



# **John Wickes School**

**Warwick**

## **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 of 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 John Wickes School from January 14, 2002-January 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 John Wickes 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, in the hallways, and on the playground. The team builds its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, the visit allows the team to build informed judgments about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at John Wickes School.

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

- ◆ *observing a total of 114 complete and partial classes. The team spent a total of over 92 hours in direct classroom observation. Every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than twice.*
  
- ◆ *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 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*

*classroom assessments*

*John Wickes School Improvement Plan, Action Plan Form, 2001-2002*

*district strategic plan*

*2000 SALT Survey report*

*1999, 2000, 2001 Information Works!*

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

*2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*

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

*2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*

*John Wickes Itinerant Master Schedule 2001-2002*

*John Wickes School Improvement Meeting Notes, October 22, 2001*

*Home/School Communication binder*

*John Wickes School Handbook*

*John Wickes School Professional Development binder*

*Warwick Public Schools Mentor Program Mentor Handbook and Personal Journal and Mentee Personal Journal*

*Warwick Public Schools Professional Development 2001-2002 document*

*John Wickes School Monthly Faculty Meeting Dates 2001-2002*

*Agreement Between the Warwick School Committee and the Warwick Teachers Union, September 1, 2000—August 31, 2003*

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 28 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 John Wickes School

### Background

The John Wickes School, located in the Eastern Greenwood section of Warwick, Rhode Island, is one of 20 schools in the city that serves students in kindergarten through grade six. The Wickes School opened in February 1955. Since that time, eight new classrooms have been added to the building, and in 2001 a new gymnasium was constructed.

One principal and 35 full and part-time teachers serve the 321 students of the school. Ninety-seven percent of the students are white, one percent are black, one percent are Hispanic, fewer than one percent are American Indian, and fewer than one percent are Asian/Pacific Islander. Fourteen percent of John Wickes students receive special education services, and 17 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. One percent of John Wickes students participate in the Accelerated Learning Activities Program.

This year John Wickes School has implemented a new reading series in kindergarten through grade three. Next year the implementation of the new series will be expanded to include grades four through six. Some teachers participate each month in after school workshops in guided-reading and shared-reading. Some teachers have also attended workshops on standards-based instruction. Wickes is an inclusion school: all special education students are fully included in regular education classrooms.

Various extracurricular programs are offered to Wickes students. These include After School Crafts, Junior Achievement, and La Escuelita, an after-school foreign language program that is available to students in grades three through six in the Warwick Public Schools. Classes in Spanish, Italian, Japanese, and French take place at John Wickes School one day a week. Students also participate in Book It, a reading incentive program sponsored by Pizza Hut. Some students keep "good deeds" journals in school. In addition, plans have been made to offer workshops for those teachers and students who volunteer to participate in those workshops, on the topic, "Social and Emotional Literacy in the Classroom—Setting the Stage for High Academic Standards." Additional programs that support students include the Homework Club, Volunteers in Warwick Schools (VOWS), and the Mentors program.

John Wickes School also participates in giving projects such as collecting food and money for Adopt-A-Family and making ornaments for the Hasbro Giving Tree during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons. This year students also collected books, games, and puzzles for the new family center in Warwick.

### State Assessment Results for John Wickes School

On the subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination three in four of the fourth graders (77%) met or exceeded the standard in basic skills; one in three of the fourth graders (35%) met or exceeded the standard in concepts; and one in five of the fourth graders (19%) met or exceeded the standard in problem solving. *Information Works! 2001* (2000 assessment data) shows that equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in mathematics for Special Education students. The same assessment results show that students at the John Wickes School perform at the same level as similar students in the state in Mathematical Skills and below the level of similar students in the state in Concepts and Problem Solving.

On the reading subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination almost three in four of the fourth graders (70%) met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Basic Understanding, and two in three of the fourth graders (64%) met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Analysis and Interpretation. *Information Works! 2001* (2000 assessment data) shows that equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in reading for Special Education and poverty students. The same

assessment results show that students at the John Wickes School perform at the same level as similar students in the state in reading.

On the writing subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination almost three in five of the fourth graders (56%) met or exceeded the standard in both Writing: Effectiveness and Writing: Conventions. On the Rhode Island Writing Assessment one in four of the third graders (25%) met or exceeded the standard. *Information Works! 2001* (2000 assessment data) shows that equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in writing for Special Education and poverty students. The same assessment results show that the students at the John Wickes School perform above the level of similar students in the state in Writing: Effectiveness and below the level of similar students in Writing: Conventions.

