



Wickford Elementary School

North Kingstown

The SALT Visit Team Report

January 18, 2002



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 Wickford Elementary School from January 14 through 18, 2002. 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 Wickford 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 Wickford Elementary School.

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

observing a total of 91 classes. The team spent a total of over 70 hours in direct classroom observation. Every classroom was visited at least once, and every classroom teacher was observed more than once.

observing the school outside of the classroom

following eight students for a full day

observing the work of eight teachers and staff for a full day

conducting 37 interviews with various members of the staff

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 three years of state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*
- ◆ *reviewing the following documents:*

district and school policies and practices

district list of professional development opportunities

records of professional development activities

classroom assessments

school improvement plan for Wickford Elementary School

district strategic plan
1999, 2000 SALT Survey report
classroom textbooks
Our Time 2001, Yearbook
Wickford Elementary Student Handbook
Weekly Word from Wickford Elementary School
Mentor Teacher Handbook
Wickford Elementary School Enrichment Clusters
2000-2001 Self Study
North Kingstown School Committee Policy Manual
North Kingstown Teacher Evaluation Document
North Kingstown School Department Curriculum Guides
Agreement between the North Kingstown School Committee and the NEA/NK Teacher Contract, 2000-2003
North Kingstown School Department Progress Reports, Grades 1-5, 3-5
North Kingstown School Department Handbook, 2001-2002
1998, 1999, 2000, 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

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 30 hours in six separate meetings spanning the five 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 Wickford Elementary School

Background

Located in the town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island, Wickford Elementary School serves students in grades one through five. The school, originally known as The Washington Academy, has a rich tradition and heritage dating back to the early 1800s. It was the first public school structure in Rhode Island. The original wooden building was destroyed twice by fire. The present brick building was constructed in 1908 and renamed Wickford Grammar School. Some time later its name changed again to Wickford Elementary School.

The school is one of seven elementary schools in the North Kingstown School District. The professional staff of one principal, 15 full-time and 13 part-time faculty, a technology coordinator, a guidance counselor, a school psychologist, a social worker, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, six paraprofessionals, one library clerk, two cafeteria workers, and two custodians service the school community.

Of the 240 students at Wickford Elementary School 98.4% are white, 0.4% black, and 1.2% Asian/Pacific Islander. Forty students (16%) receive resource services in special education, speech, and language. Four students (1.6%) receive ESL education. Approximately 18 students (7%) are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Teachers are involved in various initiatives to improve student learning and teaching. These include the school wide participation in the SmART School program for the second year, implementation of Harcourt's "Collections" in English Language Arts, "Everyday Mathematics," Houghton Mifflin's "We the People" series in Social Studies, and Gems Net for science instruction. The school received \$2500 as a "Consolidated Resource Grant" to implement embedded professional development to improve math problem-solving skills for all students. The school also received a \$500 Exxon-Mobil Education Alliance Grant to launch "Writers Notebook." Three faculty members received Critical Friends Coaches Training and are organizing teams within the school to improve teaching instruction.

Student recognitions include: four students from grades 4 and 5 participated in the "National Invention Convention" competition; three writers received honors in the "Hope for 2002" Poetry Contest, sponsored by the Rhode Island Foundation; and in May, 2001 two students teams represented the state at the Destination Imagination Global Finals in Tennessee.

State Assessment Results for Wickford Elementary School

On the subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination nine in 10 fourth graders (88%) met or exceeded the standard in Basic Skills; seven in 10 fourth graders (68%) met or exceeded the standard in Concepts; and two in five fourth graders (39%) 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: special education and poverty students. Students at Wickford Elementary School perform at the same level as similar students in the state on the Basic Skills subtest, but significantly better than similar students in the state on both the Mathematics: Concepts and Problem Solving subtests. Over the last four years there has been an upward trend in the percentage of students meeting and exceeding the standard in both Mathematics Concepts (from 31% to 68%) and Mathematics Problem Solving subtest (from 24% to 39%).

On the reading subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination 9.6 in 10 fourth graders (96%) met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Basic Understanding, and nine in 10 fourth graders (86%) 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: special education and poverty students. Students at the Wickford Elementary School perform above the level of similar students in the state on the Reading: Basic Understanding subtest and significantly better than similar students in the state in Reading: Analysis and Interpretation subtest. There has been a steady increase in the percentage of students meeting and exceeding the standard on the Reading: Analysis and Interpretation subtest over the last four years (from 77% to 88%).

