



Curvin-McCabe School

Pawtucket

The SALT Visit Team Report

February 8, 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 the 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.ride.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 Curvin-McCabe School from February 4, 2002-February 8, 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 Curvin-McCabe 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 Curvin-McCabe School.

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

- ◆ *observing a total of 126 complete classes and 21 partial classes. The team spent a total of over 120 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*
- ◆ *observing S.W.A.P. planning meeting*
- ◆ *following eight 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 administrator*
- ◆ *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

Curvin-McCabe School Improvement Plan, September 1999

*Pawtucket School District Strategic Plan, September
1998*

2000 SALT Survey Report

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

Welcome to Kindergarten binder

ESL binder

Working Wonders Portfolio of Math Tasks

*S.W.A.P., The Start With Arts Program, a Phi Delta Kappa Professional Development Institute
binder*

Start With Arts Program binder

SALT Visit binder, Chapter 6: Self Study

CIRC Reading Manual for Teachers

Educational Support in Pawtucket, ESP, Mentor and Mentee manuals

SWAP brochure

SWAP, Start With Arts Program binders

*Final Evaluation Report for the Start With Arts Program (S.W.A.P.) for the 2000-2001 School
Year Executive Summary*

Pawtucket School Department Teacher Evaluation binder

*Contract Between the School Committee of the City of Pawtucket and the Pawtucket Teachers'
Alliance*

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 30 hours in six separate meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time is exclusive of the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team must agree that every conclusion in this report:

◆ is important enough to include in the report.

- ◆ *is supported by the evidence the team has gathered during the visit.*
- ◆ *is set in the present.*
- ◆ *contains the judgment of the team.*

Using the Report

The team deliberately chose the words, phrases, and sentences it used in its conclusions, as well as in the *Portrait* and *Final Advice*. Thus, this report is the team's best attempt to encourage and support the school's continued improvement in strengthening the learning of its students.

The team reached consensus on each conclusion, each recommendation, and each commendation in this report.

It is important to note that this report reflects only the week in the life of the school that was observed and considered by this team. The report does not cover what the school plans to do or what it has done in the past.

This report is not prescriptive. The value of this report will be determined by its effectiveness in improving teaching and learning. By considering how important it considers what the team has said and why, the school will take its first step in becoming accountable in a way that actually improves learning.

It is important to read this report and consider it as a whole. Recommendations and commendations should be considered in relation to the conclusions they follow.

After the school improvement team considers this report, it should make changes in the school improvement plan. The revised plan will form the basis for negotiating a Compact for Learning with the school district. The purpose of the Compact is to ensure that the school and its district work out an agreement about the best way to improve the school and the best way to target district support for the school. A RIDE Field Service Team representative will offer assistance in preparing the compact.

2. PROFILE OF Curvin-McCabe School

Background

The Curvin-McCabe School is located in the Darlington neighborhood of the city of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The school, which serves students in kindergarten through grade six, opened in 1977. It replaced the Cottage Street School building on the same site and was named for two deceased, highly regarded staff members: Mae Curvin, a teacher, and Anna McCabe, a principal. In 1992 two self-contained classrooms were added to the open classroom style building, and in 1994 the school was renovated to provide computer work areas and to make all classrooms self-contained, except the kindergarten space. The Curvin-McCabe staff, families, and community worked together on the renovation design and the interior layout of the building.

One principal and 49 full- and part-time teachers serve the 527 students at the school. Seventy-two percent of the students are white, 18 percent are Hispanic, and eight percent are black. Seven percent of Curvin-McCabe students receive ESL services, and 19 percent receive special education services. Seventy percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

The integration of the arts in its overall program is important to Curvin-McCabe School, and several initiatives that support this integration are currently in place in the school. The Start With Arts Program (SWAP), which integrates curriculum across subject disciplines, was introduced in 1996. This program includes the following weekly arts schedule for students: two 30 minute periods of music, 60 minutes of art, 40 minutes of physical education, and 30 minutes of library. Teachers meet one day each summer to develop and update their yearlong lesson plans; then, every six weeks during the school year, the music and art specialists meet with the staff to coordinate plans. In addition, the physical education and library staff work jointly with the art and music specialists to determine how they can implement and complement SWAP activities.