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

### 3. PORTRAIT OF John Wickes School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

The visitor to John Wickes School is greeted by students, who are friendly, polite, well behaved, and fun to be around. The principal and teachers are hard working people, who are dedicated to their students. Some teachers talk informally with one another about their classroom practices and activities; yet, a climate of separation exists at John Wickes School. Because of the acceptance of perceived limitations set forth in the teacher contract and the lack of formal common planning time within the daily schedule, few teachers share with one another or collaborate and coordinate their lessons. These conditions contribute to learning for students that is disconnected and that sometimes overlaps across grades.

The Warwick School Department offers teachers many professional development opportunities. Some professional development activities are held during the school day. Additionally, the principal infuses professional development into faculty meetings. Teachers can apply to attend other professional development activities as well. However, outside of the mandated faculty meetings and the professional development that is held during the school day, teacher participation in professional development is voluntary in the district, and not many teachers from Wickes participate. Additionally, the John Wickes School Improvement Plan lacks a focus on professional development. Because many teachers do not participate fully in focused, ongoing professional development, student opportunities for learning are uneven.

Students, who reside in a newly opened family center, have recently joined the Wickes School community. The support and teaching of these students is a new challenge for the entire school. The staff has not yet received the diversity training necessary for them to be able to meet successfully the diverse needs of these and of all children in the school.

John Wickes School stands at the threshold of great change. Teachers have begun to look at setting clear expectations for student work through the use of rubrics and standards. Some teachers have begun to incorporate rubrics and criteria sheets into their daily practice—good first steps towards holding all students accountable to high expectations. However, most teachers have layered newer practices on top of their long-established practices of initiating and directing learning. Change is beginning to occur at the John Wickes School, and with the collaboration of all, students can be engaged in meaningful inquiry that will guide them all to higher levels of learning.

## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- ◆ *2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *observing the school outside the classroom*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *talking with students and teachers*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *meeting with students*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*

### Conclusions

Most students accurately complete basic computation worksheets. Their levels of proficiency in math facts and computation skills are reflected in their good performance on the 2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination. Those results show that 77 percent of fourth graders achieved or exceeded the standard in Mathematical Skills. Activities and materials that support some students as they begin to learn math concepts, include calendar math, calculating metric conversions, using rulers and tape measures, using a calculator to verify answers, and playing math games on the computer. Thirty-five percent of fourth graders met or exceeded the standard in Mathematics: Concepts. Students are beginning to learn problem-solving skills that include organizational strategies such as creating tables and drawing pictures. Many students complete a problem of the day. They often copy the problem from a flip chart or the board and write in a math journal or on a handout. However, few journal entries include explanations of the steps students have used to solve the problem. Most students have not yet learned to apply problem-solving strategies independently to solve problems. Their level of proficiency in problem solving is reflected on state assessments: 19 percent of fourth graders achieved or exceeded the standard in Problem Solving. (*following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, talking with students, 2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, reviewing classroom assessments*)

Most students at John Wickes School write frequently throughout the day. Daily writing practice includes

journal entries, letters, reports, stories, narratives, persuasive paragraphs, and informative pieces. Many students, however, center their writing on answering factual questions and copying words, definitions, and text. Students complete daily oral language exercises in most classes and often spend additional time practicing grammar skills that are isolated from their original writing pieces. As a result, many students have limited opportunities to produce original and creative pieces of writing. Many students, however, are effective writers. These students consistently brainstorm, use graphic organizers, write draft copies, edit with the use of a rubric, revise, and complete final copies. Their work includes the components of good writing such as clear voice, central theme, and logical sequence of ideas. Their emerging writing skills are indicated in their performance in both class work and on state assessments. On the 2001 New Standards Reference Examination 56 percent of fourth graders met or exceeded the standard in both Writing: Effectiveness and Writing: Conventions. On the 2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment 25 percent of third graders met or exceeded the standard. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, 2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Students in the primary grades read in small groups, while in the intermediate grades students generally read in large groups from the same texts or from trade books. Students either read silently or orally when they volunteer or are called upon. They take turns reading and answering questions about what they have read. Some students choose to read independently after they complete their class work. Most complete written or oral follow-up assignments in which they may identify story elements and recall facts from the story. Some make connections between their reading and their own lives. A few make inferences, support their opinions and predictions, and make comparisons in their reading. Student performance on state assessments reflects the range of skills they have developed. On the 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination 70 percent of the fourth graders met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Basic Understanding, and 64 percent met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Analysis and Interpretation. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, talking with students and teachers, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary)*

