

### Heterogeneous English 8 Classes for the 2013-2014 School Year:

During the 2012-2013 school year, honors and academic English 8 students received instruction in the same classroom (heterogeneous classes). A steering committee comprised of school staff, parents, and a consultant, met monthly to study the implementation of heterogeneous class methodologies in English 8 and created a framework that facilitates communication, measurement, and consistent procedures and processes. All meeting minutes are posted on the Heterogeneous Classes page of the BRMS website.

All steering committee members supported the continuation of heterogeneous instruction for English 8 classes during the upcoming 2013-2014 school year. Committee members also supported the continuation of meeting as a steering committee to further study heterogeneous classroom instruction.

Steering committee members compiled and analyzed the following data:

#### **Writing Diagnostic**

**Dates: September, 2012 and January, 2013**

**Description:** Students responded to prompts modeled on the current SAT Writing section. These prompts are more challenging than those used for the Virginia SOL, as they are intended for college-bound high school students. The prompts were then scored on a rubric modeled on the SAT writing rubric. Where the Virginia writing rubric's highest score point is a 4 (for both the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade tests), the rubric teachers used to score the diagnostic goes to a 6. (The four level on the rubric is correlated to the highest score point for Virginia's rubric.) The English 8 staff decided to use a more challenging prompt and rubric so that they could look more closely at the growth that occurred among students who entered 8<sup>th</sup> grade already skilled in writing.

<b>Results:</b>	<b>Average Difference</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>+0.77</b>
		<b>Honors</b>	<b>+0.85</b>
		<b>Academic</b>	<b>+0.69</b>
	<b>Median Difference</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>+0.70</b>
		<b>Honors</b>	<b>+0.80</b>
		<b>Academic</b>	<b>+0.60</b>
	<b>Average Score</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>3.81</b>
		<b>Honors</b>	<b>4.24</b>
		<b>Academic</b>	<b>3.30</b>

#### **Writing SOL**

**Dates: March 12-20**

**Description:** All grade 8 students take the Writing 8 SOL test. There are two parts to the Writing 8 SOL test: a multiple choice component and a direct writing short paper component. On the multiple choice component, students answer multiple choice questions focused around planning, drafting, and editing papers. For the short paper, students respond to an argumentative or expository writing prompt. Based on preliminary examination of the results on

the short paper component of the test, students at Blue Ridge Middle School performed extremely well.

**Results:** 98.6% were **at or above standards** for Composing/ Written Expression (e.g., organization and use of language to communicate a message) for the Short Paper  
97.6% were **at or above standards** for Usage/ Mechanics (e.g. correctness in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage) for the Short Paper  
55.3% **exceeded grade-level standards in** Composing and Written Expression  
65.6% **exceeded grade-level standards** in Usage/ Mechanics Standards  
50.2% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students **exceeded grade-level standards in BOTH** Composing/ Written Expression and Usage/ Mechanics  
27.3% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students with the **highest possible** score on the written paper

To contact steering committee members with questions and/or comments, please email or call the school at 540-751-2520 or use the “Contact Information” link on the Heterogeneous Classes page of the BRMS website.

BRMS Heterogeneous Classes webpage link: <http://www.lcps.org/domain/11546>