

## After-School Writing Program

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*Rockwell Elementary School  
Bristol, Rhode Island*

Second and third graders at Rockwell Elementary School signed up for a special opportunity to sharpen their writing skills. Students from Roger Williams University's (RWU) School of Education worked with the children after school to create a "Children's Guide to Bristol and Warren, Rhode Island." As part of the writing program, parents were asked to read their children's works-in-progress and take their children to photograph parts of Bristol or Warren to support the guide. The after-school writing program met once a week for 45 minutes, and included 20 students from grades two and three.

In creating the "Children's Guide," students followed a writing process. They began by brainstorming and forming an outline, then moved to writing a rough draft. The RWU students helped the children refine their first drafts, making sure they included supporting details and descriptive language. Finally, after a round of revision, editing, and peer conferencing, children were ready for the "Author's Chair." On the final day of the program, students sat in the special chair and read their completed pieces to their parents, classmates, and teachers from RWU. Children's photographs were displayed throughout the room.

The Rockwell School Parents Group, along with the principal, planned the program based on low student writing standardized test scores. The school already maintained a working relationship with RWU's Institute for Teaching and Learning, and the university was eager to collaborate with Rockwell on the after-school program. Organizers believed that students' writing skills would benefit from the indi-

vidual attention the children received from the RWU students in a relaxed, fun atmosphere.

A budget of \$350 was required to provide all students with disposable cameras. These costs were covered by a grant from RWU's Institute for Teaching and Learning.

The writing program enabled students to creatively and skillfully improve their writing. The RWU students gained valuable, hands-on experience with teaching, as well as the satisfaction of working with Rockwell students to make a positive difference in their academic lives. One university student commented that it was "great working with the children. They were eager to complete the assignment." Parents appreciated the progress their children made. As one parent described, this was a "wonderful experience for students and volunteers."

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