secondary sources, and audio collections.

### **Provisions to Address Cultural Diversity**

Cultural diversity serves as a staple within ongoing curriculum development and modification processes. Authors reflecting various geographic regions, gender and social roles, ethnic groups and cultures, and other alternative voices continue to be implemented within the literary catalogs of Ridge High School Language Arts courses. Some authors/titles include the following:

- Susanna Kaysem
- R. K. Narayan
- “The Laramie Project”
- Toni Morrison
- Kenzaburo Oe
- Yansuri Kawabata
- Wendy Wasserstein
- Pablo Neruda
- Langston Hughes
- Azar Nafisi

### **Staff Development**

The language arts staff participates in a range of district-offered staff development courses. These consist of fundamental courses focusing on specific aspects of language arts teaching, as well as various supplemental courses to enhance the language arts teacher’s ability to utilize new and upcoming technologies and techniques.

Courses including, Essential Elements of Instruction, Cooperative Learning, Active Learning in the Language Arts Class, Literature Circles, Learning Styles/Teaching Styles, and Classroom Management, focus on instructional and classroom management strategies, as well as specific approaches applicable to language arts teaching. The staff also participated in courses to enhance their technological abilities both in the classroom and in preparation work. These included courses such as Microsoft Publisher: Inside the Classroom and Finding and Evaluating Internet Web Pages. Overall, there is a definite focus among the language arts staff in the areas of technology for the classroom and instructional techniques.

The language arts staff uses other approaches to staff development aside from the staff college courses. Teachers attend AP conferences to learn of changes and development to the test, as well as teaching strategies and holistic scoring anchoring. Teachers attend New Jersey Language Arts Literacy Association (NJLALA) meetings to learn of changes being made to the SAT test, as well as to learn strategies for teaching “at risk” students. The language arts supervisor provides workshops on Open-Ended question writing and Socratic seminar during department meetings. Teachers also attend in-service training on topics such as holistic scoring. Many staff members subscribe to publications such as the English Journal and the New Jersey Council Teachers of English. Through these additions to the staff college courses, the language arts teachers are able to further supplement their staff development.

### **Grouping Strategies**

Ridge High School students are offered levels of language arts instruction appropriate to their skill level and needs. Students may transverse the different levels pending their performance in previous courses. Students are grouped as follows

Grade	College-Prep	Honors	Advanced-Placement
9	Literary Experience 9	English 9 Honors	
10	American Studies American Literature	American Studies Honors American Literature Honors	
11	British Literature	British Literature Honors	AP Language & Composition
12	Contemporary Literature World Literature	Postmodern World Literature Honors	AP Literature & Composition

## **Analysis of Survey Results**

### **Curriculum Evaluation**

#### **Strengths**

Overall, the curriculum offered by the language arts department has several strengths. The genres, such as poetry, drama, novel, short story and essay, vary throughout the courses. The thematic courses focus on multiple genres per unit. Also, most courses offer multifaceted assessments, such as portfolios and cooperative learning, in addition to traditional evaluation. Another strength is that most learning styles are addressed specifically throughout the curricula. A large majority of the curricula have been revised or written in 2002 or 2003.

#### **Recommendations**

Concerns for the curricula as a whole are based on overall gaps found throughout the offered courses. Survey results indicate there may be a deficiency in the following areas:

- While poetic forms and objectives were present in the curricula, the genre of poetry may not be clearly integrated within each unit.
- Cultural and ethnic backgrounds may not be present in all units.
- Technology may need to be updated.
- Portfolios may need to be referenced more frequently throughout the curricula.

## **Language Arts Program Goals**

#### **Strengths**

The Bernards Township Schools Language Arts Program Goals are aligned with the New Jersey Core Content Standards, although the standards are not directly referenced in the document (as noted in regards to several of the course curricula as well). Likewise,



varied genres and alternative assessments are alluded to, but are not specifically referenced. Finally, technology standards are addressed with an intentional vagueness that allows for the program to evolve with the advancement of technology.