Students at John Wickes School are friendly, polite, and well mannered. They are comfortable in school and generally show respect for themselves and others. Students know how to use effectively the resources in their classrooms. These skills help foster student readiness to learn. In some classes, though, students are consistently disengaged from learning. During lessons they chat with their neighbors, open and close their desks, play with objects in their desks, do other work, throw pencils, and generally avoid taking part in the class. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students)*

## Commendations for John Wickes School

The friendly, polite, and well-mannered students

Students who are effective writers

## Recommendations for John Wickes School

Engage all teachers in professional development in higher order math problem-solving strategies and balanced literacy. Implement the strategies that you learn in every classroom.

Engage all students in student-centered, meaningful, inquiry-based learning.

Provide more opportunities for students to write original and creative pieces that incorporate the characteristics of good writing. Expand these practices to include all students.

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, school administrator*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *meetings with students, parents, school administrator*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *2000 SALT Survey Report*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *John Wickes Itinerant Master Schedule 2001-2002*

### Conclusions

Teachers at John Wickes School are friendly with students and respectful of them. They work hard for students. They believe strongly in the work they are doing in school. (*following students, observing classes, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, talking with students and teachers, meetings with parents, school administrator, and students*)

A few teachers at John Wickes School involve their students in partner work in which students complete hands-on activities. Their students share ideas, make predictions, peer edit, graph data, and discuss results. These students are actively and enthusiastically engaged in their learning. Some teachers have students share the various strategies they have used to solve a problem. Most teachers, however, usually direct class activities, complete the assignment themselves in front of the students, and then ask students to repeat what they have done. These teachers seldom give students opportunities to take risks, to think independently, or to try to do the work on their own. These practices result in teachers who teach students to know facts, general information, and steps, rather than teachers who foster independent thinking. (*following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, meeting with students, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing classroom assessments, 2000 SALT Survey Report*)

Many teachers are beginning to use criteria sheets and rubrics to evaluate student work. A few are beginning to develop an understanding of rubrics and task criteria, as they apply to standards-based instruction. This is a good step toward holding students accountable to high expectations. Because teachers inconsistently interpret the function of rubrics or task criteria, many hold different expectations for the quality of work of different students. This contributes to unequal opportunities for student learning. (*following students,*

*observing classes, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, talking with teachers and students, meetings with students and parents, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

Some teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to engage their students effectively. In some classrooms, however, the overuse of whole-group instruction inhibits students from sharing ideas, conducting inquiries, and engaging in conversations around a theme or topic. Student opportunities for discussion and interaction are often limited, because teachers focus on volunteers and do not draw all students into those discussions. Many times teachers overlook student inattentiveness. Additionally, some teachers give students few chances to move physically during the day. Teachers seldom individualize their instruction to meet the different learning styles, interests, or developmental needs of their students. *(following students, observing classes, meetings with students and parents, talking with students)*

Teachers report they do not know what is happening among and across grade levels, but many say they want to know. While common planning time is not built into the daily schedule, some teachers do informally share ideas and materials and plan together. Regular education teachers, special education teachers, and itinerant teachers do not regularly collaborate and plan together. The fact that teachers do not talk together contributes to the sense of isolation that some teachers feel, as well as to the lack of continuity in teaching and learning within and across grade levels. *(interviewing teachers about the work of their students, talking with teachers and school administrator, John Wickes Itinerant Master Schedule 2001-2002, 2000 SALT Survey Report)*

## Commendations for John Wickes School

Teachers who have a strong work ethic

Teachers who have begun to implement criteria sheets and rubrics to evaluate student work

Teachers who informally share ideas and materials and plan together

## Recommendations for John Wickes School

Develop and implement a plan that will increase opportunities for teachers to communicate with one another and collaborate within and among grade levels.

Engage in professional development in the areas of standards-based instruction, differentiation of instruction, performance-based assessment, and balanced literacy. Implement the strategies that you learn in every classroom.

