



Hugh B. Bain Middle School

Cranston

The SALT Visit Team Report

February 1, 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 Hugh B. Bain Middle School from January 28 to February 1, 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 Hugh B. Bain Middle 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 Hugh B. Bain Middle School.

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

- ◆ *observing a total of 190 complete classes and partial classes. The team spent many hours in direct classroom observation. Every classroom was visited at least once, and most teachers were observed more than once.*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 14 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*
 - school improvement director*
 - students*
 - parents*
- ◆ *talking with and interviewing students, teachers, staff, and school administrators on many occasions*
- ◆ *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
school improvement plan for Hugh B. Bain Middle School
district strategic plan
Article 31-School Investment Fund Plans
district action plans
Cranston Professional Development Institute (booklet)
Cranston Mentor Program
Master Agreement between Cranston School Committee and the Cranston Teachers' Alliance
Cranston Quarterly, Cranston Public Schools
English Language Learners, LEP Regulations, 2000
Cranston Public Schools Teacher Evaluation Handbook
Cranston Curriculum Revision and Update
K-12 anchor papers
district assessment plan
district writing guide
district grants
district curriculum guides
2000 SALT Survey report
PDI Principal Report by School
Hugh B. Bain Middle School Self Study, 2000
Hugh B. Bain Library Research Project Ideas
School Performance Skills, Program Framework for Middle School
Hugh B. Bain Middle School, Be Pro-active, 2001-2002
The Bain Center
21st Century Community Learning
The Community Leadership Institute
TAGLIT Summary
Bain Bugle, fall 2001
Programs of Distinction booklet
classroom textbooks
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 31 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 Hugh B. Bain Middle School

Background

Hugh B. Bain Middle School, located on Gansett Avenue in Cranston, Rhode Island, serves a diverse student population of sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Opened in 1930, the school was originally designed as a junior high school to house grades seven through nine. It was the first junior high school established in the city of Cranston.

In 1995, when the district adopted the middle school concept, Hugh B. Bain added sixth grade students, and the ninth graders were relocated to the high school. Bain is one of three middle schools in the Cranston School District. A professional staff of one principal, an assistant principal, a 21st Century Program Director, 82 full-time and part-time faculty, a psychologist, two social workers, a nurse, five secretaries, three custodians, and seven kitchen staff service the school community.

There are 708 students of varied socio-economic and cultural backgrounds attending classes here. Seventy three percent of the student body is white; 9% is Asian; 11% is Hispanic; and 6% is black. Six percent of the student body receives ESL services either directly or on a monitor basis. The largest group represented in the ESL population is Cambodian. Forty percent of the school's students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch and 31% of the students receive special education services.

There are many noteworthy activities in place at the school for both students and the community. They are listed in the school's "Programs of Distinction" booklet. Several of these include The Bain Center and 21st Century Community Learning, Project Respect, the Enrichment Program, Bain Student Planning Center, Homework Club, and Channel 88 broadcasting. Students are also involved in varsity sports and after school intramurals. Bain has the largest intramural program in the city of Cranston.

State Assessment Results for Hugh B. Bain Middle School

On the subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination two in five eighth graders (42%) met or exceeded the standard in basic skills; one in eight eighth graders (13%) met or exceeded the standard in concepts; and one in six eighth graders (18%) 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: Black, Native American, special education and limited English proficient students. Students at the Hugh B. Bain Middle School perform at the same level as similar students in the state on the Mathematics: Basic Skills, Mathematics: Concepts, and Mathematics: Problem Solving subtests.

On the reading subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination two in five eighth graders (44%) met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Basic Understanding, and one in five eighth graders (22%) 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: Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, males, special education, and limited English proficient students. Students at the Hugh B. Bain Middle School perform at the same level as similar students in the state on the Reading: Basic Understanding and Reading: Analysis and Interpretation subtests.