On the writing subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination eight in 10 fourth graders (79%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Conventions, and seven in 10 fourth graders (72%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Effectiveness. On the Rhode Island Writing Assessment six in 10 third graders (56%) met or exceeded the standard. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in writing for the following groups of students: special education and poverty students. Students at the Wickford Elementary School perform significantly above the level of similar students in the state on both Writing: Effectiveness, and Writing: Conventions subtests.

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

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

Wickford Elementary School is situated high on a hilltop within sight of historic Wickford village in Rhode Island. Upon entering this imposing and stately structure, one is aware of a caring and warm atmosphere within. The sparkling hallways are flooded with light that illuminates the abundant student work on display in the many showcases. Colorful ceramic tiles, created by students to commemorate the 200-year history of the school, line the main corridor. All within this school community exhibit a strong sense of pride in their school as they go about the daily work of learning and teaching.

Students are bright, happy, well mannered, and ready and eager to learn. They demonstrate an intense respect for their fellow classmates and a high regard for teachers, staff, and the principal. The entire staff at Wickford Elementary School is genuine, hardworking, and sincere in wanting the best for its students. The new administrator is energetic, enthusiastic, and very positive in her attitude. Parents are strongly supportive of the school's efforts, feel welcomed in the school, and volunteer their time freely to assist both during the day and after school.

Teachers diligently strive to provide their students with standards-based lessons and assessments. They are incorporating into their daily practice two new series in math and language arts. While some teachers are doing so with ease, others express a need for additional help in this process. At the same time the school is also involved in the SmART School initiative, but its implementation is fragmented due to the part-time status of key staff members.

The students' high performance on six of seven subtests of the 2001 New Standards Reference Examination for fourth graders indicates that most students achieved the standard. Generally the fourth grade students at Wickford Elementary School outperformed similar students statewide on the 2000 New Standard Reference Examination, as well. While students perform admirably on state assessments, many classes at Wickford Elementary School provide whole-group instruction in English language arts. This instruction format limits the ability of some students to develop the skills to exceed the standard, while not focusing on the needs of other students, who have yet to meet the standard. In this way, academic rigor for all students is compromised.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *2001 Information Works!*
- ◆ *2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- ◆ *2001 New Standards Reference Examination results*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *meeting with students*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers and parents*
- ◆ *classroom textbooks*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *analyzing 3 years of state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*

Conclusions

Many students read enthusiastically throughout the day. They eagerly choose books for their independent reading and take full advantage of library opportunities and privileges both within the classroom and at the Media Center. Primary students demonstrate strong phonemic awareness, as well as other reading strategies for fluency and meaning. Students read in a variety of ways, including independently, whole-class, and with partners. They are able to summarize, predict, infer, retell, and demonstrate comprehension. Most students, however, have limited choice in their selection of instructional reading. While students read from the Harcourt series, as well as from trade books and books related to thematic/integrated units, the whole class generally reads the same instructional text at the same time, regardless of each student's individual reading level. Despite this, students performed well on the 2001 New Standards Reference Examination with 96% and 86% of the students meeting and exceeding the standard in Reading: Basic Understanding and Reading: Analysis and Interpretation, respectively. (*observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, following students, talking with students, 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination results, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom assessments*)

Student writing is evident in all areas of the curriculum. Students write daily for many different purposes and in

many different genres. These include writing poetry, summaries, reports, letters, “how-to” instructions, and narratives. They write in journals using prompts or self-selected topics, as well as in response to literature. Many students are proficient at taking writing pieces through all the stages of the writing process at developmentally appropriate levels. Student writing portfolios document recognizable growth. Most students unquestionably demonstrate enjoyment and excellence in the writing process. However, some students have not as yet mastered the full range of writing competencies. Twenty-two percent of fourth graders did not attain the standard in Writing: Effectiveness and 29 percent did not attain the standard in Writing: Conventions on the 2001 New Standards Reference Examination. Also, 44% of third graders did not achieve the standard on the 2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment. *(observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, analyzing 3 years of state assessment results as reported in Information Works, Rhode Island Writing Assessment results, reviewing classroom assessments, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, following students)*