Curvin-McCabe School and the Baldwin Elementary School, another elementary school in Pawtucket, are involved in a collaborative project entitled, "Expanding the Role of the Arts in Elementary Classrooms to Enhance the Literacy Growth of Children from Diverse Cultural/Linguistic Backgrounds and Economically Challenging Environments." An Eisenhower Professional Development Grant in conjunction with Rhode Island College provides 13 sessions scheduled over a seven-month period for teachers to increase their understanding of the arts, literacy, and ESL standards.

The Seedlings After School Program, sponsored by the Rhode Island Youth Guidance Center, is an arts-based therapeutic program for second through fourth graders. Seedlings is designed to be preventive and can provide intervention steps for students who show the first signs of emotional or behavioral difficulties.

A Reading Excellence Grant (REA), now in its second year of implementation, funds a reading initiative in kindergarten through grade three. A family literacy initiative is also part of this project. During the past three years funding from a Working Wonders Math grant has provided teachers with quarterly professional development opportunities. The grant also enabled the school to provide an on-site consultant to work with teachers. Additionally, one Curvin-McCabe teacher participated in Balanced Assessment training at Michigan State University.

Through the Model Classroom Initiative, Curvin-McCabe received funds from the GATES Foundation and the Rhode Island Foundation to purchase additional classroom computers. The Pawtucket School Department supported another model classroom in the school.

Power Lunch, an initiative of Partners in Education and the Public Education Fund, partners a caring mentor with one child. One day a week volunteers from the Pawtucket Credit Union, a school business partner, come to the school to read and discuss books with their mentees. Also, many students in the school read with younger students, as their Buddy Readers.

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) of Curvin-McCabe is active in the school. In addition to holding monthly

meetings, the PTO sponsors family events throughout the year.

State Assessment Results for Curvin-McCabe School

On the subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination more than two in five of the fourth graders (45%) met or exceeded the standard in basic skills; one in five of the fourth graders (21%) met or exceeded the standard in concepts; and one in 10 of the fourth graders (10%) 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 the following groups of students: white, Hispanic, black, and special education. Students at the Curvin-McCabe School perform at the same level as similar students in the state in Basic Skills and Concepts and below the level of similar students in the state in Problem Solving.

On the reading subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination one in two of the fourth graders (51%) met or exceeded the standard in Reading: Basic Understanding, and almost one in three of the fourth graders (30%) 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 the following groups of students: black, Hispanic, white, special education, and Limited English Proficient. Students at the Curvin-McCabe School perform below the level of similar students in the state in reading.

On the writing subtests of the 2000-2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination almost one in two of the fourth graders (47%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Conventions; and two in five of the fourth graders (42%) met or exceeded the standard in Writing: Effectiveness. On the Rhode Island Writing Assessment more than one in 10 of the third graders (13%) 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 the following groups of students: special education and Limited English Proficient. Students at the Curvin-McCabe School perform below the level of similar students in the state in writing. Students show a notable increase in their performance in Writing: Effectiveness between 1998 and 2001.

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

3. PORTRAIT OF Curvin-McCabe School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Curvin-McCabe School is a well-maintained elementary school of brightly lighted hallways and classrooms decorated with posters and some student work. The principal and teachers enjoy open communication with each other and celebrate a strong sense of community. Most teachers express pleasure at working in this school and concern for the academic and behavioral well being of their students. Teachers often use a variety of strategies in their classrooms to provide positive learning experiences for their students. Students really like school and want to please their teachers. They are generally well behaved and respectful of other students, the teachers, and the principal.

Both students and teachers display a wide range of awareness of standards. Most teachers have an emerging understanding of standards-based instruction and have begun to implement a unified set of standards for learning in their classrooms. Many use rubrics that outline clear expectations for all students. While the rubrics used in the school frequently hold students to high expectations, the standard is sometimes different for different students.

