



Ashaway Elementary School

Hopkinton

The SALT Visit Team Report

November 30, 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)

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

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1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS of this report

Overview

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Ashaway Elementary School from November 27 to November 30, 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 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 findings of the SALT report are presented in six report sections:

Profile describes some of the key features of the school and sums up the school's results on state tests.

The team writes *Portrait* as an overview of what it thinks are the most important themes in the conclusions that follow. While *Portrait* precedes the team's conclusions, it is written after they are complete.

The team's conclusions are about how well the team thinks the school is performing in each of the three SALT focus areas: Learning, Teaching and The School.

The team may award commendations in each focus area for aspects of the school that it considers unusual and commendable. The team must make several recommendations to the school for each focus area, drawing on the conclusions for that area. The team may make recommendations to other agencies, e.g. the district.

The team provides the school with some brief comments about how it thinks the school should proceed, in the *Final Advice* section.

The Catalpa Ltd. endorsement of the legitimacy of the report and its conclusions appears on the final page.

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 visit protocol and that this report meets all criteria required for a legitimate SALT visit report.

Members of the visit team are primarily 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 Ashaway 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 take place at Ashaway Elementary School.

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

- ◆ *observing a total of 80 complete classes and partial classes. The team spent a total of over 70 hours in direct classroom observation. Additionally, each of seven classrooms were observed for one full day. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and many teachers were observed more than once.*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following seven 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 the school and district administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*

- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *analyzing three 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

classroom textbooks and materials

provided curricula guides

teacher schedules

school improvement plan for Ashaway Elementary School

district strategic plan

Ashaway Leadership Council binder

Ashaway Elementary School Social Responsibility Program binder

Ashaway Elementary School Professional Development binder

Ashaway Elementary School Brag Book

Ashaway Elementary School Needs Assessment Survey

Ashaway Staff Survey School Improvement Goals, 2000-2001

Ashaway Elementary School SALT Visit binder

Ashaway Elementary School Operating Budget 2001-2002

CHARIHO Regional School District Instructional Evaluation Competencies and Evaluation Report

CHARIHO Regional School District Report Cards

1999-2003 Contract Agreement between NEA CHARIHO and CHARIHO Regional School Committee

School Support System Report and Support Plan for CHARIHO School System, January 2000

CHARIHO District Scoring Rubric for Writing

2000 SALT Survey report

1999, 2000 2001 Information Works!

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

1998, 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

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 33 hours in six separate meetings spanning the four days of the visit. This time is exclusive of the time the team 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 chose the words, phrases, and sentences it used 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 how important it considers what the team has said and why, the school will take its first step in becoming accountable in a way that actually improves learning.

It is important to read this report and consider it 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 school 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 Ashaway Elementary School

Background

Ashaway Elementary School serves pre kindergarten through fifth grade students in the Chariho Regional School District. Located in the town of Hopkinton, the school consists of three separate buildings that form its campus. The original building, which gives the school the grandeur of another time period, was built in 1904, while the “main” brick building, where the cafetorium, library, and offices are located, was constructed in 1967. The third building is a two-room portable classroom added in 1980. The staff consists of one principal, 29 full-time and 17 part-time faculty, one secretary, a clerk, and a nurse, as well as 15 special education aides, four general education aides, two cafeteria workers, four custodians and one maintenance/custodian supervisor.

Of the 370 students attending Ashaway Elementary School, 95% are white, 1% are black, 0.5% are Hispanic, and 3.5% are categorized as “other.” There are 30 special education students in special needs classrooms, while 19 others receive resource services. Fifty students receive speech and language services. A total of 17% of the school population receives special education services. Approximately 18% of the student body is eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch.

Among the numerous activities of note at Ashaway Elementary School are the Kids Grow Garden, where vegetables are grown for the Warm Shelter, the handicapped-accessible Nature Trail and classroom for nature studies, Student of the Month assemblies, Portfolio Teas where students present their work to parents, and the kindergarten Grandparent’s Day. Some important programs include the Summer Prime Program for first graders, Feinstein After School Program, Special Education Preschool for the Chariho school district, CALM enrichment program for all students. Parent involvement in the school includes the Parent Volunteers group, the Partners in Education (P.I.E.) group, which sponsors enrichment activities, a holiday bazaar, the Respect and Responsibility Assembly, and the Reading Week book sale. Also the school has adopted new math and social studies series in all grades.