Students are actively engaged in many mathematical activities throughout the day. Most students demonstrate mastery of basic grade level math skills by making change, taking measurements, and completing paper and pencil tasks. Some students build speed and accuracy in math computations through *Mad Minutes* and various math games. All use manipulatives, such as base ten blocks, number cubes, part-part whole mats, pattern blocks, and coins and dollars to help them gain understanding and mastery of concepts. The tools students use in their daily math work include number lines, calculators, multiplication charts, and problem-solving strategy charts. Students develop and apply problem-solving strategies, individually and in cooperative groups. They share strategies and solutions both verbally and in writing. They successfully transfer these skills in various subject areas, including science and language arts. Thirty-nine percent of fourth graders met or exceeded the standard on the 2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination Mathematics: Problem-solving subtest. *(observing classes, following students, classroom textbooks, 2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination results, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, talking with students and teachers, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Students are eager to learn. They demonstrate an admirable respect for their fellow students and hold their teachers, principal, and all other adults in the building in high regard. They are supportive and accepting of their classmates, always working cooperatively to complete tasks. They listen to one another respectfully and thoughtfully. On the playground and in the cafeteria they are polite to each other and resolve disagreements with little adult intervention. These characteristics are conducive to a positive learning environment. Students come to school ready to learn. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the students, talking with students, teachers and parents)*

Commendations for Wickford Elementary School

Respectful students

Eager learners

Recommendations for Wickford Elementary School

Provide students with varied instructional reading materials appropriate to their individual reading abilities.

Provide students with more opportunities to develop competency in the writing process. Provide students with clear expectations for each writing task.

Continue to develop problem-solving strategies in all subjects.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan*
- ◆ *classroom textbooks*
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities*

Conclusions

Most teachers involve their students in reading through whole-class teaching, using a new anthology. Although there is a variety of available literature with ancillary materials for reading instruction, it is utilized on a limited basis. In most classes all students use the same reading material and participate in the same activities associated with the reading. Students are successful at the tasks presented to them. Some of these tasks include making predictions, story mapping, sequencing events, answering literal comprehension questions for recall, summarizing the main ideas, and developing vocabulary. In some classes, students work with partners or in small groups. While there is some discussion of the text, it is not to the degree that higher-level thinking skills are required. Also, literacy services for fourth and fifth graders are not provided. Therefore, limited differentiation to reflect the individual student's specific ability level is evident. (*following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrator, and parents, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing classroom assessments*)

Writing is an integral part of the language arts curriculum. Journal writing is evident in all grades. Most of the writing is connected to thematic and seasonal units. Many teachers emphasize the writing process on a weekly basis. Visual charts, word walls, and writing resources for improving student writing are available in classrooms. Writing spans the curriculum. Student work is prominently displayed within the classrooms and throughout the building. Writing genres include poetry, summary, report, letter, "how-to" instructions, biographies, and narratives. Teachers use portfolios to document student progress. They involve their students in brainstorming ideas for story mapping and storyboards. Many teachers incorporate developmentally appropriate writing assignments into a Writers' Workshop format and use effective technological tools in this process. While there is strong evidence of