On the writing subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination one in two eighth graders (50%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Conventions; and two in five eighth graders (41%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Effectiveness. On the Rhode Island Writing Assessment one in five seventh graders (22%) met or exceeded the standard. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in writing for the following groups of students: Hispanic, Black, male, special education, and limited English proficient students. Students at the Hugh B. Bain Middle School perform at the same level as similar students in the state on 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 Hugh B. Bain Middle School is available at <<http://www.rido.net>>www.rido.net.

3. PORTRAIT OF Hugh B. Bain Middle School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Hugh B. Bain Middle School is a stately red brick building constructed in a bygone era. It is a grand neighborhood school with a history of traditional values that extends 70 years into the past. The corridors are clean, and the walls hold display cases filled with student work, trophies, and awards collected over the years. The students are friendly, polite, outgoing, and enthusiastic. Many students report that they like their teachers and their school. For the most part the teachers are dedicated, hardworking, and truly committed to doing the best job they can for the students in this community. Many willingly give more of their time than is expected or asked of them.

Over the last several years a sense of instability and unease has come with changes of the administration of Bain School. The present administrative team has set a new tone for the school. This team works with teacher leaders to improve school climate, instructional practices, and student discipline and participation. The new principal encourages the faculty to have a sharp focus on teaching and learning. The school has adopted a number of creative after school programs to support and encourage students to be responsible and to develop leadership skills. The human resources afforded students here is extensive.

There is still work to do. While some evidence of active student involvement in their own learning is seen in classes, many students are passive learners. Some teachers use lecture as their main form of instruction. Teachers and students have varying levels of expectations for student learning that seem to coincide with the grouping of students along ability levels. The school population is diverse; approximately 31% of the students receive special education services, with inclusion occurring on a limited basis. The teaming of students occurs here with only some evidence that teachers integrate their subjects. Also, many teachers are ready to move forward on an “all kids” agenda, while others are content with the way things have always been.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *2001 Information Works!*
- ◆ *1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *meeting with teachers, students, and parents*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *talking with students and teachers*

Conclusions

The majority of students are ready to learn. They are alert, energetic, cooperative, and organized. Students are respectful of each other and adults. They are conscientious in the use of planners for completing homework assignments and preparing for tests. However, some students, unprepared for class, arrive without pencils, paper, and homework. A few students exhibit inattentive, off-task behavior such as fidgeting and socializing, especially when they are participating in cooperative group activities. Passive, unengaged behavior also occurs frequently. Students are aware that they are grouped in various ability levels. Some students report that this determines what they expect of themselves. They do not perceive teacher expectations as the same for all kids. These attitudes inhibit some students from achieving their highest potential. (*following students, meeting with parents, teachers and students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers*)

Many students are writing across the curriculum and at all ability levels. Students create books, reports, science lab reports, essays, notes, journal entries, titles to chapters, and employment applications. Students use process writing, including prewriting through final copy in social studies and English. Some students also complete shared-writing activities, peer advise, and peer edit. Some students use rubrics and technology to enhance their writing. Although students are writing in many ways, the quality of their work is uneven. The time students spend actually writing varies from class to class. Yet, eighth grade assessment results indicate that students at Bain achieve at the same level as similar students state wide on the 2000 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination subtests for Writing. (*observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, following students, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing classroom assessments, meeting with students, 2000 New Standards Reference Examination results*)

Students are involved in various reading activities. Some parents report that their children are reading 25 books this year. Some students read silently after completing their regular work. Reading also occurs as a class activity in read alouds, round robin, and performance reading. Students listen to teachers read, and some are engaged in active listening. Students sometimes use critical thinking skills, such as inferring, comparing and contrasting, and reading for a purpose. Little interpretive and analytical reading is in evidence. This correlates with the low percentage of

students (22%) that met or exceeded the standard on the Reading: Analysis and Interpretation subtest of the 2001 English Language Arts Reference Examination. *(following students, observing classes, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, meeting with parents, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results)*