### **Recommendations**

The Bernards Township Schools Language Arts Program Goals do not currently require the inclusion of different cultural and ethnic background, nor do they require that all learning styles be addressed. So, while the goals are comprehensive, more specific detail would add strength and ensure greater consistency.

## **Comparison to Other Similar Districts**

### **Strengths**

Ridge, unlike many of the other schools surveyed, offers courses with specialized focuses in specific types of literature such as American Literature, British Literature, World Literature, and Contemporary Literature. Additionally, offering two to three academic levels for each grade provides optimum opportunities for students of all abilities. And finally, Ridge's elective program meets or surpasses those of the other districts; although it may appear that Ridge does not provide the same variety, many courses offered through the English departments of other schools are offered through alternate departments at Ridge such as Film Study through Industrial Arts and Yearbook/Literary Magazine through Business.

### **Recommendations**

While Ridge's electives compliment the academic program of the department, they are primarily writing or speaking based; additional courses in reading would provide students with more opportunities. EXCEL, an independent study course has not run for several years, yet it remains as an offering in the course of studies. Touting this course as an opportunity to study specific literary areas of interest beyond those in the current curricula could fill the afore mentioned absence of multiple literature based electives. Moreover, to better accommodate the non-college bound student, a Life Skills: Technical Reading and Writing course could be added to provide guidance in the more practical daily reading and writing necessary in a trade career. Based on other districts' offerings, provisions for sequential study of elective offerings could be further explored.

## **Course Comparison to Similar Districts**

Ridge High School was compared to twelve school districts with similar socioeconomic status and demographics. The major points of comparison include the types of required and elective courses, course levels, and course offerings according to grade level.

### Required Courses

Schools	9	10	11	12
Watchung	-Foundations of Communications (J, K, L) -Communication Honors	-Literature and Language (survey) (J, K, L) -Literature and Language Honors	-American Literature (J, K, L) -American Literature AP	-World Literature (J, K, L) -World Literature AP
Montgomery Township	-English 9 (survey) -English 9 Honors	-English 10 (survey) -English 10 Honors	-English 11 (American Literature) English 11 Honors	-English 12 (British and World Literature) -English 12 Honors -English AP
Bridgewater Raritan	-Language and Literature I -Honors English I	-Language and Literature II -Honors English II	-Language and Literature III -Honors English III -AP Language	-Language and Literature IV -Honors English IV -AP Literature -Language and Literature IV (RVCC credit)
Westfield	-The Storytelling Voice (survey) -Standard	-One Language, Many Voices (British and Commonwealth Literature) -Honors, Standard	-American Voices (American literature) -Honors, Standard	-A Medley of Voices (survey) -Standard
Chatham	-English 101 (survey) -Honors English 111 (survey)	-English 102 (survey) -Honors English 112 (survey)	-English 103 (American Literature) -Honors English 113 (American Literature)	-English 104 (British and European Literature) -Honors English 114 (British and European Literature)

## **Standardized and AP Testing Results**

### **S.A.T–Verbal Results Interpretation**

Ridge High School students consistently perform above the national average in the S.A.T. test. According to the 2001-2002 testing results, the overall verbal score of the 208 students who had taken the test in the 2002 academic year dropped five points garnering a 563 average as compared the average of 563 of the 236 students who had taken the exam in 2001. However, eleven percent more students took the test than the previous year. Also, the national average dropped two points between 2001 and 2002 from 506 to 504.

### **S.A.T II –Writing Results Interpretation**

The students at Ridge High School perform consistently above the national average in regard to the S.A.T. II writing component. In the 2001 testing year, the 108 Ridge High School students who took the S.A.T II, garnered an average verbal score of 624 which is 29 points above the national average. Meanwhile in the 2002 testing year, the 102 students who took the test averaged a 614 verbal score; fourteen points above the national average. From the data presented, scores among the Ridge High School students who had taken the S.A.T II within the 2001-2002 testing years dropped ten points. Also, five fewer students participated in the testing in 2002. Meanwhile the national average fluctuated between five points or an average score of 595 to 600.

