



Davisville Elementary School

North Kingstown

The SALT Visit Team Report

April 5, 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 Davisville Elementary School from April 1 to April 5, 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 Davisville 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 takes place at Davisville Elementary School.

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

- ◆ *observing a total of 80 classes. The team spent a total of over 87 hours in direct classroom observation. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once.*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 8 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

records of professional development activities

classroom assessments

school improvement plan for Davisville Elementary School 2001-2002

district strategic plan

1999, 2000 SALT Survey report

classroom textbooks

1999, 2000 2001 Information Works!

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

1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results

2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary

2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary

Davisville Elementary School Behavior Policy, After-School Detention Program, 2001-2002

The Davisville/Child Opportunity Zone Information Packet

numerous issues of The Davisville Update

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 22 hours in six separate meetings spanning the four [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 Davisville Elementary School

Background

Davisville Elementary School is one of seven elementary schools in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. The school was dedicated on December 18, 1953 as a neighborhood school. Due to the influx of military families in the mid-1950s, an addition was constructed in 1955/56 and opened in 1957. The school continues to be a neighborhood school with 75% of its students being “walkers.” No construction has occurred since; however, the grounds have been improved with the addition of playground equipment, gardens, and parking areas.

The school houses 265 students in grades 1-5. The staff includes one administrator, 14 classroom teachers, eight full-time certified support teachers, seven part-time certified support teachers, and 11 support staff personnel. The Child Opportunity Zone (COZ) has one director and one Family Center Coordinator.

Of the 265 students at Davisville Elementary, 80% are white, 9% are black, 4% are Hispanic, 1.5% are Asian/Pacific Islander, and 5% are Native American. Special Education serves 31 resource students, 34 speech and language students, and seven students with 504 Plans. Title I programs serve 54 students in math and 42 students in reading. Fifty-one percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

State Assessment Results for Davisville Elementary School

On the subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination six in 10 of the fourth graders (62%) met or exceeded the standard in basic skills; three in 10 of the fourth graders (30%) met the standard in concepts; and almost three in 10 of the fourth graders (27%) met or exceeded the standard in problem solving. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in mathematics for poverty and special education students. Students at the Davisville Elementary School perform below similar students in the state on all of the mathematics subtests.

On the reading subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination seven in 10 of the fourth graders (73%) met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Basic Understanding, and almost six in 10 fourth graders (59%) met the standard in Reading: Analysis and Interpretation. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in reading for male students. Students at the Davisville Elementary School perform below similar students in the state on the Reading: Basic Understanding and Reading: Analysis and Interpretation subtests. Student performance in both subtests has declined in each of the last three years.

On the writing subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination almost one in two of the fourth graders (49%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Effectiveness, and almost six in 10 of the fourth graders (57%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Conventions. On the Rhode Island Writing Assessment almost two in 10 of the third graders (18%) met the standard. Equity gaps (a difference of more than 15%) exist in writing for poverty, male, and special education students. Students at the Davisville Elementary School perform below similar students in the state on Writing: Effectiveness and Writing: Conventions.

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

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

Davisville Elementary School is nestled within a neighborhood of Cape Cod-style homes. The school welcomes a challenging population of children with many physical, social, emotional, and academic needs. A caring and nurturing staff, supported by a very successful and active COZ program, makes every effort to meet those needs under trying circumstances. A lack of sufficient space and a building that is often dirty present obstacles to the delivery of a high quality education for all students.

Maintaining high expectations for all students presents another challenge. For many students the day begins on an unstructured, unsafe, chaotic, poorly supervised, and understaffed playground. Fortunately, most classroom teachers have created environments that provide a sense of order and safety. These serve as “havens” until the children go to the lunchroom, which is followed by recess where chaos reigns again. Under these circumstances the delivery of a challenging and rigorous curriculum becomes almost secondary.

In spite of these less than optimal conditions children like their school and many are happy to be here. They seem to be able to separate their experiences inside the classroom from their experiences outside. Much of this is the result of a strong group of teachers who have taken the initiative and assumed responsibility for student learning. Teachers have also created a system of mutual support that serves them well. Most classroom teachers seek opportunities for professional development, secure grants, and acquire technology for their classrooms. They attend workshops, pilot programs, and participate on district committees. Some have been recognized for their outstanding contributions by organizations outside of the district.

Currently this school lacks a unified purpose or focus. The function of the School Improvement Team is not clearly defined or understood. The School Improvement Plan does not provide direction for improving student learning. A lack of effective administrative leadership also prevents realization of the school’s mission to “build a family-centered community of learners that fosters high expectations, respect, pride, and student and teaching excellence ... providing the tools for lifelong success.”