Pockets of students use problem-solving techniques in their class activities. These include planning a vacation, building a Montreal Monopoly board, completing science experiments and science fair projects, and using the KWL chart. Many students complete math sheets and review homework to reinforce concepts in math classes. Some students use computer technology, calculators, and protractors to solve mathematical problems. They develop charts and graphs to display data and illustrate their knowledge of math and science. Some students use manipulatives, games, and demonstrations to learn skills and concepts and to practice them. However, most student math work is rote, paper and pencil tasks with little time spent on problem solving. These limited math activities may explain why such a low percentage of Bain students met the standard on the New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination subtests. *(following students, observing classes, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

Commendations for Hugh B. Bain Middle School

Cooperative, respectful, friendly students

Vibrant school spirit

Strong sense of caring and community

Recommendations for Hugh B. Bain Middle School

Provide opportunities for students to engage in literacy critical thinking skills.

Implement effective use of writing rubrics across all curricular areas.

Inform students of the quality of their work through the use of teacher anecdotes and rubrics in all subjects.

Develop and implement teaching strategies for concept building and problem solving in all curricular areas.

Have consistent high expectations for all students.

Review and reconsider the division grouping practices for students.

Use the What Students Need sections of the 2001 New Standards English Language Arts and Mathematics Reference Examination School Summaries to guide you in increasing student achievement in all grades.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

Sources of Evidence

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

Conclusions

Teachers and staff at Hugh B. Bain Middle School are dedicated, hardworking, caring, and accessible. Many exhibit a readiness to grow and change; they work collaboratively to improve instructional practice. Teachers also show a willingness to participate in extra-curricular and after school activities for the benefit of students. However, an agreed-upon, clear, specific vision for the school that unifies the direction and commitment of teaching and learning has yet to be established. While there are pockets of effective collaboration between teachers, there is a lack of cohesion and cooperative working relationship among some staff in leadership roles. Because of the absence of a clearly articulated vision and because so many changes have been implemented in a short period of time, some staff are overwhelmed in their teaching. Also, a number of staff members are still resistant to change. (*following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrators, parents, reviewing school improvement plan*)

Many teachers provide various opportunities for students to discuss what they have read. They use reading as a springboard for writing. Teachers implement reading across the curriculum. Some engage their students in critical thinking skills. A few teachers are working toward the development of analysis and synthesis skills. The Performance Skills Program is an important program teachers have designed to enhance reading. There are teachers that provide dramatic read alouds in class and take advantage of the Accelerated Reader resources found in the library. Many teachers coordinate with the librarian to plan their lessons, develop alternate teaching strategies, and encourage student reading. Students use technology as an alternate reading source. However, there are varying levels of success in the implementation of various reading strategies, and expectations are lower for some students than for others. Students report that they would like more choice in selecting both their reading materials for class

and the assessment tools used to demonstrate their reading knowledge. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

Teachers provide numerous writing opportunities for students in nearly all subject areas, including process writing. Some teams work collaboratively to engage students in writing across the curriculum. Teachers often use rubrics to illustrate their expectations. However, only a few teachers are giving effective feedback to students with strategies for improving their writing. Writing conventions are not stressed uniformly across the curricular areas. Not all teachers display student writing nor do they provide opportunities and direction for every student to revise their written work. *(following students, observing classes, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

New Standards Performance Standards are posted in most rooms. While many teachers illustrate the use of standards in their lesson planning, the way that many teachers use standards is inconsistent and sometimes ineffective. Some curriculum guides are not yet aligned to the standards and, in many cases instruction is not aligned with standards. As a result, units and lesson plans are not always standards-based. This adversely affects teacher effectiveness, as well as student performance and achievement. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing records of professional development activities, talking with teachers, and school administrators)*

Some teachers engage students by using a variety of instructional methods including cooperative learning, hands-on activities, inquiry, and project-based learning. Students role-play, present, and employ creative drama. In some classes teachers move the students through a variety of well-paced opportunities for learning. Nonetheless, teachers' expectations of students are driven by the tracking system. Many assignments are simplistic and unchallenging. In some classes student learning is passive, and very little cooperative work is encouraged; these classes are traditional, teacher-centered, and lecture-based. Students sit quietly with very little engagement in learning. Students state that they would like more projects, cooperative activities, and hands-on real-life activities. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators)*

