



# Harold F. Scott Elementary School

Warwick, Rhode Island

## The SALT Visit Team Report

November 9, 2001



**School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)**

**The accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education**

The findings of this report are those of this SALT visit team. The names and affiliations of the members of the team are in the appendix. The team follows the school visit protocol in the *Handbook for Chairs on Conducting a SALT School Visit*. The team is required to focus on what it observes at the time of the visit and is restricted from comparing the school with any other. This school visit was supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education as one component of its accountability system, School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT).

Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education

James A. DiPrete, Chairman  
Jo Eva Gaines, Vice Chair  
Colleen Callahan, Secretary  
Representative Paul W. Crowley  
Sue P. Duff  
Senator Hanna M. Gallo  
Gary E. Grove  
Patrick A. Guida  
Mario A. Mancieri  
Vidal P. Perez

-

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Peter McWalters, Commissioner

The Board of Regents does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, sex, sexual orientation, race,

religion, national origin, or disability.

**For information about SALT, please contact Ken Fish at 401-222-4600, x 2200 or salt@ridoe.net.**

**This report is available at <http://www.ridoe.net/schoolimprove/salt/visits.htm>**

1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF THIS REPORT

*Overview*

*Sources of Evidence for This Report*

*Using the Report*

2. PROFILE OF Harold F. Scott Elementary School

*Background*

3. PORTRAIT OF Harold F. Scott Elementary School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

*Sources of Evidence*

*Conclusions*

*Commendations for Harold F. Scott Elementary School*

*Recommendations for Harold F. Scott Elementary School*

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

*Sources of Evidence*

*Conclusions*

*Commendations for Harold F. Scott Elementary School*

*Recommendations for Harold F. Scott Elementary School*

*Recommendations for the Warwick School District*

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

*Sources of Evidence*

*Conclusions*

*Commendations for Harold F. Scott Elementary School*

*Recommendations for Harold F. Scott Elementary School*

*Recommendations for the Warwick Public School District*

7. Final Advice to the School

8. Harold F. Scott Elementary School Improvement Team



# 1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF THIS REPORT

## Overview

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Harold F. Scott Elementary School from November 6- November 9, 2001. The following features are at the heart of the report:

- ◆ The team seeks to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school presents a unique picture.
- ◆ The team does not compare this school to any other school.
- ◆ When writing the report, the team deliberately chooses the words that will best convey its message to the school, based on careful consideration of what it has learned about the school dynamics.
- ◆ The team makes its judgment explicit.

The major questions the team addresses are:

- ◆ How well do the students learn at this school?
- ◆ How well does this school teach its students?
- ◆ How well does this school support learning and teaching?

The SALT report creates accountability for improvement by connecting its judgments of quality and its recommendations for improvement directly to the actual work going on in this school at the time of the visit.

The team closely follows the visit protocol in the *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit*. The Catalpa endorsement certifies that this team followed the protocol and that this report meets all criteria required for a legitimate SALT visit report.

The visit team is made up primarily of teachers and administrators from Rhode Island public schools. The majority of team members are teachers. The names and affiliations of the team members are listed at the end of the report.

## Sources of Evidence for This Report

In order to write this report, the team examines test scores, student work, and other documents related to this school. The school improvement plan for Harold F. Scott Elementary School was the touchstone document for the team. No matter how informative documents may be, however, there is no substitute for being at the school while it is in session—in the classrooms, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The team builds its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, the visit allows the team to build informed judgments about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at Harold F. Scott Elementary School.

The visit team collected its evidence from the following sources of evidence:

- ◆ *observing a total of 81 classes. The team spent a total of over 73 hours in direct classroom observation. Every classroom was visited at least twice, and almost every teacher was observed more than once.*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following six students for a full day*

- ◆ *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*
  - teachers*
  - school improvement team*
  - school and district administrators*
  - students*
  - parents*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *analyzing four years of state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*
- ◆ *reviewing the following documents:*
  - district and school policies and practices*
  - records of professional development activities*
  - classroom assessments*
  - school improvement plan for Harold F. Scott Elementary School*