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- ◆ *1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results*
- ◆ *2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing classes,*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom,*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *meeting with the students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *Davisville Elementary School Behavior Policy, After-School Detention Program, 2001-2002*

Conclusions

Most students at Davisville Elementary School like coming to school in spite of some very substantial and legitimate concerns that they have about this learning environment. Students are aware of the behavior standards that exist, but many do not apply them in their daily interactions with teachers or with one another. Most do not have the skills and strategies they need to solve their conflicts with other students, both within the classroom and outdoors. Many students state that they are frequently “bullied” or harassed by other students. Some say that, when they report these conflicts to adults, they are neither acknowledged nor resolved. Physical aggression occurs mostly in unstructured or poorly supervised settings. Students are frustrated that they have no recourse for resolving these issues; they unfortunately feel that they must accept these problems as the reality at this school. These factors result in feelings of insecurity and futility

that contribute to a school-wide climate that does not promote student learning. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with the students, parents, school and district administrators, Davisville Elementary School Behavior Policy, After-School Detention Program, 2001-2002)*

Some students at Davisville Elementary School are actively involved in their learning. They participate in cooperative learning activities, are able to work well independently, and take responsibility for their learning. They are able to talk about their opportunities to learn and demonstrate an appreciation and understanding for the learning process. There are a number of students who seek every opportunity to learn. They are able to focus, maintain a high level of motivation, and use strategies that allow them to learn in learning environments that are less than ideal. Unfortunately, many students in this school are not engaged in their learning. They frequently remain idle, produce student work that is insufficient in quality and quantity, and often are not on task. These students have low expectations for their learning; they are often disruptive in the classroom and do not respect the rights of other students. Most students report that school is too easy and that they are not challenged academically. These factors contribute to an academic climate in which all students do not experience success and everyone does not work to his full potential. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the students, parents, and school administrator, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators)*

Most students at this school demonstrate a basic understanding of the variety of materials they read. They are able to answer factual questions about their reading, identify basic story elements, summarize and retell the story, predict, preview, and classify information from their reading. Some are able to analyze and interpret what they read. These students demonstrate an ability to synthesize information, make inferences, extend ideas presented in the text, and make connections between ideas and the text. Many students enjoy reading and especially enjoy being read to by their teacher. As a result these students are learning to read well and are developing an appreciation for literature. On recent statewide assessments 73% of the fourth grade students tested at Davisville met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Basic Understanding, and 59% met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Analysis and Interpretation. *(observing classes, following students, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results, 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, talking with students and teachers, meeting with the students, reviewing classroom assessments)*

Some students at this school write effectively, and many are able to apply conventions and grammar correctly. Some students are excited and enthusiastic about writing. These students readily engage in their writing, take pride in their work, and are anxious to share it. They enjoy opportunities to express their feelings through their writing. In some classrooms students are able to follow the steps of the writing process to produce high quality pieces. However, many students are unable to review, assess, peer or self-edit, or revise their work consistently. They are unaware of the criteria for good writing. Student work does not demonstrate that they are writing using a variety of styles or writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. While some students are writing in science journals, most students are not writing across the curriculum on a daily basis. This limits their ability to apply their skills or use their writing as an effective means of communication. On recent statewide assessments 49% of the fourth grade students tested met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Effectiveness, and 57% met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Conventions. On the Rhode Island Writing Assessment 18% of third grade students achieved the standard. *(interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, talking with students and teachers, following students, observing classes, meeting with the students and parents, 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, 2001 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results)*

Many students at Davisville Elementary School demonstrate knowledge of basic mathematical operations. Some students are able to use manipulatives effectively, and utilize various strategies when completing tasks. Students enjoy opportunities to participate in hands-on activities and work in groups to solve math problems. Fewer students demonstrate an understanding of mathematical concepts and applications and are unable to explain their reasoning when solving problems either orally or in writing. These factors help to explain student performance on recent statewide assessments, where 62% of the fourth grade students met or exceeded the standard in Mathematical Skills; only 30% met the standard in Mathematical Concepts; and only 27% met or exceeded the standard in Problem Solving. *(2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 New Standards Reference Examination results, following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, meeting with the students, talking with students and teachers)*

Commendations for Davisville Elementary School

Students who persevere and persist in their learning

Recommendations for Davisville Elementary School

Adopt a school wide character development program that emphasizes kindness, cooperation, respect, citizenship, empathy, tolerance, and acceptance.