State Assessment Results for Ashaway Elementary School

On the subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination four in five of the fourth graders (83%) met or exceeded the standard in basic skills; three in five of the fourth graders (61%) met or exceeded the standard in concepts; and two in five of the fourth graders (40%) met or exceeded the standard in problem-solving. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in mathematics for the following groups of students: poverty and special education students. Students at the Ashaway Elementary School perform at the same level as similar students in the state on the Basic Skills and Problem Solving mathematics subtests, but better than similar students in the state on the Concepts subtest. Over the past three years, Math Concepts scores have risen steadily from 23% to 61%.

On the reading subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination, nine in 10 of the fourth graders (86%) met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Basic Understanding; and seven in 10 of the fourth graders (71%) met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Analysis and Interpretation. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in reading for the following groups of students: poverty and special education students. Students at the Ashaway Elementary School perform at the same level as similar students in the state on the Reading: Basic Understanding and below the level of similar students in the state on the Reading: Analysis and Interpretation subtests.

On the writing subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination,

seven in 10 of the fourth graders (72%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Conventions; and eight in 10 of the fourth graders (82%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Effectiveness. On the Rhode Island Writing Assessment one in four of the third graders (23%) met or exceeded the standard. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in writing for the following groups of students: poverty and special education students. Students at Ashaway Elementary School perform at the same level as similar students in the state on Writing: Effectiveness subtest, and better than similar students on Writing: Conventions subtest.

The most recently available New Standards Reference Examination results have been appended to this report. Information Works! data for Ashaway Elementary School is available at <<http://www.rido.net>>www.rido.net.

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

Ashaway Elementary School, a majestic, century-old, white schoolhouse topped with a bell tower, stands as an imposing figure in the tranquil, rural setting of Hopkinton, Rhode Island. Students play in the schoolyard and on the playground before bustling into this grand structure and into the modern main building and annex located behind it. Students confidently greet their teachers and each other with smiles and happy hellos.

Classrooms at Ashaway Elementary School are alive with activity, as students, teachers and staff continually connect to learn and grow together. Teachers feel supported by the principal, as she oversees the smooth functioning of the school. Teachers demonstrate pride in their professional growth, and many are involved in initiatives to improve student learning. The children are happy, excited, and eager to participate. The teachers and staff are dedicated to their students and work diligently to establish clear expectations and to motivate their students to strive for high standards. A strong feeling of mutual respect and warmth pervades the school, making it a safe and nurturing environment for learning.

However, many divisions exist within the school. The immediately obvious one is the facility. Of the three separate buildings; two are handicapped-accessible, one is not. Managing a school community in three different buildings presents a difficult leadership challenge. Divisions exist among parents, faculty, and administration. Parents and faculty report there is incomplete, and sometimes unclear, communication among the three groups. Another division exists between those faculty members who actively advocate a school wide change to standards, rubrics, and guided reading, and those who choose to stay with more traditional “reliable” methods. Regardless of these divisions, much of the teaching is excellent and the students clearly know what is expected of them.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *2001 Information Works!*
- ◆ *2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- ◆ *1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, and parents*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *Ashaway Elementary School Social Responsibility Program binder*

Conclusions

Students at Ashaway Elementary School are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They enjoy coming to school and are ready to participate in the learning activities. They share their experiences and knowledge with spontaneity and pride. Even during recess, students are engaged in activities, are well behaved, and are using their skills to teach each other how to play. Their overall behavior is excellent. Students have a sense of belonging here; they are welcoming of each other and adults, and they feel cared for and encouraged to learn. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students and parents, reviewing school improvement plan, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, Ashaway Elementary School Social Responsibility Program binder)*

Students at all grade levels are involved in extensive writing activities. They make entries in journals and Idea Books, follow the writing process, use technology to complete writing pieces, and write across the curriculum. Students and teachers exchange letters weekly, and students report feeling special because teachers answer their letters. Students also self-select other writing activities after completing their writing assignments. Collections of writing that have been date-stamped show significant growth over time. Students clearly know what is expected of them and enjoy writing for various purposes. They are very comfortable and confident in their writing. These strengths are reflected in the 2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination results, which show that fourth grade students performed as well as or better than similar students statewide on the Effectiveness and Writing Conventions subtests. More recently, 82% of fourth grade students met or exceeded the standard in Writing Effectiveness, while 72% met or exceeded the standard in Writing Conventions. However, of the third grade students, only 23% met or exceeded the standard on the 2001 Rhode Island Writing assessment. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing classroom assessments, 2000 and 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results, 2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, 2001 Information Works!)*