### **Advanced Placement Results Interpretation**

While scores on both the eleventh grade AP Language and Composition test and the twelfth grade AP Literature and Composition remain exceptionally strong, there is a noted drop in enrollment between junior and senior year.

### **H.S.P.A. Results Interpretation**

Since the implementation of the new New Jersey State Proficiency Assessment, Ridge High School has consistently superceded state averages in all Language Arts categories. In 2002, 95.1% of the 267 students scored at the “proficient” or “advanced-proficient” level. Of the 4.9% who scored partially-proficient (13 students), nine were special-education students, six of whom were classified with an “exempt from passing” designation. Within specific test criteria, Ridge students performed above test means in all categories, with particular emphasis on the writing, reading, and analyzing/critiquing text sections where Ridge students outperformed the state average by significant margins.

In 2003, with increased participation (287 students), 97.2% scored at the “proficient” or “advanced-proficient” level. Of the 2.8% (eight students) who scored at the “partially proficient” level, seven students were “IEP classified exempt” leaving one student who did not perform at the proficient level. Again, as in 2002, Ridge students outperformed the state average by significant margins in all areas.

## District Standardized and AP Testing Results

### Scholastic Aptitude Test (S.A.T.)

	Number of Students Taking Test	Average Verbal Score Ridge High School	National Average
2001	208	563	506
2002	236	558	504

### S.A.T. II–Writing

	Number of Students Taking Test	Average Verbal Score Ridge High School	National Average
2001	108	624	595
2002	102	614	600

### Advanced Placement–English

	English Language & Composition	English Literature & Composition
2000 Enrolled	51	25
Percentage Taking Test Scored 3-5	96%	100%
2001 Enrolled	58	22
Percentage Taking Test Scored 3-5	91%	95%
2002 Enrolled	50	39
Percentage Taking Test Scored 3-5	98%	100%

## High School Proficiency Assessment

### Language Arts Literacy

2002	Number of Students	Partially Proficient		Proficient		Advanced Proficient	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All Students	267	13	4.9%	152	56.9%	102	38.2%
General Education Students	239	4	1.7%	136	56.9%	99	41.4%
Special Education Students <sup>1</sup>	28	9	32.1%	16	57.1%	3	10.7%
IEP Exempt From Passing	10	6	60.0%	4	40.0%	0	0.0%
2003							
All Students	287	8	2.8%	159	55.4%	120	41.8%
General Education Students	257	1	0.4%	136	52.9%	120	46.7%
Special Education Students <sup>1</sup>	29	7	24.1%	22	75.9%	0	0.0%
IEP Exempt From Passing	25	7	28.0%	18	72.0%	0	0.0%

2002	Total Points Possible	Statewide “Just Proficient” Mean	Ridge General Student Mean	Ridge Special Education Student Mean
Writing	18	9.8	13.1	10.8
Reading	36	19.7	27.7	21.9
Interpreting Text	9	5.4	7.7	6.5
Analyzing/Critiquing Text	27	14.3	20.0	15.4
Picture	6	3.1	4.0	3.3
Persuasive	12	6.7	9.1	7.5

<sup>1</sup> Includes “IEP exempt from passing” totals.

2003	Total Points Possible	Statewide “Just Proficient” Mean	Ridge General Student Mean	Ridge Special Education Student Mean
Writing	18	9.6	12.7	11.8
Reading	36	18.9	27.6	25.3
Interpreting Text	14	8.2	11.7	10.8
Analyzing/Critiquing Text	22	10.7	15.9	14.5
Picture	6	3.2	4.1	3.8
Persuasive	12	6.4	8.6	8.0

### Perceptions of the Program

#### Strengths

A majority of parents and teachers agree that our school is doing well in language arts. Parents and students feel that students have access to a variety of resources to help them succeed in learning, such as technologies, media centers and libraries. Students feel that they have been taught how to use these resources and other resources available to them in the community to help them with their schoolwork. Students also feel that, in addition to written tests, they are provided with a variety of ways to demonstrate their learning, such as completing projects or portfolios.