Adopt and implement a school wide conflict resolution program. Train all members of the school staff, including paraprofessionals.

Develop and implement an effective school wide discipline program that reinforces high expectations for positive behavior and that contains appropriate, clear, and consistent consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Establish and instill high academic expectations for all students.

Engage all students in active learning. Provide more opportunities for them to engage in hands-on activities and cooperative learning.

Provide all students with daily opportunities to become fully engaged in the writing process across the curriculum.

Regularly and consistently engage all students in problem solving activities that will enhance the development of higher order thinking skills.

Recommendations for the North Kingstown School District:

Actively involve yourself in partnership with this school community as it develops and implements more rigorous academic and behavioral programs.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary,*
- ◆ *2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *1999, 2000, 2001 Information Works!*

Conclusions

The teachers at Davisville Elementary School are kind, sensitive, and nurturing. They demonstrate sincere concern for the well being of each child. Most teachers have fully committed themselves to this school and are generous with their personal resources. They express a strong desire to create and maintain a positive learning environment. Most seek opportunities for professional growth and are earnest in their pursuit of excellence in the delivery of instruction. Many teachers develop and pilot new programs and secure grants to acquire materials, technology, and professional development in a wide variety of academic areas. Teachers agree that they rely heavily on one another and the support system they have created among themselves. These dedicated teachers build the foundation for learning to take place. (*talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, observing classes, following students, observing the school outside of the classroom, interviewing teachers about the work of their students*)

There are many examples of outstanding teaching in this school. Some teachers possess strong classroom management skills. In these classrooms the teachers are able to create a positive learning environment.

They engage their students in active learning while maintaining high expectations for student behavior. Others create child-centered classrooms where teachers serve as facilitators of the learning process and where student work is proudly displayed. They encourage their students to take risks, think critically, and make connections to prior learning and real life. Additionally, there are teachers who patiently wait for students to formulate responses to their questions, who model the learning process, and who provide evaluative and substantive feedback to their students. In some classrooms teachers have established routines and structures that minimize disruption and distraction and that allow them to make the best use of their time during the school day. (*observing classes, following students, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, meeting with the students and parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*)

Teachers in some classrooms have not developed these same effective strategies, tools, or techniques. These teachers have not established high and clear academic and behavioral expectations for their students. They do not make good use of their time, and they do not provide their students with challenging or engaging activities. Those classrooms that are primarily teacher-centered do not provide for differentiated instruction, inquiry-based learning, or peer collaboration. As a result these teachers are not accommodating the needs of all students. Often teachers do not provide students with the time they need to process information or to develop their answers. Instead, they are quick to supply the answers to their students. Additionally, in some classroom teachers focus on the final product, rather than on the process used to create it. The many inconsistencies in the delivery of instruction result in unequal opportunities for student learning. (*observing classes, following students, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, meeting with students and parents, talking with students, teachers*)

Teachers at this school report that they have been provided with copies of the *New Standards Performance Standards*. However, many state that they have not been trained adequately to deliver a comprehensive standards-based curriculum or to create performance-based assessments. While they have made some effort to use rubrics, criteria checklists, and a variety of assessment tools, in most cases their lack of training and expertise has prevented them from using these effectively. (*talking with teachers, observing classes, following students, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing completed and ongoing student work*)

Some teachers at this school do not make effective use of instructional time in reading, writing, and math. Direct instruction does not take place daily. In some classrooms teachers do not have a balanced approach to literacy and numeracy. Often the teaching of reading and writing takes place in isolation, with few connections being made. Some teachers report that they have had difficulty implementing the new math series in the intermediate grades. Because intermediate grade students have not had the benefit of this program throughout the primary grades, they are not familiar with some of the strategies and concepts that are presented. As a result, student performance on statewide assessments for all English Language Arts and Mathematics subtests is below that of similar students statewide. (*interviewing teachers about the work of their students, following students, observing classes, talking with teachers, 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, 2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, 1999, 2000, 2001 Information Works!*)

Commendations for Davisville Elementary School

The kind, caring, and nurturing teachers

The willingness of the teachers to take many initiatives and accept responsibility for the success of this school

Effective support system created by the teachers

The willingness of the teachers to seek many opportunities for professional growth

Recommendations for Davisville Elementary School

Acknowledge teacher excellence.

Continue to support, encourage, and collaborate with one another.

Provide opportunities for teachers to model best practices for one another.

Continue to avail yourselves of professional development in standards-based instruction, performance-based assessment, balanced literacy, differentiation of instruction, and classroom management.

