



Lippitt Elementary School

Warwick

SALT Visit Team Report

January 19, 2001



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education

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This report is available at www.ridoe.net/schoolimprove/salt

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1. THIS REPORT'S PURPOSE AND LIMITS

School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) is Rhode Island's comprehensive school accountability system. SALT is based on using information to improve learning and teaching so that the learning of all students in the state dramatically improves. The SALT visit and other major SALT components are designed to aid schools in their ongoing development and implementation of effective School Improvement Plans.

The purpose of the visit to Lippitt Elementary School from January 16-19, 2001 was to draw conclusions about the school in the three focus areas of SALT:

- ◆ Student Learning
- ◆ Teaching
- ◆ The School

The design of the SALT visit ensures that accountability supports improvement of schools by directly connecting judgments of quality and recommendations for improvement to the actual life and work of a school. This report is built upon the observations and conclusions of the visit team. The visit team is composed of Rhode Island school practitioners and a parent. Their affiliations are included at the end of the report.

The School Improvement Plan for Lippitt Elementary School was the touchstone document for the team. However informative written reports may be, there is simply no substitute for being at the school while it is in session in the classroom, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The specific information generated by a team visit is about how the students, staff and administrator go about their day. Thus, this visit allowed professional colleagues and stakeholders to build informed judgments about the teaching and learning that actually takes place at Lippitt Elementary School.

The visit team collected its evidence from the following:

- ◆ *a total of 73 classroom observations which totaled over 78 hours of time spent in direct classroom observation. All classrooms were visited at least once. Most teachers were observed more than once.*
- ◆ *many observations of the school (outside of classroom)*
- ◆ *following 6 students for a full day*
- ◆ *observing the work of teachers, specialty teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *scheduled meetings with the following groups:*
 - *School Improvement Team*
 - *school and district administrators*

- *students*
- *parents*
- ◆ *conversations and/or interviews with many students, teachers, staff, and the school administrator*
- ◆ *examination of student work, including a selection of work collected by the school*
- ◆ *analysis of achievement and equity gaps based on Information Works! data*
- ◆ *review of district and school policies*
- ◆ *review of professional development activities*
- ◆ *review of classroom assessments.*
- ◆ *examination of classroom reading materials*
- ◆ *review of classroom assignments*
- ◆ *review of the following documents:*
 - *School Improvement Plan for Lippitt Elementary School*
 - *district strategic plan*
 - *1999-2000 SALT Survey report*
 - *classroom textbooks*
 - *1998, 1999, 2000 Information Works!*
 - *2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam School Summary Report*
 - *2000 New Standards Mathematics Reference Exam School Summary Report*
 - *2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
 - *review of Warwick Public Schools' teacher evaluation instrument*
 - *Lippitt School Improvement Team Binder*
 - *Lippitt Self Study Binder*

- *K-12 curricula for Warwick Public Schools*
- *reflections on Lippitt Inclusion Service Model*

The full team has built the conclusions, commendations and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussions. The visit team met for a total of 27 hours in six separate meetings spanning the four days of the visit. This time is exclusive of the time spent in classrooms, with teachers and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators. The team sought to develop conclusions, commendations and recommendations in the three focus areas that, in its judgment, would be helpful to the school as it works to improve teaching and learning.

The team reached consensus agreement for each conclusion, each recommendation, and each commendation in this report.

It is important to note that this report reflects a “moment” in the life of the school. The conclusions here are different from those that can be made from statewide assessment data or from information collected and analyzed by members of the school. This report is not intended to be prescriptive. Rather, it is a different lens, one not clouded by the daily life of the school. This new lens is one through which the school can look to help focus on important issues resulting in the development of strategies for overall improvement in the teaching and learning process.

The value of this report is not determined by the hard work of the Team. The value will be determined by how Lippitt Elementary School responds to the report. At first, the critical criteria will be the thoughtfulness of that response and later it will be its actual effectiveness in improving teaching and learning. The response of the faculty and staff will be most critical early on but later there is a shared responsibility to support the school in making progress. The School Department, the citizens of Warwick, and the Rhode Island Department of Education will share that responsibility.

