



Webster Avenue Elementary School

Providence

SALT Visit Team Report

December 8, 2000



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 Webster Avenue Elementary School from December 5-8, 2000 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. Their affiliations are included at the end of the report.

The School Improvement Plan for Webster Avenue 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, in the playground, and in the hallways. The specific information generated by a team visit is about how the students, staff and administrators 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 Webster Avenue Elementary School.

The visit team collected its evidence from the following:

- ◆ *a total of 78 classroom observations which totaled over 73 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 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.*
- ◆ *review of the following documents:*
 - *Providence One Plan for Webster Avenue School*
 - *district strategic plan*
 - *1999-2000 SALT Survey report*
 - *classroom textbooks*
 - *school budget*
 - *1999 Information Works!*
 - *2000 Information Works!*
 - *2000 New Standards Reference Examination English Language Arts School Summary Report*
 - *2000 New Standards Reference Examination Mathematics School Summary Report*
 - *2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
 - *Balanced Literacy: Trainers Guide Providence School Department*
 - *Institute For Learning Research and Development Center Handbook*

- *review of Teacher Evaluation Handbook for Probationary and Tenured Teachers*
- *review of Providence Public Schools' Teacher Evaluation Handbook 1995-1996*

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 30.5 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 Webster Avenue 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 Providence, and the Rhode Island Department of Education will share that responsibility.

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 Webster Avenue Elementary School

Webster Avenue School is an elementary school in the Providence School System. It serves students in grades KG-6 for the city of Providence, Rhode Island. Providence is an urban City and the largest school district in the state. The present school first opened its doors to students in 1905, and recently had an addition of two classrooms and a room that serves as a cafeteria and a gym.

A nine-member school board, appointed by the mayor, governs the Providence Public School District—the largest in the state. A mayor and a fifteen-member city council govern the city. Webster Avenue Elementary School students are served by a professional staff of 1 administrator, and 55 faculty, staff, and ancillary staff.

Webster Avenue Elementary School has an attendance rate of 90 percent. Of the 448 students attending this school 50 percent are Hispanic, 28 percent are White, 17 percent are Black, 4.9 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander, and .45 percent are Native American. Sixty-one students totaling 13.6 percent receive special education services, 80 students totaling 17.8 percent are Limited English Proficiency, and 96 percent are eligible for 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. Equity gaps, a difference of greater than or equal to fifteen percent, exist among some sub-groups at Webster Avenue School. 2000 New Standards Reference Examination results have been appended to this report. *Information Works!* data for Webster Avenue Elementary School is available at www.rido.net.

3. PORTRAIT OF Webster Avenue Elementary School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Webster Avenue Elementary school, an older building filled with history and character, is an urban school serving a polite, courteous, industrious and well-behaved student body. This school has the feel of a neighborhood school. Students and parents clearly hold the school in high regard and respect the teachers, staff, and school principal. The diverse student body served by this school is educated in a safe, friendly, respectful learning environment designed to nurture and support students in their personal and academic growth. Many of the children exhibit an interest in learning and a determination to succeed.

This school has undergone a remarkable transformation in the past three months. Under the leadership of a new principal, this school is developing into a collegial learning community. The morale, camaraderie, and supports that the professional staff provide each other foster a newfound professional dialogue focused on improving the process of teaching and learning at Webster Avenue School. This has created a culture focused on professional growth and improving professional practice. These changes are nurtured by a principal who cares about her students and staff, wants each child and staff member to achieve at high levels, and is willing to go the extra mile to provide the necessary supports to help them grow and succeed.

Teachers are actively working to make the Principles of Learning—research-based approaches to teaching and learning—a reality in the classroom. They recently adopted a Balanced Literacy program to integrate the process of reading and writing and to develop high levels of literacy in all students. Furthermore, efforts to improve the nature and quality of assessment and mathematics instruction are underway. Although teachers are exerting considerable effort to incorporate these strategies into the teaching practices, many of these reforms are in their earliest stage of implementation. All these changes provide a foundation on which this school can build to move forward.