Recommendations for North Kingstown School Department

Provide job embedded professional development in the recommended areas.

Continue to train and support teachers as they implement new programs in reading, writing, mathematics, and science.

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*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *Davisville Elementary School Improvement Plan 2001-2002*
- ◆ *The Davisville/Child Opportunity Zone Information Packet*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators*
- ◆ *1999-2000 SALT Survey Report*
- ◆ *Davisville Elementary School Behavior Policy After-School Detention Program 2001-2002*
- ◆ *reviewing The Davisville Update*

Conclusions

Davisville Elementary School offers all students a wide variety of after school programs funded by the COZ (Child Opportunity Zone). These enrichment programs provide opportunities for students to explore and expand their interests in both academic and extracurricular areas. These small group settings foster cooperation and positive social skills that students need to develop. Parents are secure in the fact that their children are safe and happy when engaged in these programs. Additionally, COZ serves many families in securing the resources required to meet their physical, social, emotional, and academic needs. It also provides parent education programs that are well attended, and it encourages a home/school connection. All members of this school community sincerely appreciate the support and services provided by COZ. (*The Davisville/Child Opportunity Zone Information Packet, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators*)

The Davisville Elementary School Improvement Team is not currently functioning as the guardian of the school mission, nor is it responsible for overall school improvement initiatives. The role of this team is very unclear. The School Improvement Plan for the 2001-2002 school year does not include goals or tactics that are likely to bring about improved student learning. Many of the components focus on

improving facilities and building a stronger school community, but they do not connect directly to student learning and achievement. The School Advisory Council, which is mandated by the district, plays a more significant role in the direction of the school. However, it is not clear how these committees function, interact, or mutually support one another or the goals of this school. *(Davisville Elementary School Improvement Plan 2001-2002, meeting with the school improvement team and district administrators)*

Davisville Elementary School is not functioning as a fully efficient or effective learning community. While most children are happy at this school, many are disappointed that their day includes periods of time when they do not feel safe, secure, respected, or challenged. Too many students report bullying, harassment, and even physical aggression on the playground and in the lunchroom that is never resolved. Parents state that they are not satisfied with these circumstances and the lack of satisfactory resolution. Parents also report that there are many inconsistencies in the delivery of instruction, expectations, academic rigor, communication, and discipline. Many students and parents feel that they are not heard when they express their concerns at the school or district level. *(1999-2000 SALT Survey Report, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with the students, parents, school and district administrators, observing the school outside of the classroom, observing classes, following students)*

The principal of this school expresses respect and appreciation for her professional staff. Along with the staff, she is welcoming to all students. While some teachers feel that they are supported by the school principal when seeking professional development or initiating programs, there is some frustration that the principal is not an active participant in this process. Many teachers and support staff express a desire for stronger leadership and decision-making. Some teachers and staff do not feel that administrative support extends to the daily operation of this school, especially in the areas of discipline, instructional leadership, and facility management. These factors contribute to the ineffectiveness and inefficiency in the operation of this school. *(observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with teachers, staff, and school administrator, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators)*

Many parent and community members volunteer at Davisville Elementary School and provide valuable and much appreciated services. However, the overall use of staff at Davisville Elementary School is inefficient and ineffective. The pull out models that are currently used to deliver services in Title I Reading, Chapter I Math, and Resource cause students to miss valuable opportunities to engage in classroom activities with their peers or be serviced in the least restrictive environment. The number of paraprofessionals assigned to supervise the lunchroom and playground is completely insufficient and results in unsafe conditions for the students. Limited opportunities for the paraprofessionals to engage in meaningful discussions about their roles and responsibilities exacerbate the problems that exist. Additionally, the distribution of additional support staff does not focus on service to students, parents, or teachers, but is restricted to clerical and office support. *(meeting with parents, school and district administrators, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with teachers, staff, and school administrators, observing classes, following students)*

The detention policy that is being instituted at this school was initiated with good intent, but is not having the desired result of improved student behavior. The number of repeat offenses by the same students offers proof. In some classrooms a variety of interventions are being used successfully and a more proactive approach is taken, such as a classroom homework club. However, the school wide discipline policy does not connect behavior to logical consequences. For example, writing as a form of punishment is counterproductive in a school that is trying to encourage and promote student writing. Additionally, students, parents, teachers, and support staff report that violations of the policy often go unresolved and continue to occur. This results in a school wide climate that is not safe, secure, or conducive to learning. Furthermore, it does not foster the sense of community that is an important piece of the school's mission. *(Davisville Elementary School Behavior Policy After-School Detention Program 2001-2002, observing the*

school outside of the classroom, meeting with the students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators)