Following the SALT visit your school will use the information in this report to revise your school improvement plan. The modifications you make to your plan will form the basis for a Compact for Learning with your district. This compact ensures your school benefits from the information in a SALT report by using it to inform your improvement efforts, request the support needed from the district and community, and describe the changes you plan to make in the near future. While your RIDE Field Service Team representative will assist in facilitating your school and district efforts to develop your compact, the responsibility to do this rests with your School Improvement Team.

It is important to read and consider this report as a whole. Recommendations and commendations should be considered in context with the conclusions. That is the way they were written.

2. PROFILE OF Lippitt Elementary School

Lippitt Elementary School is one of twenty elementary schools in the Warwick Public School System. It serves students in grades PK-6 for the city of Warwick, Rhode Island. Warwick is a suburban city with a population of approximately 85,400. The present school first opened its doors to students in 1951. Additional classrooms were added in 1957, 1964, and 1967. The gymnasium was added in 1999-2000.

A five member elected school board governs the Warwick Public School District. A mayor and a nine member city council govern the city. Lippitt Elementary School students are served by a professional staff of one administrator, thirty-three full and part-time faculty, eight aides and support personnel, and three custodians.

Lippitt Elementary School has an attendance rate of 95 percent. Of the three hundred thirty students attending this school 97 percent are White, 1 percent is Hispanic, and 2 percent are Black. Sixty-eight students totaling twenty-one percent receive special education services (This number includes a pre-K special education class). No students are classified as Limited English Proficiency, and 18 percent applied for and receive free or reduced-price lunch.

The team used the test score information found in *Information Works!* and the 2000 New Standards Reference Exam School Summaries to determine the performance gaps discussed in the student learning conclusions. 2000 New Standards Reference Examination results have been appended to this report. *Information Works!* data for Lippitt Elementary School is available at www.rido.net

3. PORTRAIT OF Lippitt Elementary School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Lippitt School is a school with an inviting atmosphere. It provides a safe, clean, friendly learning environment. Children enjoy learning here, teachers enjoy teaching here, and parents enjoy sending their children here. There is a strong sense of respect between and among students, parents, faculty, staff, and the principal. This school is a home away from home for the well-mannered, polite, friendly, and engaging children who attend this school. Lippitt School exemplifies kindness and camaraderie.

The collegiality and cohesiveness of the teachers and staff permeates this school. The teachers are hard working, nurturing, and have a genuine interest in providing their students with the best education they can impart. The desire to provide the students of Lippitt Elementary School with a quality education extends to the parents and community. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and School Improvement Team (SIT) benefit from a core of active and engaged parents. Last year, in the absence of strong, consistent, building leadership, the faculty, parents, and teachers came together and gave themselves an identity as a powerful force for change in the school.

The willingness of the teachers to work cohesively toward a set of common goals and direct their own professional development is evident in the efforts they have made to create a mutually supportive learning environment and an active and engaged School Improvement Team. This team shared the leadership of this school with itinerant principals and began formalizing their ongoing efforts to improve the process of teaching and learning at Lippitt Elementary School. The new principal immersed himself into this culture of shared leadership and willingly supports their involvement in decision-making.

The school has taken a number of steps toward becoming a standards-based teaching and learning environment. Standards, performance tasks, and alternative assessments can be found throughout the school. Good, sound, standards-based educational practices are emerging in this school, but many instructional practices continue to be grounded in traditional pedagogy focused more heavily on basic skills. Nevertheless, there are some powerful examples of effective practices in this school that can serve as a model for other teachers to learn from as they continue their efforts at continuous improvement and engage in professional growth.