*Harold F. Scott Elementary School mission Statement*

*district strategic plan*

*2001 Information Works!*

*1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results*

*1999, 2000, and 2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*

*2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*

*2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*

*Warwick District Strategic Plan—Guiding Beliefs*

*Warwick Public Schools—Professional Evaluation instrument*

The full team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 25 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 must agree that every conclusion in this report:

- ◆ *is important enough to include in the report.*
- ◆ *is supported by the evidence the team has gathered during the visit.*
- ◆ *is set in the present.*

- ◆ *contains the judgment of the team.*

## Using the Report

The team deliberately chooses the words, phrases, and sentences it uses in its conclusions, as well as in the *Portrait* and *Final Advice*. Thus, this report is the team's best attempt to encourage and support the school's continued improvement in strengthening the learning of its students.

**The team reached consensus on each conclusion, each recommendation, and each commendation in this report.**

It is important to note that this report reflects only the week in the life of the school that was observed and considered by this team. The report does not cover what the school plans to do, or what it has done in the past. This report is not prescriptive.

The value of this report will be determined by its effectiveness in improving teaching and learning. By considering the importance to the school of what the team said and why, the school takes its first step in becoming accountable in a way that actually improves learning.

It is important to read and consider this report as a whole. Recommendations and commendations should be considered in relation to the conclusions they follow.

After the school improvement team considers this report, it should make changes in the school improvement plan. The revised plan will form the basis for negotiating a Compact for Learning with the district. The purpose of the Compact is to ensure that the school and its district work out an agreement about the best way to improve the school and the best way to target district support for the school. A RIDE Field Service Team representative will offer assistance in preparing the compact.

## 2. PROFILE OF Harold F. Scott Elementary School

### Background

Harold F. Scott Elementary School is one of twenty elementary schools in the Warwick School System. The school was built in 1965 in the southwestern part of the city. The floor plan and design is unique. The school plant, set up in pods surrounding the center all-purpose room, resembles a baseball diamond. The back addition, built in 1968, provided a new pod of rooms. The most recent addition was completed in winter 2001.

The school currently houses 293 students in grades kindergarten through six. The student body includes 272 white students, 13 Asian students, four black students, and four Hispanic students. Twenty students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. There are 31 students receiving special education services.

The students at Scott School are served by a professional staff that includes one administrator, 29 full- and part-time faculty, five teacher assistants, one secretary, and two custodians. The majority has worked together for over 10 years.

The Harold F. Scott School PTA provides needed funding for cultural arts programs, Weekly Reader publications, field trips, and materials needed for class projects. They also offer many family programs, such as candy bar bingo, math night, science night, and an ice cream social. The PTA also offers a wide variety of after-school programs, which include an art program, a foreign language program, a musical production, and a quilting class.

Scott students participate in the “Feinstein Good Deeds” program that promotes good deeds, teamwork, safety, and peaceful solutions and the “Can Do Club” that promotes responsibility and a positive work ethic. Selected students can join the “Mentor Club” that meets once a week with “Junior Mentors” from Tollgate High School. A handful of selected students meet with an adult mentor once weekly during school hours.

A number of parents volunteer through the VOWS (Volunteers of Warwick Schools) program. Parents help in the library, work with students, assist with the kindergarten screening, and chaperone field trips.

On the 2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination subtests more than nine in 10 of the fourth graders (97%) met or exceeded the standard in Mathematics/skills, two in three fourth graders (66%) met or exceeded the standard in concepts, and two in five of the fourth graders (43%) met or exceeded the standard in problem solving. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist for special education students on mathematics tests. Students at the Harold F. Scott Elementary School perform above the level of similar students in the state.

On the 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination subtests more than nine out of every 10 fourth graders (98%) met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Basic Understanding; more than eight in 10 of the fourth graders (83%) met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Analysis and Interpretation; and nine in 10 of the fourth graders (91%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Effectiveness; more than three in four fourth graders (72%) met the standard in Writing: Conventions. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist for students receiving free and reduced-price lunch, special needs students and black students on English Language Arts tests. Students at the Harold F. Scott Elementary School perform at the same level on both reading subtests as similar students in the state and below similar students in the state on both writing subtests.