Students in Ashaway Elementary School recite poetry, read in groups, read with cross-grade partners, and participate in whole-group, guided, and independent reading. They listen to oral readings, read journal stories to the class, read letters from teachers and pen pals, and take home book bags. Many students choose to read for pleasure after finishing their work. They select books from the library throughout the day, some even during recess time. Students discuss their reading and predict future events in the stories. Also, they compare and contrast books with the video versions. Students connect events in books with experiences in their own lives. They report that reading is an integral part of what they do at school and that they enjoy reading. These various activities and student attitudes are reflected in the scores on the 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination results in Reading: Basic Understanding (86%) and Analysis and Interpretation, which show that (71%) met or exceeded the standard. *(2001 New Standards Reference Examination results, following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students)*

Problem-solving activities are part of every student's day. In all curricular areas students brainstorm, predict, share thinking processes, and select appropriate strategies. Students describe their thinking processes in their journals and as they solve math problems in class. They use problem-solving strategies to explore solutions to multi-step problems. They use the scientific method in their science experiments, and they also use their prior knowledge to find solutions. Students routinely display their skills in graphing, tallying, and constructing Venn diagrams throughout the day. They demonstrate good computation skills, as well as an understanding of math concepts in their work. These demonstrated skills correlate well with the significant rise in the percentages of students meeting and exceeding the standard on all mathematics subtests of the New Standards Reference Examination Assessment between 1999 and 2001. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, 1999, 2000, and 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results)*

Students understand rubrics as tools for improving their work. They have internalized the concept and process for assessing the quality of their work, as well as for how to improve upon it. They use rubrics to self-assess and peer-evaluate. Students clearly know what is expected of them in their work. *(observing classes, following students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students)*

Commendations for Ashaway Elementary School

Eager, enthusiastic, and friendly students

Well behaved, respectful, and helpful students

Students who accept diversity

Recommendations for Ashaway Elementary School

Continue to focus on problem-solving, reading, and writing activities that engage the students in their learning.

Continue to expand the use of rubrics to provide students with clear expectations for their work.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, school and district administrators*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ 1999, 2000 and 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results
- ◆ CHARIHO Regional School District Scoring Rubric in Writing

Conclusions

Teachers at Ashaway Elementary School work hard to promote good learning and teaching. Many teachers take responsibility for their own professional growth, both during the school year as well as in the summer. Teachers report their participation in graduate course work, study groups, grade level teaming, workshops, and mentoring. Most teachers are successfully putting into practice a variety of initiatives. They are well on their way to addressing the new standards fully, using rubrics for assessment, implementing guided reading, phasing in a new math series, and utilizing a teacher devised social responsibility plan for behavior management. They use rubrics extensively to provide students with clear expectations for learning. These teachers willingly give of their time for developing and implementing new programs. However, some teachers are not fully engaging in these practices and are satisfied with the status quo. (*following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, reviewing records of professional development activities*)

Teachers model and use the writing process to improve student growth. Graphic organizers often begin this process. Classroom management systems track student progress. Teachers value the editing process by conferencing with students and encouraging peer editing. They utilize the district rubric for scoring writing

to guide students toward writing proficiency. Many maintain collections of student work over time in a portfolio format, and some teachers regularly send these portfolios home for families to enjoy. Most teachers provide students with opportunities for sharing their work with each other and some students with pen pals. Students frequently use technology to publish their polished pieces. Teachers honor student work by displaying it in public places. Many teachers provide students with choice in selecting reading and writing activities. These practices lead students to value and enjoy the writing process, as well as to improve their writing competencies. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, meeting with students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, CHARHO Regional School District Scoring Rubric in Writing)*

Teachers are differentiating instruction in some areas. Many teachers maximize the use of assistants and parent volunteers by incorporating their expertise into the work of the class. Many teachers use running records to determine the appropriate instructional and independent levels of their students. Some teachers organize their classroom libraries by interests and levels. Others are in process. Some teachers create modifications for students with special needs, as well as open-ended projects and activities that incorporate multiple intelligences. *(observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, following students, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Students read everyday throughout the curriculum. Many teachers have invested their own time in strengthening their instructional strategies in reading. They participate in study groups, organize their classroom libraries, and use running records to assess student growth. Recognizing the importance of linking reading with writing, most teachers implement activities to meld them. This begins as early as the preschool level. Read Aloud is a common activity among all grades. Teachers promote reading at home. Some use book orders and book bags. Most address and track how successfully students have met the standard of reading 25 books a year. The librarian actively promotes reading among students by making the library accessible, even during recess time. She also collaborates with classroom teachers, as well as specialists, to develop effective reading connections for students. These effective practices significantly contribute to the students' interest, skill, and love of reading. *(observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Teachers incorporate problem-solving activities across the curriculum every day. They teach strategies in how to solve problems. They ask students to share their thinking, as they use these strategies. Sometimes students combine these strategies to solve complex problems. Using literature and graphic organizers to introduce problem-solving strategies, teachers then weave these strategies into projects and portfolios. Problem-solving is used in inquiry activities in science experimenting, independent spontaneous brainstorming, sequencing, and data retrieval charts. Students have success with these strategies. Since 1999 the assessment scores in problem solving have dramatically increased from 14.8% to 40% of the fourth graders, who meet or exceed the standard. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, 1999, 2000, and 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results)*