Lippitt Elementary School has built a strong foundation necessary to become a great school. This school has strong teacher leaders and is ready to take the next steps in its pursuit of excellence—additional changes in professional practice, job-embedded professional development, formalizing and clarifying the inclusion program, and dramatically improving the achievement of the students who attend this school.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *2000 Information Works!*
- ◆ *2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- ◆ *2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam School Summary*
- ◆ *2000 New Standards Mathematics Reference Exam School Summary*
- ◆ *examination of student work*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *classroom observations*
- ◆ *scheduled meetings with students and parents*
- ◆ *conversations and/or interviews with teachers, staff, and students*

Conclusions

There is a wonderful student body of willing, eager learners at Lippitt School. They are warm, friendly, caring, often do good deeds, and demonstrate a community consciousness. Students exert a great deal of effort in the learning process and try to do their best. The children are well mannered, courteous, well behaved, and make many contributions to the fine reputation Lippitt School enjoys within its community. (*observations of the school, following students, classroom observations, conversations and/or interviews with teachers, staff, and students, meetings with students and parents*)

Many students in this school effectively employ a variety of strategies to develop their proficiency with reading. Most students have good reading comprehension skills, can recall basic facts in printed text, and effectively identify the plot, setting and main characters in stories. Students are less adept at reading analysis and interpretation. Students are reading in groups, responding to literature in reading response journals, participating in literature circles, reading silently, drilling high frequency words, developing phonemic awareness, partner reading, and reading at home. Many students are working to reach the 25 book standard. Fewer students are using non-traditional responses to reading such as timelines, flow charts, and making connections between text and their own lives. On the 2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam, the fourth grade students at Lippitt Elementary School met or exceeded the standard in the following: *Reading Basic Understanding* – 74 percent, *Reading Analysis and Interpretations* – 62 percent. These scores are below district and state averages. The students' performance on the subtests of the 1999 New Standards Reference Exam is comparable to similar students in basic understanding and below similar students state-wide in analysis and interpretation. (*2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam School Summary, 2000 Information Works!, classroom observations, examination of student work, following students*)

Students are much more proficient with basic mathematical skills than concepts and problem solving. Many math assignments focus on computation skills with one correct answer. Less emphasis is placed on open-ended problems that have a number of potential solutions requiring a variety of strategies to solve. Students practice basic mathematical skills as well as concepts and often use correct terminology in mathematics. Students in some grades are using a variety of strategies for problem solving such as: working backwards, guess and check, logical reasoning, and making an organized list. Fewer students are using manipulatives or are capable of using words to explain why and how they came to the answer. On the 2000 New Standards Mathematics Reference Exam, the fourth grade students at Lippitt Elementary School met or exceeded the standard in the following: *Skills* – 53 percent, *Concepts* – 18 percent, *Problem Solving* - 17 percent. While these scores are below district and state averages, the students performance on the subtests of the 1999 New Standards Reference Exam is above similar students state-wide in skills and comparable to similar students in concepts and problem solving. (2000 New Standards Mathematics Reference Exam School Summary, 2000 Information Works!, classroom observations, examination of student work, following students)

Students have a stronger grasp of the conventions of writing rather than applications of effective writing strategies. Many students are writing in journals, responding to literature using open-ended prompts, creating poetry, and keeping track of their writing in folders. Some students are using graphic organizers to guide the writing process, self-editing and self-correcting, reflecting on their writing, presenting their work to others, and occasionally using computers to write and publish their work. Fewer students are consistently writing personal essays, narrative procedures, or engaging in free writing, creative writing, expository writing, and writing across the curriculum. On the 2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam, the fourth grade students at Lippitt Elementary School met or exceeded the standard in the following: *Writing Effectiveness* - 40 percent, and *Writing Conventions* - 26 percent. On the 2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment, 12 percent of the third grade students at Lippitt Elementary School met or exceeded the standard. These scores are below district and state averages. The students' performance on the subtests of the 1999 New Standards Reference Exam is above similar students state-wide in conventions and below similar students in effectiveness. (2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam School Summary, 2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment, 2000 Information Works!, examination of student work, following students, classroom observations)

Commendations for Lippitt Elementary School:

- The well behaved and respectful students
- The community consciousness of the students
- The courteous and polite students

Recommendations for Lippitt Elementary School:

Examine the “What Students Need” section of the New Standards Reference Exam School Summary report for the past three years and use that information to make changes in instructional practice.