The breadth of educational changes that have taken place at Webster Avenue School in such a short time are remarkable. These changes and the energy required to successfully adopt them have hindered the school's ability to thoughtfully reflect on their present stage of implementation and think through the most effective ways to ensure the continued development and success of these efforts. Furthermore, many teachers are uncertain how to approach these changes and have some reservations about their readiness to successfully incorporate them into their daily instruction. The professional development the staff is receiving does not sufficiently address these needs.

Presently, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the instructional strategies, assessment practices, and various components of the Balanced Literacy Program are still at the awareness level. Furthermore, many classroom assignments—especially in mathematics—are more aligned with skills-based outcomes than the rigorous content and performance standards necessary to develop student knowledge and understanding of concepts and problem solving strategies.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Sources of Evidence

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

Conclusions

Many students are learning and practicing basic mathematical skills. Most students are not yet able to apply their knowledge of mathematics to solve real-world problems. Many mathematical problems students solve tend to focus on basic skills more than open-ended problems that result in multiple solutions. Few students are using manipulatives. Few are demonstrating the expertise necessary to use writing to effectively explain their mathematical thinking and reasoning. On this year's (2000) New Standards Mathematics Reference Exam, the fourth grade students at Webster Avenue Elementary School met or exceeded the standard in the following: Skills – 16 percent, Concepts – 2 percent, Problem Solving – 0 percent. These scores are below the district and state averages. Furthermore, their performance on the subtests of the 1999 New Standards Reference Exam is below similar students state-wide. (2000 New Standards Mathematics Reference Exam School Summary)

Many students communicate their ideas and thoughts much more effectively when they are communicating orally. Students have passion, ideas, and personal backgrounds to form the basis for engaging writing, but often lack the technical skills and grasp of the English language to effectively compose and communicate their thoughts in written form. Students are writing often, in many formats, and in a variety of teacher-selected genres. Students are using webbing and other graphic organizers to guide the writing process, writing daily in journals and expressing their feelings and opinions through their response journals and backing them up with pieces of fact from the literature. Some students are peer editing, and self-correcting. The quality of student writing—conventions, grammar, and effectiveness—varies widely. On the 2000 New

Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam, the fourth grade students at Webster Avenue Elementary School met or exceeded the standard in the following: Writing Effectiveness - 31 percent, and Writing Conventions 17 percent. These scores are below the district and state averages. Furthermore, their performance on the subtests of the 1999 New Standards Reference Exam is comparable to similar students state-wide. On the 2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment, 4 percent of the third grade students at Webster Avenue Elementary School met or exceeded the standard on this assessment. (2000 New Standards Reference Exam School Summary Report, 2000 Rhode Island Writing Assessment, 2000 Information Works!, following students, classroom observations, examination of student work)

Students are reading and being read to frequently using many of the elements of Balanced Literacy. Classroom assignments and student work samples demonstrate an inconsistent proficiency between and among grades in reading understanding and reading analysis skills. Students are better at word attack than they are at understanding the meaning of words. Students are using response journals that describe their interpretations of read and heard stories that go beyond a strict retelling of the character and setting. On the 2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam, the fourth grade students at Webster Avenue Elementary School met or exceeded the standard in the following: *Reading Basic Understanding* – 54 percent, *Reading Analysis and Interpretations* – 35 percent. These scores are below the district and state averages. Furthermore, their performance on the subtests of the 1999 New Standards Reference Exam is below similar students state-wide. (*classroom observations, following students, examination of student work, 2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Exam School Summary*)

The students at Webster Avenue school are polite, courteous, industrious, and well-behaved. Students clearly hold the school in high regard, and respect each other, their teachers, the staff, and the school principal. Many students are motivated, like to work with each other, and are willing to perform tasks required by their teachers. (*following students, classroom observations, observations of the school, conversations and/or interviews with teachers, students and staff, meetings with students and parents*)