The special education teachers, both resource and self-contained, are meeting the needs of their students. Teacher routines are established, and the students know these routines and are excited about them. Here, children are involved in the same types of activities as the regular education students. These students work on computers to complete subject area tasks and help one another to achieve success. Parent volunteers work one-on-one with students to supplement the work of the teacher, which greatly benefits these students. When students succeed in performing the tasks asked of them, teachers offer incentives and rewards to further motivate them. Inclusion of special education students in regular education classes occurs naturally and with ease. However, there are not enough materials in the resource rooms to integrate the new curricula as it is

implemented in the regular classes. (*following students, observing classes, talking with teachers and staff, interviewing teachers about the work of their students meeting with district administrators*)

Commendations for Ashaway Elementary School

Hardworking, self-directed teachers

Professional growth of teachers and staff

Teachers who honor students and their learning

Successful collaboration among teachers and staff

Strong effort by the special education staff

Recommendations for Ashaway Elementary School

Support the teachers in their efforts to continue to learn and implement the various initiatives underway to improve student learning.

Increase administrative presence in the classroom to promote the implementation of new initiatives.

Recommendations for Chariho Regional School District

Ensure that special education teachers receive the same materials and training as regular education teachers to achieve equity and seamless integration.

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *talking with many students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *observing the school outside the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school and district administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing district strategic plan*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ reviewing the school improvement plan
- ◆ Ashaway Elementary School Needs Assessment Survey
- ◆ Ashaway Elementary School Improvement Goals Staff Survey, 2000-2001
- ◆ Ashaway Elementary School Professional Development binder
- ◆ Ashaway Elementary School Social Responsibility
- ◆ Ashaway Elementary School Brag Book
- ◆ CHARIHO Regional School District Instructional Evaluation Competencies and Evaluation Report

Conclusions

The School Improvement Plan, adopted on September 24, 2001, is an incomplete document for moving the school forward to improve student learning. The Needs Assessment Survey and the School Improvement Goals Staff Survey, conducted last year, are just the beginnings of self-study. While several of the components of an effective plan are present, action plans with assigned accountability, assessment of progress as well as timelines for implementation are noticeably missing. As written, this plan is not an effective agent for change. (*meeting with the school improvement team, school administrator, reviewing school improvement plan, Needs Assessment Survey, School Improvement Goals Staff Survey, 2000-2001*)

Professional development activities on the district level are primarily voluntary, most occurring after school hours and during the summer. This practice contributes to inconsistent implementation of district initiatives and the adoption of new curricula. These professional development experiences are not clearly job embedded. The district teacher evaluation instrument does not include a professional development

component nor does it assess professional growth to improve student learning. District leaders report that the teacher evaluation tool is not standards-based and discussion has begun concerning its revision. Mentoring new teachers is occurring through partnerships between new staff and veteran teachers. Ongoing meetings between mentors and new teachers occur both during and beyond the school day. New teachers use meetings during the lunch/recess time to collaborate with their more experienced colleagues. *(talking with talking with many teachers, school and district administrators, reviewing district strategic plan, Ashaway Elementary School Professional Development binder, CHARHO Regional School District Instructional Evaluation Competencies and Evaluation Report)*

Because the school is divided into three buildings, communication is also divided. Communication among and between teachers, between teachers and administration, and between the administration and parents is an acknowledged concern of all parties. The principal has a challenging job of managing the school as a community in three separate locations. Initiatives have been set in place to address this issue: weekly bulletins, monthly meetings with faculty representatives, which are separate from faculty meetings, the principal's survey for supporting teaching, and the principal's weekly "coffee hour." The newly instituted block of time at lunch promotes school wide teacher-to-teacher communication. A few parents report that school memos are not always clear and that teachers do not fully participate in the Parents In Education group. They report feeling unsupported; they want input from the school community. These gaps in communication contribute to the lack of clarity in what teachers and parents expect of one another and hinder the smooth functioning of the school. *(observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, school administrator, and parents, talking with teachers, staff, and school administrator)*