On the Rhode Island Writing Assessment almost two in five of the third graders (39%) met or exceeded the

standard.

The most recently available New Standards Reference Examination results have been appended to this report. *Information Works!* data for Harold F. Scott Elementary School is available at [www.rido.net](http://www.rido.net).

### 3. PORTRAIT OF Harold F. Scott Elementary School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Harold F. Scott Elementary School is a quaint little building that sits atop a hill, tucked away from the busy streets of Warwick. Outside you may spy a turkey or a fox. Nature surrounds you. When you first enter, a warm, embracing welcome is immediately felt. The entire staff of the school greets you with a smile. Administration, faculty, and students are friendly and respectful. Brightly colored projects and papers decorate the hall, celebrating the important work of children. Upon entering the classrooms, visitors see teaching and learning, most of which is exciting and engaging. Teachers work as a unified team to improve their craft and spend many hours before and after the school day sharing with colleagues. There is a palpable energy directed at constant improvement of practice.

Students are the lucky recipients of this excitement and energy. They enjoy school and like to learn. While most Scott students are learning well, not all are being given the challenges and services they need and deserve to reach their “fullest potential.” They are patiently looking for more. .

## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *1999, 2000, 2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- ◆ *1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *Harold F. Scott Elementary School Mission Statement*
- ◆ *meetings with students*
- ◆ *talking with students*
- ◆ *Warwick District Strategic Plan—Guiding Beliefs*

### Conclusions

Students at Scott Elementary School are friendly, enthusiastic, and respectful. They are noticeably charming and welcoming to all visitors. They love to share their work and are proud of their accomplishments. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meetings with students*)

Most students enjoy working independently and in cooperative groups, sharing information and generating ideas. They take pride in what they have accomplished and make connections between reading and their lives. Many are able to reflect on their work and to self-assess by using rubrics as tools. While they evaluate, a few are able to reflect on mistakes and set personal goals for future achievement. Linking new facts with prior knowledge, they are able to make inferences and predictions. They apply problem-solving strategies. Many students share thoughts with others, supported by evidence, and are able to accept other points of view or perspectives. They are not afraid to question teachers and peers when they disagree, but they are always respectful. However, some follow instructions and procedures well, but finish early and have little to do. They work quickly because the tasks are too easy for them. They complete tasks just because they are told to, even if they have already mastered the concepts. These students wait patiently for others to finish, so they can go on to the next task. These students are not “motivated to achieve their individual academic and social potential.” (*Harold F. Scott Elementary School Mission Statement, observing classes, following students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, meeting with students, talking with students*)

Students are working on math problem-solving skills and using manipulatives and writing to explain their answers. Many think that math is fun. A few are able to solve challenging problems, while others work on simpler mathematical skills. Most are able to work independently; however, a few rely on their peers or teachers to provide the answers necessary to complete their tasks. Skills and concepts are strengths for most students, as reflected by their scores on the *2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination subtests: skills and concepts*. However, the ability of students to meet the standard in problem solving is lower, with only 43% meeting the standard. While steady improvement in students subtest scores on concepts and skills can be noted from 1999-2001, the scores in problem-solving remain stagnant. (*following*

*students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination, observing classes, talking with students)*

Scott Elementary School students demonstrate their ability to be “creative and effective communicators” by successfully engaging in numerous literacy activities on a daily basis. Most students enjoy reading different genres for information and pleasure. They enthusiastically engage in many different activities: guided reading groups, literature circles, and shared and independent reading of high quality literature. All students write in personal journals. Many write poems, biographies, and business, friendly, and persuasive letters. In addition, they engage in expository and narrative writing and produce newspapers. They understand and effectively use the steps of process writing. Literacy is a noticeable strength for most Scott students, as demonstrated by their outstanding growth in performance on the New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination subtests: reading and writing. *(New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination, Warwick District Strategic Plan—Guiding Beliefs, observing classes, following students, talking with students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

## Commendations for Harold F. Scott Elementary School

The exceptionally friendly and respectful students

The strong literacy skills of the students

## Recommendations for Harold F. Scott Elementary School

Raise the level of challenge for your students.

Modify instruction to meet all learners’ needs.