Commendations for Webster Avenue Elementary School:

- The extremely well behaved student body
- The respect the students show each other and their teachers
- The frequency of student writing

Recommendations for Webster Avenue Elementary School:

- Continue to provide extensive and varied writing opportunities that focus on language development and writing effectiveness.
- Examine the “What Students Need” section of the New Standards Reference Exam School Summary reports for the past three years, and other available data on student performance. Use this information to guide future instructional strategies and curricula choices.
- Continue to provide many and varied opportunities for reading.
- Increase the focus on mathematical writing and communication.
- Expand the use and availability of manipulatives and calculators in all grades.
- Increase the level of complexity in mathematical problems and include open-ended problems that result in multiple solutions.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *classroom observations*
- ◆ *observations of the school*
- ◆ *examination of student work*
- ◆ *examination of classroom assessments*
- ◆ *conversations and/or interviews with many students, teachers, staff and school administrator*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *scheduled meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, students, and parents*
- ◆ *Review of Balanced Literacy: Trainers Guide Providence School Department*
- ◆ *Review of Providence One Plan 2000-2001 for Webster Avenue School*
- ◆ *Review of Institute For Learning Research and Development Center Handbook*

Conclusions

The teachers at Webster Avenue School have made remarkable changes since September, 2000. They are dedicated to their students and to each other. Most teachers show a strong commitment to change their professional practices in order to improve the learning and understanding of their students. To accomplish this they are adopting and beginning implementation of the Principles of Learning, Balanced Literacy, mathematical problem solving, piloting Everyday Mathematics, and using rubrics and performance-based assessments. (*classroom observations, conversations and/or interviews with teachers, and school administrator, meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, Review of Balanced Literacy: Trainers Guide Providence School Department, Providence One Plan 2000-2001, Review of Institute For Learning Research and Development Center Handbook*)

A large portion of classroom teaching is focused on Balanced Literacy, a program recently adopted by the district. Teachers are reading aloud to their students. Many are using daily messages to share the news of the day, and providing opportunities for students to read independently. A few teachers are effectively using guided reading, are encouraging students to engage in paired readings, and are using literacy centers where students practice and extend what was learned in reading and writing lessons. Some teachers are conferencing with students and many are making reference to the basic elements of literacy. Relating to the writing portion of the program, most classroom walls provide many examples of student writing with accompanying expectations for student performance and models of student work. Most teachers are modeling daily messages, techniques for engaging readers in the writing, Venn diagrams, webbing, word

works, engaging students in peer editing, and developing students' writing proficiency in a variety of genres. While whole group instruction is often used, some teachers are employing the strategies outlined above with small groups of students and differentiating instruction according to individual and group needs. Although a complete schoolwide implementation of the plethora of strategies found in the Balanced Literacy program has not occurred, the student work resulting from these strategies in a number of classrooms shows evidence of good reading comprehension, analysis and interpretation and elements of effective writing. (*classroom observations, conversations and/or interviews with teachers, staff, and students, following students, examination of student work, review of the Balanced Literacy: Teacher's Guide*)

There is a clear focus on improving the nature and quality of student work. However, in mathematics many assignments are only skills-based, lacking the necessary academic rigor for a thinking curriculum. While many teachers have begun introducing problem solving strategies, the lack of a schoolwide program focused on simultaneously developing skills, concepts, and problem-solving strategies is hindering students' complete understanding of mathematics. Furthermore, the inconsistent rigor and complexity of the problems being used is not providing sufficient opportunities for students to use their mathematical skills and knowledge of concepts to solve problems. (*following students, classroom observations, conversations and/or interviews with teachers, meetings with students, school and district administrators*)

