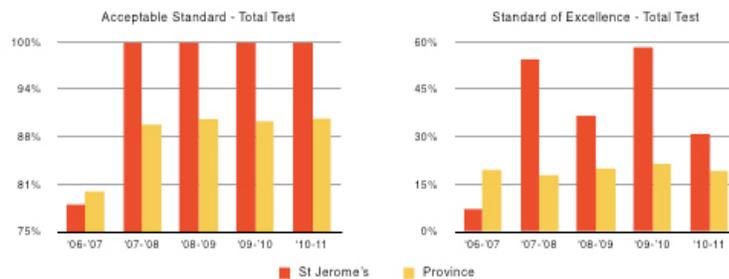


# Results of Implementation

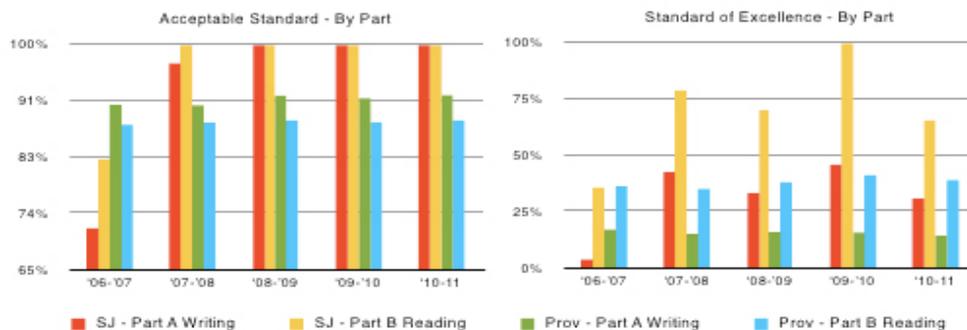
## 4 Years of Writing Success Alberta School Case Study

In 2007, the elementary teachers of St Jerome's School in Vermilion, Alberta attended Empowering Writers instruction in an effort to improve their students' writing. The results were immediate. St. Jerome's teachers have maintained this high standard of writing for the past 4 years.



***"We have been participating in Empowering Writers since 2007 and have seen our writing and reading scores soar. This wonderful program has certainly given our children the power to be great writers!"***

*Peggie Roth  
3rd Grade teacher  
St. Jerome's School, Vermilion, AB*



## What did writing instruction look like before Empowering Writers?

Prior to EW most of our teachers simply asked the children to write a story. They thought that by having the children listen to stories and read stories that the process of writing a story would come naturally. Some teachers would ask children to imitate pattern stories, but the stories were often only a few lines long and the language was general with a few short uninteresting sentences.

The challenges facing our teachers was how to teach writing. What specific skills could be taught to enable our children to write stories. Some of us did some research and tried a number of different manuals so there was no consistency between grades in our approach. The other manuals were not organized in such a way that skills were isolated, taught, modeled, practiced and then incorporated into a complete story as the Empowering Writers' manual is. Improving writing became our goal.

# Results of Implementation

## **What did you learn at the Empowering Writers Workshop?**

Everyone agreed to attend an EW workshop in Red Deer, Alberta four years ago. With Barbara Mariconda coaching us through the workshop on how to write a story, how to use the manual, the purposes behind each section of the writing diamond, and the implementation of modeling and guided practice we came to feel quite confident that we could really teach our kids how to write a story. Barbara's introduction into how she began developing this program, her history in her own classroom and her own acknowledgment of how difficult it can be to teach writing (even for a published author) really made us realize she was one of us, someone who understood the challenges faced in today's classrooms and how pragmatic this program was.

Returning home we all eagerly began our lessons and soon discovered how easy it was to teach story writing with the tools presented in the manual. We practiced and practiced and saw our kids enthusiasm for writing flourish. They were so eager to implement their newly acquired skills into these wonderful pieces of writing that at first the results shocked them (they were very impressed with what their words sounded like) and then their writing made them very proud.

## **What were the results of implementing Empowering Writers?**

Our Provincial Achievement Test Writing scores soared. We had a new principal when our scores came in in the fall and he could not believe our results. His first question to us was if this group of children was a stronger than usual group. The answer was no, not at all. His reply was how did you do this. We explained about our new writing program, EW, our attendance at an EW workshop and our goal to implement the program from kindergarten to grade 5. He was so impressed he got the middle level teachers to attend both narrative and expository workshops later that year.

## **What is the impact of the writing instruction on the students?**

The children are confident writers, they understand what needs to be written in order to have a great story. They pride themselves on using vocabulary they have seen used in books. When they are reading they identify story writing techniques, appreciate the writer's skills and vocabulary, and they store away ideas for their own stories. They are more aware of how authors communicate their ideas. For example how to develop a critical character, setting or object. How authors build suspense and flip sentences to put the action in the front or how authors give great detail to expand the main event and put pictures in their heads. Their awareness when they are reading has moved beyond just enjoying a story and on to also appreciating the writing itself. Empowering Writers enables us to build the children's confidence and pride in their abilities to write excellent stories!

## **Have you attained your goals for writing instruction?**

Our Provincial Achievement Test Writing scores continued to be excellent and we have since been nominated twice for awards based on our marks. We are now beginning our 5th year of using EW and have met our long term goal of having every child meet the Acceptable Standard on our P.A.T.s. (That happened our first year using EW and has been maintained every year since.). Now our goal is to try to continue to have more and more children reach the Standard of Excellence, but more importantly our long term goal is to teach a love and appreciation for great books and great writing.