good writing skills among the students, a cohesive, horizontally, and vertically articulated approach to teaching writing conventions is limited. Although some teachers demonstrate expertise in this area, others need assistance. Students need more challenges to excel. *(following students, observing classes, classroom textbooks, talking with teachers and school administrator, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Mathematics instruction is an important part of the school's curriculum. Implementation of the new math series is a strong component of each day and most students find success in daily math work. Teachers reinforce math skills in their students through Mad Minutes, paper and pencil activities, and various math games. Manipulatives are an integral part of teaching math concepts and skills. Teachers utilize *Everyday Math* as the foundation for instruction, while infusing problem-solving skills throughout the curriculum. To build problem-solving strategies teachers consistently use *Problem Solver*. To strengthen skills, concepts, and problem solving teachers provide resources such as manipulatives, calculators, number lines, multiplication, and problem-solving strategy charts. Teachers place a clear emphasis on problem-solving techniques in daily work and provide for learning opportunities in problem solving through cooperative grouping. The teachers' successful use of *Everyday Math* and *Problem Solver* offers a strong and consistent approach to mathematical instruction and will lead to improved student performance throughout the grades. *(observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, reviewing school improvement plan, classroom textbooks, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing records of professional development activities, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Standards are the foundation of learning at Wickford Elementary School. Curriculum guides are aligned to standards, which are posted in most classrooms. While their display is evident, the use of standards is at the emergent level. Most teachers communicate their goals to students. However, many students are not challenged by clear and consistently high expectations, which they are capable of achieving. Rubric use is at various levels of implementation throughout the school. Many generic rubrics, rather than task specific rubrics, are in use. Most students lack a clear understanding of what they need to do to succeed and excel during the initial stages of their work. However, most teachers diligently and successfully employ portfolio assessment. While multiple forms of assessment exist within this school, report cards are not aligned with standards-based instruction and assessment. Some teachers utilize the assessments that come with the language arts series; others do not make use of this resource. There is little evidence of differentiated instruction in lessons. Whole-class instruction limits appropriate grouping practices for optimal learning. While there is abundant technology available in the school, it is not utilized effectively for differentiating instruction. These practices hinder academic rigor at all levels. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrator, parents, talking with students, teachers, and school administrator, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Commendations for Wickford Elementary School

Hardworking, positive, and enthusiastic professionals

Dedicated and consistent efforts to improve problem solving

Recommendations for Wickford Elementary School

Focus on differentiated instruction and fully use the abundant resources available.

Tap into the expertise of your staff and in the district to mentor teachers in the skills needed to ensure best practices.

Differentiate the instruction of reading and writing to meet the needs of each student.

Increase rigor in all academic areas.

Utilize all components of the new language arts series to provide continuity of language arts instruction throughout the school.

Improve student-writing performance with a systematic writing approach across all grade levels.

Clearly outline student expectations by developing task-specific rubrics. Use rubrics at the initial stages of student work and through the revision process.

Recommendations for North Kingstown School District

Provide adequate training for all teachers, so they may use the new language arts series to its fullest potential.

Provide any missing components of the language arts series that will enhance instruction.

Support collaboration in the district to support teachers as mentors in the skills needed to ensure best practices.

Provide common planning time in teachers' schedules.

Develop and implement a standards-based reporting instrument.

Provide literacy services for grades four and five.

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with many students, teachers, staff, and school administrator and parents*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan*
- ◆ *classroom textbooks*
- ◆ *reviewing district and school policies and practices*
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities*
- ◆ *district list of professional development opportunities*

Conclusions

While the Wickford Elementary School Improvement Plan is comprehensive and ambitious in scope, it does not include goals for reading improvement and technology implementation and integration. Timelines are also ambitious and unrealistic. The professional development goals, as spelled out in the plan, are key to the school's success. They are crucial components needed for the faculty to move forward to improve student learning and teaching. (*reviewing school improvement plan, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, talking with teachers, and school administrator, district list of professional development opportunities*)

The new principal is a strong and energetic force in moving this school forward. She is well liked by students, staff, and parents. She is seen as a builder of community within the school. She is an active presence throughout the school. Parents report that she is accessible, approachable, and "part of the students' day-to-day existence". Her management style is characterized by "evolution, not revolution." (*following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator and parents*)

Parents have ample opportunities to participate in the daily workings of the school. They feel welcomed into the fabric of school life. Through LINKS, they volunteer many hours in classrooms and around the building, providing support to the staff in various ways. Parent involvement includes a very active PTO, Student Council, Learning Centers, and Destination Imagination. Parents volunteer to serve as recess monitors. Parents are very involved in the SIT/SAC. Parents are a strong presence in the building. This is admirable. (*observing classes, observing the*

school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator)

Although the school building is old, it is not outdated. The building is well maintained by a conscientious custodial staff. The halls and classrooms are cheerful and brightly lighted. The exterior grounds are well tended. The playground is expansive and well equipped with developmentally appropriate apparatus. However, due to the large expanse of the area, adequate supervision is difficult to maintain at all times. Adequate fencing is not in place to ensure safety and security in the children's play area. Although school security is good, the main entrance to the school is not totally secure. It is not visible from the main office or easily seen by school personnel. Also, due to the setting of the building on the property, there is the potential of unsafe conditions at dismissal time, when walkers and cyclists intermingle with the buses and cars. *(observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with teachers, staff, and school administrator)*