Powerful examples of accountable talk / writing and clear expectations are evident throughout the school. Teachers are modeling and expecting students to back up their remarks and writing with evidence and to build on the thoughts and ideas of others. Most teachers are using lists, criteria/rubrics, and benchmark papers relevant to the desired assignment to clearly communicate both the form and quality of work they expect. Some teachers have extended this environment of clear expectations so that students, during peer conferencing, are even using scoring guides and checklists to validate what they say to their peers about how to improve their work. (*meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, students and parents, conversations and/or interviews with teachers, and staff, students, following students, classroom observations, examination of classroom assessments*)

Teachers throughout the building are using rubrics and checklists. There are some very good examples of teachers using these tools to guide instruction and to provide clear expectations by defining the form and quality of student work. The predominant type of rubric is holistic, which uses one broad inclusive scale to evaluate all the subparts of an assignment. The limited use of analytical rubrics hampers teachers' ability to provide detailed feedback about the quality of specific parts of students' work (for example, grammar and spelling, cohesion between sentences, the development of a controlling idea, writing effectiveness, etc.). The use of holistic rubrics and the differences in teachers' knowledge and implementation of rubrics may explain why some teachers assign scores that do not always reflect the actual criteria outlined in the scoring guide. (*conversations and/or interviews with teachers, classroom observations, examination of student work, examination of classroom assessments*)

Commendations for Webster Avenue Elementary School:

The willingness of the teachers to grow professionally

The dedication of the professional staff to the Webster Avenue school community

The clear expectations and accountable talk for reading and writing that permeate the school

The emergent implementation of the Balanced Literacy program and the Principles of Learning

Recommendations for Webster Avenue Elementary School:

Continue the considerable efforts you have begun during this academic year to build a nested learning

community.

Work to consistently implement the strategies found in the Balanced Literacy program in all grades and all classes.

Strengthen the focus on writing by encompassing all the major components that comprise an effective piece of writing.

Provide more opportunities for both partner reading and independent reading for a variety of purposes in a variety of genres.

Continue incorporating the Principles of Learning into your daily instruction.

Work to deepen your understanding and proficiency with the various initiatives you have begun.

Increase the rigor and complexity of the mathematical problem solving assignments and increase the focus on concept development.

Work toward grade level benchmarks for students' performance, in both reading and writing, and apply rubrics in a manner consistent with the criteria used for assessments.

Recommendations for the Providence School District:

Provide the resources, professional development, and technical assistance Webster Avenue School needs to effectively implement the Principles of Learning and the Balanced Literacy program, and make the recommended changes in mathematics.

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *classroom observations*
- ◆ *observations of the school*
- ◆ *conversations and/or interviews with many students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *scheduled meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, students, and parents*
- ◆ *review of the school budget*
- ◆ *review of Providence One Plan for Webster Avenue School*
- ◆ *Review of Balanced Literacy: Trainers Guide Providence School Department*
- ◆ *review of Teacher Evaluation Handbook for Probationary and Tenured Teachers*
- ◆ *review of Providence Public Schools' Teacher Evaluation Handbook 1995-1996*
- ◆ *review of professional development activities*
- ◆ *examination of the media center*
- ◆ *following students*

Conclusions

Webster Avenue School is a part of a nested learning community of professional growth and reform being developed by the Providence School District. Following the direction of the district, under the guidance of the recently appointed principal, the school is actively working to create a culture of professional learning. This is creating a newfound energy, excitement, and desire to work as a team focused on improving student learning. The school principal, literacy coach, lead teachers, and other teachers are working collaboratively to share the instructional leadership responsibilities in the school. A number of signs are emerging that indicate these efforts are having a positive effect on students' motivation, attendance, and the quality of their classwork. (*conversations and/or interviews with teachers, classroom observations, following students, meetings with students and parents, observations of the school*)