Some teachers at Bain involve their students in effective problem solving activities. These activities are found in individual classes as well as in integrated units presented by some teams. Many teachers use excellent questioning techniques; they enthusiastically and actively involve their students in the work of the class. In math classes teachers engage their students in completing math work sheets, problems from the textbook, and reviewing homework. A few teachers involve their students in problem-solving activities. Emphasis, however, is placed on basic skills, with little application of basic math skills to higher order thinking and concept building. Teachers make limited use of computers, calculators, tools, games, and demonstrations to teach skills and concepts. Individualized instruction is not in evidence. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing classroom assessments, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

Teachers assess student work in a variety of ways. They assign oral presentations, projects, science labs and lab reports, class discussion, inquiries, and real life applications. They frequently use traditional assessments such as essays, multiple choice and true/false questions, and fill in the blank statements. Student conferencing occurs in a very few instances. Limited examples of differentiation of assessment, student choice in presenting knowledge, and formal portfolio use are in evidence. These practices limit every student's ability to demonstrate his full understanding of the subject. *(following students, observing classes, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, meeting with students, parents, talking with students, teachers, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Commendations for Hugh B. Bain Middle School

Dedicated, caring, and hardworking staff

Involvement in extracurricular activities

High incidence of reading and writing across the curriculum

Recommendations for Hugh B. Bain Middle School

Participate in team building and collaboration activities.

Implement standards-based curriculum and instruction.

Have high expectations for all students.

Use research-based strategies for improving reading and writing instruction.

Increase the use of problem solving strategies in all classes.

Provide effective feedback on writing in all curricular areas.

Provide all students with an opportunity to revise their work.

Engage students in active learning in all subjects, and provide more challenging assignments with alternate forms of assessment.

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators and parents*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan and self study*
- ◆ *PDI Principal's Report by School*
- ◆ *Programs of Distinction booklet*
- ◆ *observing the school's website*
- ◆ *Hugh B. Bain SALT Visit binder*
- ◆ *1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *reviewing district and school policies and practices*
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*

Conclusions

The principal is the instructional leader in this school. During his short tenure at Hugh B. Bain Middle School, he has experienced considerable success in changing the culture and moving the focus of the school to learning and teaching. He is setting the tone in the school. The number of staff in leadership roles, including the vice-principal,

department chairs, team leaders, and a literacy consultant, provide an exceptional opportunity to improve instructional practices. However, this leadership group is not yet working as a team with a clearly defined plan to improve teaching and student learning. This detracts from the effectiveness of their collective work. *(interviewing teachers, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, and parents, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, following students, observing the school outside of the classroom)*

The school improvement team has had its starts and stops due to the changing school leadership and the resistance of some teachers. With the support of district level staff and new school leadership at Bain, a self-study and the school improvement plan have been completed. While it is not clear whether the entire faculty had a role in its development, most components of an effective plan are in place. This document, when it is revised to incorporate the recommendations of this report, will be an effective tool to help move the school forward in improving teaching and student learning. *(reviewing school improvement plan and self study, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators)*

The extensive availability of computers in classrooms and labs is quite surprising and laudable. Over 200 machines are on hand for student use. However, the ages of these computers ranges from brand new to six years. Approximately 90 machines are not even two years old. There is no formal plan in place for the systematic replacement of computers. The district provides technical support two half days each month. The technical assistance for staff using computers during class time rests mainly on the efforts of a few Bain faculty members, when they are available. This limits the effective use of computers as instructional tools when unexpected events occur during the lesson, either in the individual classroom or in the computer lab. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing the TAGLIT (Taking a Good Look at Instructional Technology) document, talking with students, teachers, school administrators)*