Develop learning activities for students that foster the sharing of ideas, conducting inquiry, and engaging in conversations around a theme or topic.

## Recommendation for the Warwick School Department

Support John Wickes School in the development and implementation of a plan that will increase opportunities for teachers to communicate, plan, and collaborate within and among grade levels.

## 6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *meetings with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *2000 SALT Survey Report*
- ◆ *reviewing John Wickes School Improvement Plan*
- ◆ *School Improvement Meeting Notes, October 22, 2001*
- ◆ *Home/School Communications binder*
- ◆ *John Wickes School Handbook*
- ◆ *John Wickes School Professional Development binder*
- ◆ *Warwick Public Schools Mentor Program Mentor Handbook and Personal Journal and Mentee Personal Journal*
- ◆ *Warwick Public Schools Professional Development 2001-2002 document*
- ◆ *John Wickes School Monthly Faculty Meeting Dates 2001-2002*
- ◆ *Agreement Between the Warwick School Committee and the Warwick Teachers' Union, September 1, 2000-August 31, 2003*

### Conclusions

The goals outlined in the John Wickes School Improvement Plan focus on school climate, student behavior, the need for professional development, student performance, and achievement in reading, writing, and math. The plan, a revision of last year's plan, now includes the addition of, "only those things that we can

accomplish." The plan does not reflect an in-depth self-study about the teaching and learning that is now taking place in the school. The indicators of accomplishment are primarily observations and lists; some are not measurable indicators of progress. The school improvement plan, therefore, is limited in its effectiveness as a guide for increasing teacher effectiveness in increasing student learning and achievement. *(reviewing John Wickes School Improvement Plan, meetings with school improvement team and school administrator, talking with teachers and school administrator, School Improvement Meeting Notes, October 22, 2001)*

Teachers in this school are offered different opportunities to improve their effectiveness in the classroom. Varied options for participation outside of the school day in professional development are offered throughout the year, and some teachers at Wickes participate in these offerings. The principal at Wickes has incorporated one-hour professional development workshops during two monthly faculty meetings. The district mentoring plan can support the professional growth of beginning teachers. All of these supports can help teachers improve the quality of their instruction. However, with the exception of the contractually required faculty meetings and the professional development activities held during the school day, participation in professional development is voluntary in the district; many teachers do not take part. Additionally, the teacher evaluation instrument is a one-page satisfactory/unsatisfactory checklist. It includes an optional comment page, an optional informational update page, and an observation form. This is a weak tool, which does not provide constructive feedback that could support the professional growth of teachers. *(Agreement Between the Warwick School Committee and the Warwick Teachers' Union, September 1, 2000-August 31, 2003, Warwick Public Schools Professional Development 2001-2002 document, John Wickes School Monthly Faculty Meeting Dates 2001-2002, John Wickes School Professional Development binder, Warwick Public Schools Mentor Program Mentor Handbook and Personal Journal and Mentee Personal Journal, meetings with district and school administrators, talking with teachers)*

Some parents are pleased with the willingness of the principal and the teachers to work with them and their children in multiple ways: the open-door policy, teacher representatives at monthly parent meetings (PTO), the prompt response of teachers to parent concerns, and teacher-initiated contact with them. These parents state they feel that the principal is approachable and visible to them and their children. They feel they are a part of the school community. *(meetings with parents and school administrator, 2000 SALT Survey Report, talking with teachers, Home/School Communications binder, John Wickes School Handbook)*

A new challenge facing the John Wickes School is the arrival within the past month of children from a new family center in the city. The district and the school learned about the center only a week before it opened. Both lacked the expertise for working with the family center children. As a first response to this challenge, the principal distributed information to assist teachers in developing an understanding of how to work with the children from the center. Also, the district hired a transitional advocate to work with the families and the school. The principal, teachers, and school staff say they are still unsure about how best to meet the social, emotional, and educational needs of these new students. The other students in the school are also confused. *(following students, observing classes, talking with teachers, staff, and school administrator, meetings with students, school administrator, and district administrators)*

Each classroom is equipped with computers, many of which are not used regularly. Some students use a computer to look up information to answer a specific question, and some do word processing. Most students, who use the computers, play a variety of games that include educational games for the reinforcement of math skills. Computers and the internet are not used as teaching tools in most classrooms. Many teachers say they do not have the expertise to incorporate the use of computer technology into their teaching practice. Some computers and printers need repair. The result is that the potential value of this resource for students and teachers is not realized. *(following students, observing classes, talking with teachers and students)*