Provide additional professional development in the area of mathematics.

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *meeting with students, teachers, school improvement team, district and school administrators, and parents*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *talking with students*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*

### Conclusions

Teachers at Scott School genuinely like their students. They honor their students' ideas and opinions and model respectful and kind interactions both with their students and among themselves. Students are given clear expectations and sincere encouragement. All teachers respect their students and provide them with a "safe, secure, and nurturing environment." (*following students, observing classes, meeting with students, school improvement team, school administrator, and teachers , , interviewing teachers about the work of their students, observing the school outside of the classroom*)

Teachers at Scott School exemplify the very definition of collegiality. They willingly share ideas with other colleagues and often arrive at school early and stay late. They are dedicated to improving practice and collaborate constantly, often on their own time. They offer each other support without hesitation. Their students benefit from their constant modeling of good humor, kindness, and respect. (*following students, observing classes, meeting with students, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, meeting with school and district administrator, parents and the , school improvement team*)

Some teachers teach students to think using metacognitive strategies. They make them take responsibility for their own learning. These teachers act as facilitators, using the students' interests to guide them. They challenge their learners by encouraging them not only to meet, but also to exceed the standard. (*observing classes, following students, meetings with students, parents and district and school administrator, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work*)

Teachers are diligently using many forms of assessment to evaluate student daily work. These include projects, individual and cooperative group conferences, observations, and student self-assessments, which they use to inform their instruction. Rubrics are being used effectively in most classrooms. Teachers devise some rubrics, while others are the product of student and teacher collaboration. Many rubrics are effectively used to target desired benchmarks; however, others refer only to simple conventions and procedures. As a result, teachers cannot gain all the necessary information to guide their instruction. (*observing classes, following students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, meetings with students*)

The individual needs of some students at Scott School are not being met. Both students who need greater challenge and those who are struggling with their learning are sometimes overlooked. A few teachers continue to instruct without modifications, despite differences in the learning rates and styles of their students. This leaves some students unengaged or confused. (*following students, observing classes, meetings*)

*with students and parents, talking with students)*

The teachers at Scott School demonstrate enthusiasm for standards-based instruction. Teachers make a direct connection between content and the standard being addressed. Benchmarks are clearly defined and are used by students as tangible goals. Most teachers have firmly embedded their instruction in standards-based practices. They reflect both individually and collegially on their practice in order to improve student learning. (*observing classes , following students, meetings with students, the school improvement team, and school administrator, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, talking with students)*

## Commendations for Harold F. Scott Elementary School

The respectful and encouraging teachers

The exemplary collegiality of teachers

The teachers who use metacognitive strategies to improve student learning

Teachers' embrace of standards-based practice

## Recommendations for Harold F. Scott Elementary School

Continue to refine the effective use of rubrics to inform instruction.

Provide professional development in differentiated instruction in order to meet all learners' needs.

Modify instruction to meet all learners' needs.

Provide rigor and challenge for all of your students.

## Recommendations for the Warwick School District

Support Scott School in providing professional development in differentiated instruction.

## 6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *meetings with students, school improvement team, school and district administrators, and parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *school improvement plan*
- ◆ *conversations with teachers*
- ◆ *1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results*
- ◆ *records of professional development activities*
- ◆ *Warwick Public Schools—Professional Evaluation instrument*

### Conclusions

The atmosphere at Scott Elementary School is warm and welcoming. The school “family” is responsive to the needs of students and is proud of their accomplishments. There is mutual respect between all who learn and work here. Students are kind to one another and adults model this behavior in their daily interactions. Scott School is truly a nurturing community. (*meetings with students, parents, school improvement team, and district and school administrators, observing the school outside of the classroom, observing classes, following students, interviewing teachers about the work of their students*)

The principal at Scott School is dedicated, enthusiastic, and supportive of her staff. She cares deeply for the students and their well being. Parents report that she is highly approachable and responsive to their concerns. As one student reports, “She makes sure that she is your friend.” (*observing the school outside of the classroom, meetings with students, parents, the school improvement team, and district and school administrators, interviewing teachers about the work of their students*)