Develop strategies designed to improve student performance with a specific emphasis on reading analysis, mathematics concepts and problem solving, and writing effectiveness.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *classroom observations*
- ◆ *observations of the school*
- ◆ *conversations and/or interviews with many students, teachers, staff, and the school administrator*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *scheduled meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, students, and parents*
- ◆ *review of student portfolios*
- ◆ *examination of student work*
- ◆ *examination of classroom reading materials*
- ◆ *review of classroom assessments*
- ◆ *review of classroom assignments*

Conclusions

Teachers and staff exhibit motivation and desire to improve their practices to better meet the needs of their students. Their dedication and initiative is clearly evident in their involvement in the community and the support and respect they have garnered from the parents and students this school serves. Teachers and staff demonstrate an extraordinary willingness to assist and support each other. They care deeply about their school and students. (*conversations and/or interviews with teachers, staff, and students, meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, students and parents, observations of the school, classroom observations*)

Teachers are extremely dedicated and work very hard to educate their students. They are employing a number of strategies to develop a strong academic foundation for their students. Some exemplary practices are clearly evident throughout the school that need to be shared and capitalized on. While teachers are consistently building a strong foundation, some are not expanding on this foundation in a way that challenges students to think independently, critically and creatively. Some teachers are successfully teaching the various skills and strategies students need in a non-isolated fashion that connects what students learn, allows students to expand their thoughts and assimilate materials in new and different ways. This is not occurring schoolwide. (*following students, classroom observations, examination of student work, meetings with students, conversations and/or interviews with teachers and students*)

Teachers use a variety of strategies to provide positive feedback to their students. Teachers often circulate around the room and offer immediate feedback to their students focused on improving the nature and quality

of student work. Teachers' questions and inquiries were always responded with an eye toward developing student understanding. Journal entries often contain detailed teacher comments about the content of the work and support a personal dialogue between the teacher and student. A sincere desire to build self-esteem is evident in the classroom through positive reinforcement. (*following students, classroom observations, examination of student work, meetings with parents, review of classroom assignments*)

There is an emergent understanding of the strategies and techniques necessary to effectively teach in a standards-based environment. A few teachers are successfully using rubrics to provide students with information about how well they have performed. While standards and benchmarks are readily displayed throughout this school, they are infrequently used as a clear guide for the purpose of the lesson. There is much confusion in this school about the distinction between checklists and valid rubrics that are clearly aligned with the standards. The criteria found in rubrics often focuses more on the form or appearance the work should take than on clear indicators that guide instruction and assess the quality of student work and the depth of their understanding. (*classroom observations, review of classroom assessments, following students, conversations and/or interviews with teachers and students, review of student portfolios*)

Teachers are making a concerted effort to improve the quality of student writing in many content areas. There is a strong emphasis on the writing process with step by step instructions visible throughout the school. Student work is displayed throughout the school. Students are writing frequently in journals, developing different forms of poetry, and responding to literature using open-ended prompts. Fewer assignments challenge students to write to a particular audience, expand and elaborate on ideas, and create clear text in a variety of forms and purposes. Most teachers are focusing on writing conventions more than writing effectiveness. The strategies and techniques that teachers use are not sufficiently varied and purposefully chosen to sequentially deepen students' understanding of effective writing. (*classroom observations, following students, examination of student work, conversations and/or interviews with teachers and students, review of classroom assignments*)

A great deal of reading instruction takes place at this school. Teachers are having students read often and in a variety of genres. Teachers use a combination of whole language and phonics in the primary grades. The use of trade books enhances the basic reading programs at this school. A number of strategies are being successfully employed to teach students reading comprehension—partner reading, guided reading, teacher and student read alouds, silent sustained reading, and independent reading. All of these techniques are not being utilized schoolwide. Most teachers are focusing on basic reading understanding more than in-depth analysis and interpretation. Reading analysis and interpretation techniques such as: literature circles, exploring the author's purpose, supporting interpretation and elaboration with convincing textual evidence, and establishing connections between text and prior knowledge are less prevalent in this school. (*examination of classroom reading materials, classroom observations, following students, meetings with students, conversations and/or interviews with teachers and staff*)