The teacher evaluation process for the Providence Public Schools, as presently designed and implemented, 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 knowledge of subject (content and performance standards), in knowledge of pedagogy, and the learning environment caused by the adoption of the Principles

of Learning and standards by the Providence Public Schools. Furthermore, this tool is not clearly linked to mentoring or a support program designed to improve the performance of teachers in enhancing students' learning. (*review of Teacher Evaluation Handbook for Probationary and Tenured Teachers, review of Providence Public Schools' Teacher Evaluation Handbook 1995-1996, meetings with school and district administrators, conversations and/or interviews with teachers*)

The professional development taking place at Webster Avenue Elementary School primarily addresses the use and implementation of the Balanced Literacy program and the Principles of Learning, two major focuses of the Providence School District. In addition to the contractual days for professional development, a number of teachers have also chosen to participate in professional development outside the normal school day. A number of strategies are being employed to enhance professional development. These include the use of the literacy coach, lead teachers and other professionals for in-class modeling and lesson design. Some teachers are sharing their expertise during grade level common planning time recently built into the schedule. So far adequate time for teachers to try, use and reflect on the strategies being introduced has not been built into the professional development provided by the school and district. Furthermore, a detailed plan does not exist for how additional professional development will build on or deepen teachers' various levels of understanding of what has been introduced so far, or balance the future training needs of the school and district with those of individual teachers. (*classroom observations, conversations and/or interviews with teachers, meetings with school improvement team, school and district administrators, review of professional development activities, Review of Balanced Literacy: Trainers Guide Providence School Department*)

Computer technology is not effectively integrated into the students' day, depriving students of a tool for investigation, communication, and discovery, as well as limiting the ability to share, access, and manage information. Classrooms, although equipped with one or more computers, are sometimes missing supporting peripherals and/or sufficient computer resources and programs. There are five computers that are linked to a laser jet printer in the library that are available and used by students. With some notable exceptions, the print and electronic media in the school media center/library and classrooms are inadequate to meet the literacy needs of a K-6 learning community—especially given the diverse needs and cultural backgrounds of the student body. While there is evidence of recent purchases, the gaps in the available print and electronic resources inhibit students' ability to develop their information literacy, document literacy, and communication tools and techniques. (*classroom observations, examination of the media center, conversations and/or interviews with teachers and students, review of school budget, meetings with school improvement team, students and parents*)

While parental involvement at Webster Avenue School is limited, the parents at Webster Avenue School have a deep faith and trust in the education their children receive from this school. The parents clearly respect their childrens' teachers, and feel teachers are very persistent in providing both oral and written communication. However, communication in languages other than English is limited and often not timely. This language barrier hampers parents' ability to interact with their children's teachers, obtain important written information about the school, and engage in two-way dialogues necessary to learn about their school as well as be an advocate for their child. (*meetings with school improvement team and parents, conversations and/or interviews with parents and staff*)

Commendations for Webster Avenue Elementary School:

The newfound energy, excitement, and camaraderie

The focus on improving student learning

Recommendations for Webster Avenue Elementary School:

Devise a formal professional development plan designed to sequentially deepen teachers' proficiency with the strategies and techniques they will need to implement the Principles of Learning, Balanced Literacy, integrate technology into the curricula, and a more rigorous approach to mathematical concepts and problem-solving, and standards-based instruction and assessment.

Implement this professional development in a way that provides time for teachers to try, use, and reflect on the strategies being introduced.

Integrate technology into both your teaching and into student assignments.

Expand the current print and electronic resources in both the library and classrooms to include resources that meet the varied learning needs of your culturally diverse students, that enhances student learning.

Create a system of encouragement and support that allow parents to be active participants in the education of students, both at home and in the classroom.

Recommendations for the Providence School District:

Work with the Providence Teachers Union to devise a teacher evaluation instrument focused on professional growth and including specific measurable criteria related to the Principles of Learning and the Rhode Island Beginning Teachers Standards with a maximum three-year cycle for formal evaluation.

Link this instrument to the mentoring / support programs designed to improve the performance of teachers and ensure proper supports.