#### Recommendations

While both parents and teachers agree we are doing well in language arts at Ridge High School, the concept of workplace readiness strategies and establishing the connection between literature in the classroom and “everyday life” yield a discrepancy. This incongruity can be found within the Parent, Student, and Teacher Opinion Surveys. For example, according to findings in the teacher survey, 69.7% of instructors feel that the school prepares students to deal with future issues and concerns differing from the Student Opinion results, where 46.9% students claim they strongly agreed or agreed with the same statement. Meanwhile, 29.5% of students claim they see a relationship between their studies and their “everyday lives,” while according to Parent Opinion Survey results, 50% of parents see this connection. In regard to this same survey, 51.3% parents believe the “school is doing a good job” regarding preparing students for the workforce. However, 83.2% of parents feel, that the “school is doing a good job in preparing students to continue their education on more advanced levels.

### Perceptions of the Program

In 2003, parent opinion inventories, student opinion inventories, and teacher opinion inventories were administered district-wide through the National Study of School Evaluation. Some selected responses, which relate to the Language Arts Department, are indicated below.

Response choices are Strongly Agree (SA)/Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D)/Strongly Disagree (SD), or Not Applicable (N/A).

Statement	SA/A	N	SD/D	N/A
<b><i>Parent Opinion Inventories</i></b>				
Our school is doing a good job in English/Language Arts (reading, writing, listening, speaking)	76.0%	10.4%	13.6%	0.0%
Students see a relationship between what they are studying and their everyday lives.	50.0%	25.0%	22.4%	2.6%
Our school is doing a good job in preparing students to continue their education in more advanced levels.	83.2%	9.9%	6.8%	0.0%
Our school is doing a good job in preparing students to enter the work force.	51.3%	31.4%	12.0%	5.2%
In our school students have access to a variety of resources to help them succeed in learning, such as technology, media centers and libraries.	88.0%	4.2%	4.8%	0.0%
<b><i>Student Opinion Inventories</i></b>				
Our school is preparing students to deal with issues and problems they will face in the future.	46.9%	27.9%	23.7%	1.5%
Students see a relationship between what they are studying and their everyday lives.	29.5%	33.7%	34.4%	2.4%
Teachers provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning.	63.6%	26.2%	8.9%	1.3%
Homework that I am expected to complete helps me to improve my learning.	39.6%	28.1%	31.3%	1.1%
In our school students have access to a variety of resources to help them succeed in learning, such as technologies, media centers and libraries.	87.4%	8.8%	3.1%	0.7%
I have been taught how to use the resources of the school and the community to help me with my schoolwork.	66.0%	22.8%	10.0%	1.1%
Technology is incorporated into instruction in many classes.	52.2%	29.7%	16.6%	1.4%
In addition to written tests, students are provided with a variety of ways to demonstrate their learning, such as completing projects or portfolios.	66.8%	21.4%	10.3%	1.5%
<b><i>Teacher Opinion Inventories</i></b>				
Our school is doing a good job in Language Arts (reading, writing, listening, speaking)	75.0%	6.3%	0.0%	18.7%
Our school is preparing students to deal with issues and problems they will face in the future.	69.7%	16.7%	13.6%	0.0%
Sensitivity to issues of racial and ethnic fairness is demonstrated by students, teachers, and administrators at our schools.	63.6%	19.7%	16.6%	0.0%