More time and energy needs to be invested in teaching math. Some teachers are effectively pushing their students to stretch and reach mathematically through the use of manipulatives to make connections to mathematical equations, group problem solving, integrating math into other content areas. Other effective strategies include: showing the relationships between shapes, extending numeric and geometric patterns, and helping students select and apply strategies when solving problems. Fewer assignments offer rigorous open-ended problems that require students to apply their knowledge of skills and concepts to solve problems, apply math to real-life situations, and explain their answers to problems orally or in writing. Often assignments and mathematical problems are concrete paper and pencil computation problems that focus on basic skills. Students often don't master the basic skills they need for a particular grade, which results in repetition in the skills taught from year to year. Emphasis on reiterating basics detracts from higher order thinking and problem solving. (*examination of student work, conversations and/or interviews with teachers and staff, meetings with students and parents, classroom observations*)

Commendations for Lippitt Elementary School:

The dedication of teachers

The motivation and desire to improve

The extraordinary willingness to assist and support each other

The willingness to change professional practice

Recommendations for Lippitt Elementary School:

Design and implement professional development activities that focus on standards-based instruction, rubrics, the Principles of Learning, differentiated instruction, and higher order thinking skills.

Design standards-based lessons and units specifically designed to teach and assess the indicators of performance found in the Warwick Public Schools K-12 standards-based curricula. Assess these lessons and units using rubrics with criteria clearly focused on the standards the lesson was designed to address.

Re-examine current practices and devise strategies that will build students' mastery of basic skills with less repetition than currently exists, thereby freeing up more time for math concepts and problem solving practices routed in real life situations.

Reshape the language arts and social studies time allotments and instructional strategies to include a more efficient approach to literacy that integrates different subjects. Consider adopting the strategies in a model such as Four Blocks or Balanced Literacy to enhance your language arts program.

Adopt methods that involve applications of skills in project-oriented active learning assignments, rather than passive learning strategies.

Recommendations for Warwick School District:

Provide high-quality, job-imbedded professional development addressing the topics outlined above.

Provide technical assistance and resources to this school to assist them in eliminating the repetition in mathematical skills taught from year to year, and sequentially developing students' understanding of mathematics concepts and problem solving.

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *classroom observations*
- ◆ *observations of the school*
- ◆ *conversations and/or interviews with many teachers and staff*
- ◆ *scheduled meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, students, and parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *review of School Improvement Plan for Lippitt School*
- ◆ *review of Warwick Public Schools' teacher evaluation instrument*
- ◆ *review of School Improvement Team Binder*
- ◆ *review of Lippitt Self Study Binder*
- ◆ *review of professional development activities*
- ◆ *review of reflections on Lippitt Inclusion Service Model*
- ◆ *review of K-12 curricula for Warwick Public Schools*

Conclusions

Teachers have demonstrated a strong willingness to improve their professional practice. Professional development is frequently planned and offered by the district. There has been a strong focus on the writing process and problem solving by teachers in this school. The lack of a formalized plan at the school level and the limited number of professional development days in the present teachers' contract are impeding the opportunities for high-quality job-imbedded professional development focused on standards-based instructional practices, assessments, differentiated instruction and other areas of need. There are some powerful examples of effective practices throughout this school that have not been fully capitalized on through in-class modeling and other forums that share the knowledge and expertise that exists in this school. (*conversations and/or interviews with teachers, meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, review of professional development activities, classroom observations*)

The teacher evaluation process for the Warwick Public Schools is not an effective tool to improve professional practices. This process lacks specific measurable criteria that focus on student learning and does not reflect the changes in planning, instructional practices, and assessment techniques required in a standards-based classroom. This checklist offers little constructive or instructive feedback that the teacher can use to

engage in a cycle of continuous professional growth. *(review of Warwick Public Schools' Professional Evaluation Instrument, meetings with the school administrator, conversations and/or interviews with teachers)*