Although this school building was not designed to accommodate the current student population, the physical plant and grounds for this learning community have many attractive features. Among these are the flower garden, nature trail, playgrounds, and circuit training stations. Display cases and enclosed bulletin boards provide ideal locations for the presentation of student work. New windows and classic wooden ceilings are among the features that visitors notice upon entering the building. However, a lack of physical cleanliness frustrates the staff and does not honor students. Conditions in the cafeteria and student lavatory facilities are deplorable. In addition to a lack of cleanliness, some lavatories have no doors to ensure privacy or comfort. The continuation of these unacceptable conditions, despite numerous complaints from various constituencies, is frustrating and extremely troubling to all concerned members of this school community. *(observing the school outside of the classroom, observing classes, following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators)*

Parents report that the communication they receive from Davisville Elementary School is generally acceptable, and in some cases, exceptional. The school provides a monthly newsletter for families. Some teachers provide weekly progress reports, and others use personal newsletters, web sites, and email as effective communication tools. While many teachers at Davisville Elementary School make efforts to collaborate and communicate with one another, common planning time for grade level teachers is not available. Ongoing opportunities for teachers to share lessons, materials, concerns, and ideas for improved student learning are solely the responsibility of the teachers and usually take place beyond the contractual day. Overall, most members of this learning community feel connected to the school in a meaningful way. *(reviewing numerous issues of The Davisville Update, observing classes, following students, meeting with parents, talking with teachers, 1999-2000 SALT Survey Report)*

A recent decision by the North Kingstown School District to move the students in grades four and five to another district elementary school for the 2002-2003 school year has had a substantial impact on all members of this learning community. A high level of anxiety exists among those teachers who are unsure about their positions for next year. Students and parents also have serious and valid concerns regarding how the Davisville population will be accepted by another school. Some parents and teachers feel that there is a general disregard and insensitivity on the part of the district administration and its governing body pertaining to this matter. This is demonstrated by the fact that there has been no clear or direct communication from the district regarding this decision, which might have alleviated some of these concerns. *(talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators, meeting with the school improvement team, students, parents, school and district administrators)*

Commendations for Davisville Elementary School

The services offered by COZ and the strong home/school connections they promote

The commitment of parent and community volunteers

Meaningful communication provided to families

Recommendations for Davisville Elementary School

Evaluate, assess, and clarify the roles and responsibilities of both the School Improvement Team and the School Advisory Council in an effort to provide a more consistent and unified school vision.

Review and assess the use of specialists to make delivery of instructional services to all children more

inclusive.

Conduct regular inspections of the school building to ensure that a high standard of cleanliness and comfort is maintained.

Restructure the current school schedule to accommodate common planning time for grade level teachers.

Recommendations for the North Kingstown School District

Provide clear and complete information in a timely manner regarding decisions that directly impact the Davisville School community. Facilitate the transition of the Davisville families to their new school. Involve teachers, students, and parents from both school communities as they prepare for this move.

Join in partnership with this school as it redefines the roles and responsibilities of the School Improvement Team, revises its School Improvement Plan, and enters into a Compact for Learning with this School District.

7. Final Advice to the School

The Davisville Elementary School community faces substantial challenges. The reconfiguration of the school to serve students in kindergarten through grade three is bound to cause some anxiety for the teachers, staff, students, and their families. As you prepare for the changes that will occur, remember that the mutual support and trust that teachers have nurtured has sustained you thus far. Now you must maintain this same level of support and trust as you move forward.

Your pursuit of excellence in the delivery of instruction should continue to be your main focus. Do not waver from this commitment. Do not be afraid to hold your students to the same high standards that you hold for yourselves. Your students have proved to be resilient and persistent. These qualities will serve them well as you hold them accountable to higher standards.

At this time there are many visions for the future of this school. All stakeholders in this school community need to form a true partnership and develop a shared vision for school improvement. If this is accomplished, Davisville Elementary will become a school where students can become enthusiastic lifelong learners.

The Davisville Elementary School Improvement Team

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Parent

Joni Power
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Donna Thompson
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Grade 5 Teacher
Wakefield Elementary School
South Kingston, RI

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

Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

Davisville Elementary School

April 5, 2002

To complete the Catalpa Ltd. report endorsement, I discussed the conduct of the visit with the Visit Chair while it was in process, I observed a portion of the visit 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.
May 2, 2002