## **Professional Standards**

### **International Reading Association/National Council of Teachers of English**

#### **Strengths**

The language arts curricula at Ridge High School meet or exceed the curricula and content area standards provided by the International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English. Specific areas of strength are directly reflected in the specific curricula and lessons offered by the language arts teachers. In particular, the students encounter a wide range of print and nonprint texts and literature. They are encouraged to use a variety of strategies to interpret these texts utilizing a wide range of learning styles. Throughout their experience they use literature and text to compose a variety of writing pieces. They use research, both informational and technological, to support their statements. Finally, students use spoken, written and visual language to accomplish their own purposes as members of the community, both in and out of class. Specifically courses such as Public Speaking, Forensics as well as American Students and those required for graduation, all incorporate oral strategies and the implementation of different audiences for communication.

The issues of diversity of voices, dialects, geographic regions and social roles are found throughout the department but readily within such curriculum as British Literature and Literature of the Commonwealth Countries, World Literature, Post-Modern World Literature Honors, and Contemporary Literature. Within these courses, “students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use and patterns” as specified by The NCTE standards. Based on findings in the Teacher Opinion Survey, 63.6% of teachers feel an overall “sensitivity” to “racial and ethnic fairness” is evident among students, teachers, and administration and throughout the district language arts department.

Multiple learning and teaching strategies, such as the visual, verbal, auditory, and kinesthetic, which address the conventions and structure of language in order to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate various literary forms are apparent in all language arts curriculums. Curriculum such as Contemporary Literature and American Studies provide evidence that these learning and teaching styles are manifest within the suggested activities. These activities include cooperative learning, use of the fine arts, music, and performance.

#### **Recommendations**

While all of the standards given are being met through various avenues, a few leave room for further emphasis. Specifically, students may need further in-class practice using spoken and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.



## **Current Technological Status**

### **Implementation of Goals**

The four district technological goals are a part of the language arts' own development as a technological proficient department. According to the District Wide Technology Plans the areas regarding staff development, student access to the Internet and appropriate software, use of private resources, and the implementation of online services and the district website by staff are critical to the success of the department's evolution.

#### **Goal 1: Design and implement relevant, focused staff development programs in instructional technology for all instructional staff.**

- Within the 2002-2003 academic year, a third of the language arts department has taken relevant, technology staff development courses.
- The courses taken by the language arts department in regards to technology include; GradeKeeper, PhotoShop, Microsoft Publisher for the Classroom, and Microsoft Publisher for the Office.

#### **Goal 2: Foster equity for all student by insuring equal access to infrastructure and instructional technology.**

- According to the 2003 district wide parent opinion inventories, 88% of parents feel that school students have access to a variety of resources to help them succeed in learning, such as technology, media centers and libraries.
- Based on findings from the 2003 student opinion inventories, 87.4% of students feel they have access to a wide array of technological resources including media centers and libraries.

#### **Goal 3: Explore new technologies and their potential role in educational programs.**

- Section V. of the Bernards Township Schools Language Arts Program Goals states that "students will apply current and emergent technologies to language arts experiences." Some of technologies include; hypertext, computer data base, CD ROM, use of desktop publishing programs, hyper-media/multi-media production techniques and use of integrated curricular software.
- Some of the technologies listed in Section V. of the Bernards Township Schools Language Arts Program Goals appear to be outdated. These outmoded equipment and programs include; microfilm/fiche, graphophonic cueing systems and laser video disc players.
- The findings from the 2003 student opinion survey yield that 52.2% of students feel that technology is incorporated into instructions in many classes.

- Based on an informal survey of required language arts curriculum, some technologies described appear to be outdated such as ClarisWorks.

**Goal 4: Provide reliable access to the Internet and other telecommunication services to schools and staff.**

- As stipulated by the District Wide Technology Plan, a minimum of 20% of staff members should consistently utilize the Internet, district email, and the Bernards Township School District WebPage. As of June of 2003, over 20% of the language arts staff have accessed the Internet for research and classroom use, utilized district email for Intranet and parental contact and have referenced the Bernards WebPage for timely district updates.