For the past several years Bain has had three different principals. The school is still going through the difficult transition between being a junior high school to becoming a middle school in its operation. With the leadership of the new principal the staff is generally ready to accept the challenge of this change. There are, however, a number of staff members who are resistant to change. This creates challenges in the implementation of best practices school wide. Teachers instituting these practices in their classrooms feel they are not receiving the support and encouragement of some of their colleagues. Interdisciplinary teams consist of four “major” subject teachers. Teachers speak of the unified arts subjects as “the minors.” This leads to an overall perception that the unified arts program is less valued, thus affecting morale. Some teams function exceptionally well, creating interdisciplinary units and communicating and sharing strategies to meet their students’ needs. Many teachers, however, are working in isolation, and there is little evidence of a coordinated approach to instruction. The opportunity exists within the current schedule to vary the length of instruction time, regroup students, mainstream special education students, and engage in interdisciplinary units. However, most teachers do not take advantage of this opportunity. The faculty has few opportunities to receive training or professional development in team building. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing records of professional development activities, attending team meetings)*

Several teams successfully create small learning communities for their students. Students in these learning communities feel connected and have clear expectations when they work with their team of teachers. However, students report that teachers generally do not coordinate tests and assignments, which makes it difficult for them to budget their time and successfully complete their work. While some teams work to integrate assignments, the team model is not embraced by the entire staff. *(talking with students, teachers, staff and school administrators, attending team meetings, observing classes)*

At present teacher evaluation responsibilities are shared between the principal and the department chairs. A new comprehensive, standards-driven, teacher evaluation tool and evaluation process are in place for both tenured and non-tenured faculty. This process has the necessary components for developing teachers and ensuring quality instruction at Bain. However, the mentoring program, which operates on an informal basis, is not fully implemented. Portfolios are not required for new teachers. *(talking with teachers, staff, and school administrators, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

The Bain School Improvement Plan includes an academic development committee, which identifies the need for a school-based professional development plan. Ten teachers at Bain have taken Course One, while 12 have participated in the CRISS (Creating Independence through Student-owned Strategies) program. These are designed to help teachers and administrators develop and implement standards-based curriculum and instruction. The school-based literacy consultant works diligently to offer support and to demonstrate standards-based teaching in the classroom. However, there is currently no clearly articulated and comprehensive professional development plan that is responsive to the specific the needs of this school community and its evolving middle school concept. Similarly, there are very few professional development opportunities at the district level that support the needs of a middle school that is struggling with the issues of teaming, scheduling, inclusion, tracking, team teaching, and interdisciplinary teaching. *(reviewing school improvement plan, talking with teachers, staff, and school and district administrators, PDI Principal Report by School)*

Administrators are available and open to the ideas of staff and personnel in how to implement change. The principal is also available to participate in various student activities. Monthly faculty meetings, department chair meetings, and team meetings are forums for communication. The school and some teachers provide a variety of web sites and e-mail addresses that link students, parents, teachers, and administrators to one another. Parents report that they are kept informed of their students' growth by receiving progress reports and report cards. However, they would like a better method of communication about their child's ongoing education; they wonder why quizzes and tests are not sent home. Parents request a monthly newsletter to bridge the gap between home and school. Although good communication is evident between administrators and staff, the school/home communication about daily student progress is inconsistent. *(talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, observing the school web site, reviewing school improvement plan)*

In the last one-and-a-half years a number of new programs have been developed and implemented at Bain. These programs engage community partners to support the development not only of academic skills of students, but also their social and emotional health.. Some examples include the Bain Student Planning Center, Project Respect, and the 21st Century Learning Community. Truancy Court is designed to support the school's efforts to reduce absenteeism and to work with families by setting clear consequences for the student who does not comply. The Truancy Court is firm, and it has judicial authority. Its intent is to help the child succeed in school. Other activities such as Student Council, Homework Club, and SAM help students to develop leadership and responsibility skills. The Bain community has worked very hard to have a variety of interactive programs that support teaching, discipline, student engagement, and student leadership. However, the A.P.O.L.L.O. program, as it currently is structured, is not an effective alternative to participation in a Foreign Language class. *(Hugh B. Bain SALT Visit binder, Programs of Distinction booklet, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents)*