The faculty, staff, and leadership of Lippitt School embody a cohesive supportive spirit that embraces a shared ownership of their school. This positive feeling is genuinely reciprocated from parents and students. Mutual respect is evident within this educational team. The teachers are hard working, nurturing, and have a keen interest in providing their students with the best education they can impart. The willingness of most teachers to work cooperatively toward a set of common goals and pursue their own professional development is evident in the efforts they have made to create a mutually supportive learning environment and an active and engaged School Improvement Team. The atmosphere created by the professional staff is mirrored by the students and manifests itself in their polite, respectful attitudes and feelings toward the school, teachers, and each other. *(observations of the school, following students, conversations and/or interviews with teachers, meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, students and parents, conversations and/or interviews with teachers, and students)*

A heartfelt desire to provide the students of Lippitt School with the best possible education is what brought parents, teachers, and staff together during a transition in school leadership. This desire still exists today. The School Improvement Team enjoys a mutually supportive environment that fosters shared decision-making. The new principal willingly supports this team's involvement in decision-making. School Improvement Team meetings are well attended by parents and teachers. Much of this time has been spent conducting self-study and preparing for the upcoming SALT visit. The School Improvement Team has established five broad goals for the school. The present School Improvement Plan does not include tactics and action plans with measurable criteria designed to address each of the broad goals in the plan. The indicators of accomplishment are not clearly aligned with action steps. Furthermore, many of the issues currently being discussed within the School Improvement Team are not reflected in the current School Improvement Plan. *(review of School Improvement Plan, review of SIT Binder, meetings with school improvement team and school administrator)*

Lippitt School is one of several inclusion schools in Warwick. They are in the beginning stages of a three to five year implementation process. Commitment to instruction of all students in this model is a high priority. This model promotes collaboration among teachers, lowers adult to student ratios, and allows for more flexible ability grouping. Although the district is comfortable with the progress of implementation, the staff has some legitimate concerns regarding structure and implementation of this program. Many of their reservations are grounded in a desire to improve the quality of the services they are providing. The district, principal, and staff are willing to implement the inclusion model and make it work. While the district is committed to the model, the lack of clearly articulated expectations, guidance, and supports are hindering the school's ability to fully implement this program. *(Reflections on the Lippitt Inclusion Service Model, meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, conversations and/or interviews with teachers and staff, classroom observations, observations of the school)*

Commendations for Lippitt Elementary School:

The exceptional atmosphere created by the professional staff

The heartfelt desire to provide the students of Lippitt School with the best possible education

The willingness to share the leadership roles and responsibilities in this school

Recommendations for Lippitt Elementary School:

Seek outside technical assistance to develop a revised School Improvement Plan that includes targets, tactics,

and specific action plans with clear measurable indicators that enable you to determine when goals have been achieved.

Use the information from this SALT report to revise your current School Improvement Plan to reflect this report's recommendations and the major initiatives that this school is working on such as the inclusion model.

Develop a professional development system that provides in-class modeling by current teachers and people outside the school for innovative strategies.

Continue to work toward the full implementation of the inclusion model and seek more guidance and direction from the district regarding the most appropriate way to deliver the services inherent in this model.

Recommendations for Warwick School District:

Provide the resources, technical assistance, and incentives necessary to implement in-class coaches as outlined above.

Provide the school with clearly defined expectations, more guidance, and direction regarding the most appropriate way to deliver the services inherent in an inclusion model.

Negotiate with the Warwick Teachers' Union to add days to the contract for on-going professional development.

Work with the Warwick Teachers' Union to revise the existing teacher evaluation instrument. Develop a formative evaluation instrument focused on professional growth that includes specific measurable criteria that reflects standards-based instruction and relates to the RI Beginning Teachers Standards.

Recommendations for the Warwick Teachers' Union:

Negotiate with the district to add days to the contract for on-going professional development.

Work with the Warwick School District to revise the existing teacher evaluation instrument. Develop a formative evaluation instrument focused on professional growth that includes specific measurable criteria that reflects standards-based instruction and relates to the RI Beginning Teachers Standards.

7. Final Advice to the School

While a SALT visit report is designed to promote productive action, it is the school improvement team, not the visiting team that decides what that action should be. How the school and community respond to the report is much more important than what the report says about the school. It is your response that shapes the action you will take and determines how likely you are to reach your objectives. Thus, it is important for the school to consider the information in this report carefully and decide deliberately how to modify the School Improvement Plan, based on the insights the report generates.