**International Society for Technology in Education**

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) is a nonprofit professional organization with a worldwide membership of leaders and potential leaders in educational technology. ISTE is dedicated to providing leadership and service to improve teaching and learning by advancing the effective use of technology in K–12 education and teacher education. They also provide members with information, networking opportunities, and guidance as they face the challenge of incorporating computers, the Internet, and other new technologies into their schools.

**Strengths**

Through current and ongoing technological integrations, Ridge students are developing a keen awareness of the role technology plays within the academic process. By integrating various media in the writing, reading, speaking, listening, and viewing processes, students overall experiences are enhanced toward greater understanding and appreciation of the language arts. Such media include: Web Quests, Internet Inquiries, Hypertext, Weblogs, Inspiration, Microsoft Office (including Word, PowerPoint, and Publisher). Hardware resources include: LCD projectors, Television/V.C.R. units, overhead projectors, Computers, and CD/Radio players.

**Recommendations**

Student, parent, and teacher perception surveys yield concerns that students may not be realizing the real world applications of their learning. The Language Arts staff can assist students toward a recognition of the lifelong learning applications of technological processes and mediums, including real-life writing and reading simulations. By incorporating the use of specific hardware, students can realize the role that productivity programs can play within the language arts experience. In addition, Language Arts teachers can enhance students' relationships with technology by incorporating the social, ethical, and cultural concerns technology brings into our daily lives. Such topics may include: plagiarism, web site evaluation, diverse opinions/viewpoints, negative impacts of technological advancements on students' lives, identify theft, copyright laws, accessibility of information, language, and personal schema.

## **Bloom's Taxonomy Implementation**

Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of Education provides the foundation upon which a student's cognitive learning is continuously built. Cognition is categorized by six levels of learning, ranging in complexity from least to most:

1. Knowledge
2. Comprehension
3. Application
4. Analysis
5. Synthesis
6. Evaluation

Based on an informal survey of the language arts curricula, these programs of study address each level of Bloom's Taxonomy throughout their curricula. The Student and Parent Opinion Inventories concur with this analysis. Over 60% of parents and 63.6% of students feel that teachers provide instructional activities that involve students in their learning. These findings indicate that rational and intellectual thinking is encouraged in students by various teacher-designed lessons and student directed activities. Evaluation, which is the most complex level on the cognitive scale, is actively employed among the language arts staff. An eclectic means of evaluation is utilized throughout the language arts curriculum as well. In addition to written tests, 66.8% of students feel they are provided with a variety of ways to demonstrate their learning, with other forms of evaluation such as completing projects or portfolios. This data illustrates that most language arts students have the capability to draw upon individual schema, grasp the meaning of material, apply this meaning to new academic situations, analyze and then apply this knowledge by recognizing relationships, and ultimately judging the given purpose of the material.

### **Curricular Alignment**

The desired outcomes for language arts instruction are based on New Jersey's core Curriculum Content Standards. For language arts, there are five standards that must be addressed by the curricula. They are

- 3.1 (Reading) All students will understand and apply the knowledge of sounds, letters, and words in written English to become independent and fluent readers, and will read a variety of materials and texts with fluency and comprehension.
- 3.2 (Writing) All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.
- 3.3 (Speaking) All students will speak in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.
- 3.4 (Listening) All students will listen actively to information from a variety of sources in a variety of situations

3.5 (Viewing and Media Literacy) All students will access, view, evaluate, and respond to print, nonprint, and electronic texts and resources.

The curriculum in Bernards Township has been aligned to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards through a program of curriculum revision. Every student graduating from Ridge High School will meet or exceed all New Jersey Core Content standards as measured by the cumulative progress standards.