Some special education students at Scott Elementary School have unmet needs. They are excluded from art and music instruction, while other students receive this opportunity. In addition, there is no common planning time provided for staff serving these children to meet and assess their needs. As a result, these students are deprived of the opportunities in the arts afforded their peers and their teachers are denied the time needed to engage in professional discussion regarding their needs. (*meetings with district and school administrators, following students, conversations with teachers*)

Teacher-leaders at Scott School have worked hard to implement an inclusion model in order to meet their students’ needs. However, the lack of common planning time and inadequate formal training in inclusion have hindered these efforts, resulting in missed educational opportunities for students. (*following students, classroom observations, conversations with teachers, meeting with district, meeting with school administrator*)

Scott Elementary School has engaged in several self-study activities, including the examination of standardized test data to determine its educational strengths and weaknesses. In addition, it has surveyed

parents and examined student learning and teaching in small focus groups. Using this information, it has set goals and written updated action plans. According to this plan, there has been extensive professional development in literacy. However, little training has been undertaken in the area of mathematics. This provides few new opportunities for students to engage in challenging mathematics problem-solving explorations and discoveries. (*school improvement plan, meetings with students, teachers, school improvement team, district administrator, and parents, observing classes, following students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, New Standards Reference Examination results, records of professional development activities*)

The Warwick Professional Evaluation instrument is not useful in improving instruction. It offers no goal setting to assist teachers in targeting areas for improvement. Furthermore, it stresses attributes of neatness and appearance and care of materials and equipment at the expense of professional instruction ability. This antiquated document is not reflective of current educational practices. (*meeting with district and school administrators, Warwick Public Schools—Professional Evaluation instrument*)

## Commendations for Harold F. Scott Elementary School

The nurturing school community

The supportive and caring principal

## Recommendations for Harold F. Scott Elementary School

Provide ALL of your students with instruction in art and music.

Support teacher-leaders in receiving professional development in inclusion, so they can meet the needs of all students.

Provide common planning time for all staff involved in special education.

Provide professional development in mathematics problem solving.

## Recommendations for the Warwick Public School District

Provide ALL students with instruction in art and music.

Provide professional development in inclusion, so that the needs of ALL students are met.

Provide common planning time for all staff involved in special education.

Implement a new professional evaluation instrument that will be useful in improving practice.

## 7. Final Advice to the School

You have a wonderful collegial and welcoming atmosphere. You demonstrate respect for your students with all that you do. Scott School is a place where children are truly happy. With the development of a child-centered environment and the adoption of standards-based practices, you have demonstrated tremendous dedication as educators. These are some of the tools you will need to continue your journey toward excellence. The key to your success will be to focus on learning new skills to meet the needs of all of your students.

## Harold F. Scott Elementary School Improvement Team

Virginia Bolano  
Principal

Mary Bushee  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher

Mark Gresens  
Parent

Debbie Johnson  
Special Education Teacher

Carol Marginson  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher

Lesley McDonnell  
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher

Barbara Perra  
Parent

Wayne Salisbury  
Parent

Diane Shalvey  
Parent

Veronica Tefft  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher

## The SALT Visit Team

Elisabeth Newman, chair  
SALT Regents Fellow  
on loan to the Rhode Island Department of Education  
from The Bristol Warren Arts Magnet Program at Reynolds School  
Bristol, Rhode Island

Maureen Azar, Principal  
Feinstein Elementary School  
Central Falls, Rhode Island

Mary Ann Bellomo  
Grade 1 Teacher  
Daniel Waterman Elementary School  
Cranston, Rhode Island

Brian Rathier  
Special Education Teacher  
Graniteville Elementary School  
Johnston, Rhode Island

Jane Sclama  
Grade 3 Teacher  
Rockwell Elementary School  
Bristol, Rhode Island

Joyce Sevigny  
Parent  
Scituate, Rhode Island

# New Standards Reference Examination and RI Writing Assessment Results (2001)

## Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

### Harold F. Scott Elementary School

November 9, 2001

To complete the Catalpa Ltd. report endorsement, I discussed the conduct of the visit with the Visit Chair while it was in process, and I have reviewed this report. 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, 1<sup>st</sup> 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.  
November 30, 2001