Recommendations for the Providence Teachers Union:

Work with the Providence School District to devise a teacher evaluation instrument focused on professional growth and including specific measurable criteria related to the Principles of Learning and the RI Beginning Teachers Standards with a maximum three-year cycle for formal evaluation.

Link this instrument to the mentoring / support programs designed to improve the performance of teachers and ensure proper supports.

7. Final Advice to the School

Continue to implement the Principles of Learning and the various components of the Balanced Literacy program with the accompanying professional development. Make a concerted effort to incorporate concepts and content from other subject areas. The subject matter revealed through science, social studies, and the arts often are of high interest to students. Integrating these subjects during read alouds, or independent reading can serve as a powerful motivational tool to help encourage students to read independently. As you adopt your next major reform, Everyday Mathematics, make sure careful and well-planned steps are taken to ensure the successful implementation of this program. The combination of these efforts coupled with time for teachers to reflect and revise their practices will help you achieve your goal of raising student performance.

Capitalize on the strong support and trust for this school and its professional staff that exists among the parents. As you work to increase parental support and involvement in both the school and the classroom, expand your efforts by reaching out to the community to establish community partnerships. This can yield new resources of culture, language, real-life-applications of school teachings, and other supports that can substantially enhance the learning of your students.

Offer your diverse student body more authentic real-life experiences. Work to bring the community into your school and provide opportunities for all students to experience, first-hand, the world around them. Increase the number of hands-on learning activities and authentic problems and project to provide students with opportunities to approach complex tasks and concepts from a variety of directions. These varied approaches, coupled with a focus on differentiating instruction will help you more fully address the multiple learning styles and learning needs that exist in this school.

The common planning time recently built into the schedule provides a wonderful opportunity for the professional staff to work collegially to establish and coordinate grade level expectations for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Use this time to benefit both you and your students by collaboratively planning lessons and looking at student work. Capitalize on the extensive and varied expertise that exists within many members of your faculty to deepen your understanding of the new learning you are acquiring.

As you continue the journey through this exciting and exhausting time, remember to celebrate all your effort and hard work. Congratulate yourselves and others on the effort, enthusiasm, and time spent learning, planning, and teaching through these past few months. Take time to periodically reflect, individually and as a community, on your successes, areas of needed changes, and direction for the future. The Principles of Learning, the Balanced Literacy program, and future reforms must all be understood and fully incorporated into everyday teaching practice for Webster Avenue School to continue to grow as a nested community of learners and sustain the momentum that has resulted in the changes presently taking place at this school.

When reading and reflecting upon this report the school and its community should bear in mind, by design, this SALT report is not a celebration of all the wonderful things taking place in this school. Rather, this report is a presentation of those items that, in the visiting team's judgment, the school and community must focus on if they are to help all students, of all achievement levels, perform at higher levels. As you work with this SALT report we hope you realize our conclusions, commendations, and recommendations are designed to help you make this strong collegial learning community better meet the needs of your students. For that is, unquestionably, the intent of our team.

Webster Avenue Elementary School IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Sharon Arena-Zanghi
Teacher

Rachel Barker
Teacher

Eileen Biancuzzo
Principal

Monica Calligano
Parent
PTO President

Elissa Ciarlo
Teacher

Dolores deAmante
Teacher

Joan DiRuzzo
Community Council Woman

Bethany Glynn
Teacher

Sheryl Markos
Secretary
Recording Secretary

Daryl Mazza
Literacy Coach
Chairperson

Richard Nawrocki
Teacher

Mary Beth Slack
Parent
PTO Secretary

THE SALT VISIT TEAM

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Technology Education / Department Chairperson
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Chair of the Team

Marie S. Bernier
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Kevin J. Dillon
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New Standards Reference Exam and Rhode Island Writing Assessment Scores (2000)

Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

Webster Avenue Elementary School

December 8, 2000

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.
1/10/01