## 9-12 PROGRAM EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Constraints</i>	<i>Current Status</i>
<b>Assessment Strategies Recommendations</b>					
1	Consistently implement a variety of assessment strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create matrix</li> <li>▪ Train staff</li> </ul>	Summer Curriculum Writing 2004	Time and budget for summer curriculum writing	Completed for those courses revised 2004
2	Consistent assessment variety through all units in course, especially for writing	Adopt matrix	2004-2005 Grades 9-10 2005-2006 Grades 11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time and budget</li> <li>▪ Training of new staff</li> </ul>	About ½ of courses include this component
3	Multifaceted assessment in each unit	Revise assessment instruments	Ongoing	Teacher training time	Ongoing – Staff College
4	Consistent throughout each Language Arts course offered	Create & implement a check list for each course offered	Ongoing as courses are revised	Time and budget	Ongoing – Staff College
5	Align curricula for newly adopted PSAT (9 & 10) and new SAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review curricula for alignment</li> <li>▪ Train summer curriculum writing staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summer 2004</li> <li>▪ Ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget</li> <li>▪ Staff</li> <li>▪ Availability</li> </ul>	Completed Summer 2004
6	Revitalize HSPA and testing prep lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review curricula for alignment</li> <li>▪ Train summer curriculum writing staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summer 2004</li> <li>▪ Ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget</li> <li>▪ Staff</li> <li>▪ Availability</li> </ul>	Completed Summer 2004
<b>POETRY INSTRUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS</b>					
7	Use poems as anticipatory set/closure for a required extended reading	Utilize anthologies, 1-3 poems per week. See appendix in Curriculum.	2004-2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teacher planning time</li> <li>▪ Summer curriculum</li> </ul>	Dept. meetings provided research time. Teachers used new poems

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Constraints</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
				writing	
8	Research paper on Poet/Present	Incorporate unit in each course curriculum	2004-2005	Planning, time and budget	Completed
9	Paper on Poetry Analysis	Incorporate unit in each curriculum	2004-2005	Planning, time and budget	Begun
10	Students to attend Dodge Poetry Festival	Plan in May; go in September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Finance</li> <li>▪ Transportation</li> </ul>	Teacher interest	Completed September 2004
11	Activities with National Poetry Month	Plan at department meeting one day	Ongoing	Must adjust curriculum	
12	Guest speaker	Invitation	National Poetry Month	Funds and schedule	
13	Explore student publication via internet/magazine	Student submissions via LA class	October – April	Need oversight	Realm
14	Writing contest: Local/National	Student submissions	Ongoing	Student interest	NJCTE – 4 winners
15	Review effective instructional strategies for poetry	Staff College course	Ongoing	Teacher interest	
16	Each course writes one poem	Plan at department	Ongoing	Planning time	Completed
<b>LEARNING STYLES RECOMMENDATIONS</b>					
17	Review activities & improve balance in choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Curriculum revision for two</li> <li>▪ Curriculum/staff college course</li> </ul>	Summer	Budget & time	
18	Appendix giving instructional strategies	Committee	Summer	Budget & time	In progress – 8/05 completion date
19	Bibliography of resources for teachers	Committee	Summer	Budget & time	
<b>CULTURAL DIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS</b>					
20	Incorporate short stories & poetry	Summer curriculum writing to research titles to			

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Constraints</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
	from other (particularly Eastern, African & Latin American) cultures to compliment a primary unit text (novel, play or longer work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify areas (courses) that are the weakest</li> <li>▪ Within those courses, identify potential places of integration</li> </ul>	Summer 2004-2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget</li> <li>▪ Staff</li> <li>▪ Availability</li> </ul>	
<b>MISCELLANEOUS RECOMMENDATIONS</b>					
21	Create departmental procedure appendix detailing department expectations	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summer 2004</li> <li>▪ Ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget</li> <li>▪ Staff</li> <li>▪ Availability</li> </ul>	In progress – 8/05 completion date - done
22	Schedule 19-23 students per section	Work with scheduling/guidance to balance pupil load	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget</li> <li>▪ Staff</li> <li>▪ Availability</li> </ul>	