A School Improvement Plan that accurately reflects the major initiatives and reforms this school is undertaking, with a clear bottom-line focus on improving student performance, and detailed tactics and action plans with measurable goals would provide a strategic direction to your reform efforts. Refer to the *SALT Guide: Using the SALT Visit Report*, for guidance on considering the information presented in this report and using this information to make modifications to your School Improvement Plan.

Work through your professional development committee to develop a written plan designed to provide the faculty and staff with the additional instructional practices needed to make the changes recommended in this report. There are some very good practices in this school that should be shared through in-class modeling. Consider including coaching and opportunities for in-class modeling as part of the overall range of training offered to the professional staff.

This faculty is hard working, cohesive, and caring. There are a number of sound instructional practices throughout this school that are building a strong foundation in your students. Realizing your desire of helping all students achieve at higher levels will require some different instructional practices, student assignments, and assessments with a stronger emphasis on challenging students, applications of knowledge and higher order thinking skills. Focus more attention on aligning student assignments and assessments to the standards and grade level benchmarks fashioned by the district to ensure your considerable efforts more effectively build on students' knowledge from year to year.

Do not just keep adding on to your existing practices. Thoughtfully reflect on what you presently do, decide which practices and assignments can be eliminated or combined, and look for opportunities to increase the rigor of present assignments and make connections among the various assignments and content areas. Your enthusiasm for teaching and dedication to students will help them to become life long learners.

Because of the nature of this staff, none of the changes facing this school are insurmountable. Capitalize on the cohesiveness of this faculty and work together to support each other and learn from each other. Build upon the strong foundation and shared leadership that exists in this building. As you work with this SALT report we hope you realize our conclusions, commendations, and recommendations are designed to help you make this strong learning community better meet the needs of your students. For that is, unquestionably, the intent of our team.

LIPPITT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Frank Adams Teacher	Audrey Bell Co-Chairperson
Robin Cahoon Aide	Kim Casacalenda Teacher
Ann Casey Teacher	Patricia Cousineau Co-Chairperson
Gail Lury Teacher	Ann MacCarthy Parent
Rick Moore Parent	Theresa Nelson Parent
Kathy O'Palenick Teacher	Barbara Penza Teacher
Nancy Plumb Teacher	Azar Proctor Parent
Charles Proctor Parent	Roy Roberts Principal
Barbara Robitaille Teacher	Linda Voccio Teacher

THE SALT VISIT TEAM

Dr. Michael S. Barnes
Technology Education Department Chairperson
Ponaganset Middle / Senior High School
Foster-Glocester, Rhode Island
(on leave to Rhode Island Department of Education to serve as a SALT Fellow)
Chair of the Team

Kenneth A. Blackman
Principal
Edward S. Rhodes School
Cranston, Rhode Island

Karen A. Luth
Grade 4 Teacher
West Glocester Elementary School
Glocester, Rhode Island

Joan Mallin
Parent
Cranston, Rhode Island

Donna A. McEnery
Grade 4 Teacher
Orlo Avenue Elementary School
East Providence, Rhode Island

Kate Thompson
Multiple Intelligences Coordinator
Chariho Middle School
Wood River Junction, Rhode Island

New Standards Reference Examination and RI Writing Assessment Results (2000)

Catalpa Ltd. Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

Lippitt Elementary School

January 19, 2001

To complete the Catalpa Ltd. report endorsement, I have reviewed this report, observed a portion of the visit, and discussed the conduct of the full visit with the Visit Chair. Based on my knowledge derived from these sources of evidence, using the criteria specified in the *Endorsing SALT Visit team Reports by Catalpa Ltd.*, and using the methodology and procedures specified in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs, 1st edition*), I conclude that:

1. This report was produced by a legitimate SALT Visit that was led by a trained SALT Visit Chair and conducted in a manner that is consistent with SALT Visit procedures.
2. The conclusions and all other content of this report meet the criteria specified for a SALT Visit report.

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report as a legitimate SALT Visit Report.



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD
Catalpa Ltd.
February 9, 2001