The school is involved in implementing several notable district level programs and initiatives such as *Everyday Mathematics*, *Collections* language arts series, and SmART. The SmART program, while a district initiative, is not consistently implemented at various district schools. There is little evidence that the program is underway at Wickford Elementary School. Staffing, schedule coordination, and time for interdisciplinary planning are minimal, which results in incomplete implementation. Started one year ago, the series *Everyday Mathematics* works well at this school. The *Collections* series, underway for the first year, is not fully in use at this time. Teachers report a need for additional training. *Collections* components that have yet to be utilized include guided reading, literature circles, challenge libraries, recommended trade books, and technology components, including CD-ROMs. Some of these components have not yet been purchased. The technology component for the various programs is not fully implemented at this time. Teachers report a need for additional technology training in the utilization of this integral resource. Also, responses to technical difficulties are slow. *(reviewing school improvement plan, talking with teachers, and school administrator, classroom textbooks, observing classes, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, following students, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, parents, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

The Wickford Elementary School has a warm, caring atmosphere with a high degree of collegiality. Staff and students report they are happy to come to school. A high level of respect exists among the staff, and this level of respect can be seen among the students. Both parents and teachers report that the diversity of teaching styles is recognized and valued. Communications between home and school occur regularly and by various means. A family atmosphere prevails throughout the school. Clearly, Wickford Elementary School is a nurturing place to learn and grow. *(observing classes, following students, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, reviewing school improvement plan, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator)*

Commendations for Wickford Elementary School

- Strong commitment to students
- Enthusiastic and positive leader
- Supportive, nurturing community of learners
- Ambitious School Improvement Plan
- Well-maintained building and grounds

Recommendations for Wickford Elementary School

- Revisit and modify the timelines in the Wickford Elementary School Improvement Plan.
- Implement the professional development goals in the school improvement plan. Encourage all teachers to

participate in these opportunities.

Provide adequate supervision for both recess time and dismissal.

Address security regarding the main entrance to the school.

Provide additional teacher training in the use of the *Collections*, language arts series.

Provide additional teacher training in the use of technology.

Determine whether to continue in the SmART initiative.

Recommendations for North Kingstown School District

Provide resources and monetary support so that the school can fully implement its school improvement plan.

Provide adequate personnel to supervise recess and dismissal.

Address security regarding the main entrance to the school.

Enclose the playground area with adequate fencing.

Provide additional teacher training in the use of the *Collections* language arts series.

Purchase remaining *Collections* materials to support the language arts curriculum.

Provide additional teacher training in the use of technology.

Address and resolve technology issues in a timely manner.

7. Final Advice to the School

The Wickford Elementary School community has established itself as a warm, caring place for children to learn and grow. The students are delightful and consistently display a positive attitude toward learning. The entire school community exemplifies sincerity, collegiality, and a strong commitment to its students. Everyone is working hard with the best interest of the students in mind.

The new leadership is committed to increasing student performance by utilizing best practices in instruction. As reflected in test scores, students perform at very high levels here. Implementation of differentiated instruction will meet the individual needs of students so that all will strive for even higher levels of achievement. Improved articulation between teachers within the building and in the district will strengthen all academic programs. This will allow teachers to tap into the wealth of knowledge available to them within their own school community. Embedding standards and rubrics in all pedagogical practices will increase academic rigor and *raise the bar* for all students.

Good luck as you take your next steps to change, grow, and improve student learning. You have all the components necessary to be an exemplary school. With your new principal, develop a new focus for your school and stay the course. As heard in a fourth grade classroom this week, “Shoot for the moon – even if you miss, you’ll land among the stars!”

The Wickford Elementary School Improvement Team

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Kris Auger

Parent and Co Chair

Debbie Bailey

Parent

Morag Cronkite

Teacher and Co Chair

Jean Donohue

Teacher

Kathy Falvey

Teacher

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Parent

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Teri Ohs

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Teacher and Co Chair

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

Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

Wickford Elementary School

January 18, 2002

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.
February 11, 2002