Teachers at Curvin-McCabe work very hard. Many routinely and effectively support individual student learning. Yet, some teachers rely too heavily on large-group instruction that leaves too many students disengaged from learning for long periods of time. While teaching reading is a central focus in the school, reading instruction lacks continuity across grades and tends to center on teacher-directed activities, rather than on student-centered ones. Teachers spend a great deal of time reading to students, and students spend much of their time listening and discussing and far less time practicing their reading skills. In writing, however, student work demonstrates steady progress in the effective communication of their ideas.

In math teachers involve students in much work around computation skills and math concepts, but they generally involve students in few activities of complex problem solving. This contributes to the low student performance in problem solving on the state assessments.

Excitement surrounds the Start With Arts Program (SWAP), a school-wide program that supports learning by integrating music and art into the curricula of academic subjects. SWAP is strongly supported by the principal, faculty, support staff, and students.

Generally, Curvin-McCabe provides a happy and healthy learning environment for students, but low student achievement, as demonstrated on state assessments, is a cause for great concern. However, Curvin-McCabe School can move its students to higher levels of learning if it fully implements a revised, clearly defined improvement plan that has been developed from an in-depth self-study of student learning.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 Information Works!*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with teachers, students, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *Welcome to Kindergarten binder*
- ◆ *ESL binder*
- ◆ *2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *2000 SALT Survey Report*
- ◆ *Working Wonders Portfolio of Math Tasks*

Conclusions

Students at Curvin-McCabe really like school and look forward to coming to school every day. They help each other; many enjoy participating in the Buddy Readers program. Students work well with their peers in small group settings, and many evaluate one another's work in a positive and constructive manner. Students respect each other and their teachers. They know the routines and resources in their classrooms. Students want to please their teachers and try to live up to their classroom expectations. In general, students are ready to learn. (*following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*)

While students at Curvin-McCabe School engage in oral, silent, and paired reading activities, they often spend much of their time listening and discussing and far less time practicing their reading skills. Most students adequately answer factual information recall questions about what they read, and they often write summaries of their reading and responses to what they have read. Occasionally, students act out stories and sequence story events in grade and language appropriate ways. Many students make predictions, and some are able to connect what they read to their own experiences. During the course of the year students work to read 25 to 30 complete books. Some of these are simple books, and a few of them are challenging. The basic reading skills of many students, as well as the more complex skills of far fewer students, are reflected in their performance on state assessments in reading: 51

percent of the students achieved or exceeded the standard in Basic Understanding and 30 percent achieved or exceeded the standard in Analysis and Interpretation on the 2001 New Standards Reference Examination. *(following students, observing classes, talking with teachers and students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, Welcome to Kindergarten binder, ESL binder, 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary)*

Student skills in writing are reflected in their classwork and in the steady increase in their performance on the state writing assessments. Between 1998 and 2001 student performance in Writing Effectiveness on the New Standards Reference Examination has increased from 16 percent to 42 percent achieving or exceeding the standard. Throughout the day students engage in writing activities that include writing sentences using vocabulary words, writing out math story problems, writing stories in music, and responding to reading, as well as writing longer pieces. Many students follow a well-defined writing process that includes brainstorming, webbing, mapping, drafting sloppy copies, peer and self-editing, revising, and publishing final copies. These activities help students improve their writing effectiveness, especially their writing of short stories, autobiographical incidents, and persuasive essays. *(following students, observing classes, 2001 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 Information Works!, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, observing the school outside the classroom)*

Most students willingly participate in basic math activities and routines. They practice counting, computing, and doing calendar math. They complete written and mental exercises like grouping and comparing numbers, estimating, and measuring with decimals, percentages, fractions, and whole numbers. They work with manipulatives, shapes, graphs, and rhythm patterns. Some calculate metric conversions, find areas and perimeters, and determine factors. Students connect math to their other daily activities when they count heartbeats in physical education class, make patterns and clocks in art, and develop equations that assign note values in music class. With guidance, a few students successfully complete multi-step problems in math, but most students can independently complete only simple problems. These activities are not enough to support student improvement in math. On the 2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination 45 percent of the students achieved or exceeded the standard in Skills; 21 percent achieved or exceeded the standard in Concepts; and only 10 percent achieved or exceeded the standard in Problem Solving. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, 2001 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 Information Works!, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, 2000 SALT Survey Report, Working Wonders Portfolio of Math Tasks)*

Commendations for Curvin-McCabe School

Student respect for each other and their teachers

Student desire to live up to classroom expectations

The steady increase in student performance on the state assessments in writing

Recommendations for Curvin-McCabe School

Provide more in-depth instruction of math topics.