Two-hundred-and-nineteen students receive services in Bain's special education program. This is 31% of the entire student population. These students are located in 10 self-contained classrooms, four resource rooms, general education classrooms, and pilot programs. While many of these students are mainstreamed for unified arts, homeroom, and at lunchtime, most are not mainstreamed in academic subjects. The new administration is working to create an atmosphere in which teachers are more comfortable working with the special education population in an inclusion model. Floating teacher assistants are an indication of this support. In a few classes around the school, teachers, who volunteer, successfully implement efforts toward inclusive practices. The 1998 Cranston Public Schools Report and Support Plan documented a need for more professional development for general education teachers in inclusion; the need for this training still exists. This impedes a coordinated movement toward inclusion. *(observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, reviewing school improvement plan, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing records of*

professional development activities, reviewing classroom assessments)

Commendations for Hugh B. Bain Middle School

The strong instructional leadership of the principal

The exemplary community spirit

The outstanding and extensive student support programs, services, and community partnerships

Recommendations for Hugh B. Bain Middle School

Delineate clear roles and responsibilities for each member of the leadership team.

Design and articulate a clearly defined leadership plan for improving teaching and student learning. Implement this plan.

Review and revise the school improvement plan to include the recommendations of the SALT Visit Report. Include all stakeholders in this revision.

Develop a coherent and comprehensive Bain Middle School professional development plan that supports the school improvement plan and the team concept.

Encourage all staff to participate in this professional development.

Investigate and implement effective teaming practices. Consider creative ways of using time, regrouping students, and including special education students in regular classes.

Fully implement the Mentor Program for new teachers.

Enhance the communications with the parents.

Work with district administrators to creatively solve the technology support and maintenance needs of Bain Middle School.

Recommendations for the Cranston School District

Provide professional development opportunities to meet the needs of the Bain Middle School community.

Work with Bain leadership to secure grants or new resources for technology replacement.

Investigate technology support options for the Bain school community to ensure assistance in trouble shooting and maintaining computer systems.

7. Final Advice to the School

The potential for a vibrant, effective learning community exists at Hugh B. Bain Middle School. The school pride, strength of diversity, and goodwill of students, staff, and community are ready to be tapped. Include students and parents in the discussions and decisions, as the school community defines and implements its middle school instructional model.

Teachers at Bain are a hard working, dedicated staff, who often give more than is required. They are united in their goal of putting kids first. Many are beginning to implement standards, talk about student learning, and embrace the changes necessary for all kids to succeed at their highest levels. Even though some teachers are happy with the status quo, many teachers are working toward implementing progressive techniques in the classroom so that all students are actively engaged in their learning. Support consistent standards for all students; deepen the students' writing and reading skills; and develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills.

To meet the educational needs of your large special education population administrators and teachers must operate together with an established inclusion plan. The implementation of a number of new programs over the last two years has helped to engage community partners in supporting the development of academic skills, as well as the social and emotional needs, of the students. Although interdisciplinary teams are in place, many teams function in less than optimal ways. In-service education and collaboration among staff will lead to a more coordinated approach to education.

This school has a wealth of human resources poised to move the reform agenda forward. The principal is an effective leader, who is committed to instructional excellence and student success. With his support the teaching staff is making progress in meeting the needs of all Bain students. Using a school improvement plan that reflects the collective efforts and priorities of the Bain community, there is great promise that educational excellence will take root and flourish for the students in this school. An administrative team is now in place to provide leadership and stability to your school. Work with them. Embrace this opportunity for positive and meaningful change. Create a school of excellence so all your students thrive in the 21st Century.

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

Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

Hugh B. Bain Middle School

February 1, 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 20, 2002