There are plenty of opportunities beyond the school day for students to grow as learners. CALM, an after-school program, includes activities such as karate, cooking, Celtic dance, and hair and nail care. The Feinstein After School Program, an after-school book discussion group, a newspaper club, Family Math Night, Showcase Portfolio Night, and Talent Show are representative of these opportunities. Teachers, parents, and community members combine talents to provide these enrichment activities. *(Ashaway Elementary School Brag Book, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator)*

The school climate is warm and welcoming. Teachers and parents report a sense of family and community. The support staff and school volunteers contribute to this atmosphere. The students exude friendliness and enthusiasm. Appropriate behavior abounds. These factors set the groundwork for good learning to happen. *(observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, staff, and district administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, and parents, Ashaway Elementary School Social Responsibility Program binder)*

The principal commands the facilitative role of leadership. She encourages teachers to take on leadership roles and to learn new strategies for teaching. Teachers report that the administrator is supportive, approachable, hard working, and eager to have her school be successful. District administrators report that the principal has an excellent work ethic; she, is thoughtful, insightful, and creative. She knows how to make district initiatives work in her school, and she utilizes her resources wisely. These leadership qualities are good supports for school change. *(talking with teachers, staff, and school administrator, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, observing the school outside of the classroom)*

Commendations for Ashaway Elementary School

Creative use of lunch/recess block to promote teacher collaboration

Large variety of opportunities for after-school activities

Recommendations for Ashaway Elementary School

Increase administrative presence in the school to promote effective communication.

Seek ways to keep your parent community informed and involved. Become a visible presence in the Partners in Education group.

Revise your school improvement plan to include complete action plans, timelines, and assigned accountability. Use this report to guide you in determining your next steps for improving student learning.

Recommendations for Chariho School District

Incorporate embedded, ongoing professional development activities in support of district initiatives. Ensure that all teachers receive appropriate training.

Develop a new standards-based teacher evaluation instrument. Implement it in a timely fashion.

7. Final Advice to the School

The Ashaway Elementary School staff is to be commended for its fine work in providing a safe, nurturing, and creative place for students. Continue to capitalize on the wonderful energy your students bring to the school community each day. Continue to promote the love for learning that is so noticeable in your students. Your dedication to your craft is apparent, and your students are the beneficiaries.

Your school community is ready to envision a new and more complete school improvement plan with all the components needed to make it a viable vehicle for change in your school. Use the conclusions and recommendations in this report as your guide. Identify a common vision for the school and support each other in making it happen. Everyone's best effort is needed to sustain your various initiatives to change as all teachers transition to standards-based instruction and assessment.

Communication is key to your future success. Together, all must reflect on ways to improve communication and take appropriate steps toward that goal. It will take every member of this community working cooperatively to ensure that your hard work and keen interest in your students' successes will result in continuous growth in their learning. You cannot afford to do less for your students. As you have clear expectations for your students, you must now have clear expectations for yourselves.

All the components for an outstanding school are present here. Good luck to you as you take the next steps on your journey toward becoming an exemplary school in every way.

The Ashaway Elementary School Improvement Team

Linda Perra
Principal

Karen Mann
Librarian

Heidi Panciera
Parent

Dolores Rhodes
Teacher

The SALT Visit Team

Margaret M. Della Bitta
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South Kingstown High School
South Kingstown, Rhode Island
on leave to the Rhode Island Department of Education
to serve as a SALT Fellow
Team Chair

Jane Briggs
Reading Specialist
Western Coventry Elementary School
Coventry, Rhode Island

Joyce Coady
Grade 2 Teacher
Hamilton Elementary School
North Kingstown, Rhode Island

Anne T. Kiley
Grade 1 Teacher
Francis J. Varieur School
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Elizabeth Olausen
Grade 4 Teacher
Warwick Neck School
Warwick, Rhode Island

Jon Romeo
Principal
Bradford Elementary School
Westerly, Rhode Island

Pamela Rowland
Library Media Enrichment Specialist
Wickford Elementary School
North Kingstown, Rhode Island

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

Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

Ashaway Elementary School

November 30, 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, 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.
December 28, 2001