The culture of the school is one of contradiction. It is puzzling how, on one hand, most teachers say their colleagues are the strength of this school and that teachers care about their students and work hard, and how, on the other hand, they say that they do not know what their peers do in their classrooms. *(interviewing*

*teachers about the work of their students, talking with teachers, observing of the school outside of the classroom)*

## Commendations for John Wickes School

Parents who feel they are a part of the school community

The honest dialogue around the challenges presented by the arrival of students from the newly opened family center

## Recommendations for John Wickes School

Complete an in-depth self-study of John Wickes School that involves parents, students, teachers, and the principal. Use the results of the self-study to revise your school improvement plan. Tie the indicators of accomplishment to student performance. Implement the plan throughout the school.

Involve all teachers in professional development. Focus on performance-based assessment, balanced literacy, differentiated instruction, higher order problem-solving skills, and standards-based instruction.

Continue the efforts already begun to ensure that parents are active partners in the academic and social education of students. Build on the strong base of parents who feel they are a part of the school community.

Enlist the help of an outside facilitator to engage all the adults in the school in open discussion about the puzzling contradictions that exist within the school.

Engage all teachers in the effective use of computer technology as a teaching and learning tool. Implement the strategies you learn in all classrooms.

## Recommendations for the Warwick School Department

Support John Wickes School with the resources necessary to revise the school improvement plan to reflect an in-depth self-study.

Include teachers in the development of professional development offerings.

Work with the Warwick Teachers Union to revise the current teacher evaluation instrument so that it becomes a tool that will foster professional development and improvement in teaching and learning.

Continue to support the school with the family center transitional advocate. Engage all staff in diversity training. Support them as they implement the strategies and skills they learn to provide an equal educational opportunity and access for all children.

Provide timely technical support to John Wickes School.

## 7. Final Advice to the School

The entire staff of John Wickes School must come together to develop consistent and open communication within and among grade levels in the school in order to increase student learning. Find ways and the time necessary to develop continuous and ongoing dialogue that is open and honest among all. In a climate of working together teachers can share their successes and frustrations and find ways to learn from them. Like students, teachers can learn, teach, and grow, both as individuals and as members of a team with a common purpose and goal. Work to establish a climate in which you and your students are comfortable taking risks to learn. Allow students to experiment and make decisions, to voice and support their opinions. Embrace the diversity that has become a part of your school culture.

Many teachers have begun the hard work of developing rubrics and criteria sheets that give students clear and focused standards for performance. Most teachers must develop still further understanding about the application of rubrics and performance-based assessments. Capitalize on and learn from the expertise of teachers in the school who already use rubrics to hold all students accountable to the same high standards. Implement alternative teaching strategies that will challenge all students to higher levels of learning.

Build on the support of those parents who already feel they are a part of this learning community, to involve more parents in the education of their children. Make parents partners with the school. Encourage their participation in decision-making in the school.

After conducting an in-depth self-study, revise the school improvement plan. Use that plan as the catalyst for continued positive change in the school.

John Wickes School has demonstrated that it has the capacity and desire to change its current school culture. Many of you have talked openly and frankly regarding the new family center and how it has impacted this school. Embrace the challenges given to you in this report to begin the dialogue that will move you and your students to higher levels of achievement.

## The John Wickes School Improvement Team

Roy Costa  
Principal/SIT Chair

Judy Armour  
Kindergarten Teacher

Michaela Brown  
Parent

Lois Conway  
Grade 2 Teacher

Emma D'Antuono  
Grade 1 Teacher

Karen Felts  
Parent

Betty Pearce  
Librarian

Diane Waterman  
Wickes Secretary

Christine Williams  
Intensive Resource Teacher

## The SALT Visit Team

Sandra L. Olson  
English Language Arts Teacher/Team Leader  
Ponaganset Middle School  
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Byfield School  
Bristol, Rhode Island

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Pre-K—Grade 3 Health/Physical Education Teacher  
Hugh Cole School  
Warren, Rhode Island

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

## Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

### **John Wickes School**

January 18, 2001

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

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

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



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD  
Catalpa Ltd.  
February 6, 2002