Engage all students in complex problem-solving activities that will enable them to increase their learning and to apply their learning in different situations.

Continue to involve students in a well-defined writing process.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with teachers, school administrator*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *meeting with school improvement team, students, school administrator, district administrators, and parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *2001 Information Works!*
- ◆ *2000 SALT Survey*
- ◆ *S.W.A.P., The Start With Arts Program, a Phi Delta Kappa Professional Development Institute binder*
- ◆ *observing S.W.A.P. planning meeting*
- ◆ *Start With Arts Program binder*
- ◆ *Curvin-McCabe School Improvement Plan, September, 1999*
- ◆ *SALT Visit binder, Chapter 6: Self Study*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *Working Wonders Portfolio of Math Tasks*

Conclusions

The school schedule is structured so that teachers have common time available to them for planning. During those times, many teachers within a grade collaborate informally to share ideas and materials. Through the SWAP program, classroom teachers and the occupational therapist plan in collaboration with arts teachers on a scheduled basis. Informal planning activities also include the physical education teachers and the librarian. Common planning time enables teachers to share with each other, learn from one another, and plan for similar learning opportunities for all students. (*talking with teachers and school administrator, S.W.A.P., The Start With Arts Program, a Phi Delta Kappa Professional Development Institute, Start With Arts Program binder, observing S.W.A.P. planning meeting, Curvin-McCabe School Improvement Plan, September, 1999*)

Some teachers effectively utilize instruction for both large and small groups. They encourage students by offering

positive comments, by nudging and prodding them, by providing constructive feedback on how they are doing with the task, and by suggesting other strategies students may try. Teachers often provide students with individualized instruction and provide adequate wait time for their responses. This teaching supports the needs of various learners. However, some teachers answer their own questions before students can process them and respond. Also, some teachers rely too heavily on large group instruction, which leaves many students disengaged and uninvolved in learning for long periods of time. *(following students, observing classes, talking with teachers, SALT Visit binder, Chapter 6: Self Study, interviewing teachers about the work of their students)*

Teachers at Curvin-McCabe School have been trained in standards-based instruction and are implementing standards to varying degrees. Students also have a varied understanding of standards. Although teachers have posted standards in their classrooms and have begun to use rubrics to assess student work, their interpretations of rubrics vary. While benchmark papers are available for math, few teachers provide students with sample papers that model work that meets the standard. Without work samples students often lack a clear understanding of what teachers expect of them. *(following students, observing classes, interviewing teachers about the work of their students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, Working Wonders Portfolio of Math Tasks, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrator, district administrators, parents)*

Teachers at Curvin-McCabe work hard for their students. Students like their teachers. Many teachers come early and many stay after school to help individual students. Some are involved in the PTO. Some meet with individual families to support students in their learning. Their actions contribute to a supportive atmosphere for all members of the school community. *(meeting with students, school administrator, district administrator, and parents, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with teachers)*

Many teachers routinely and effectively work with individual students throughout the day. They communicate with students about what students are writing while they are writing it; they check the progress students are making when they work independently in math; they talk with students in art about how their drawings might connect with a social studies lesson; in ESL and special education inclusion classes they ask individual students questions to determine their levels of understanding. These strategies not only help teachers accommodate the needs of individual students, they also help teachers direct their future planning. *(following students, observing classes, talking with teachers, interviewing teachers about the work of their students)*

Commendations for Curvin-McCabe School

Many teachers who collaborate informally to share ideas

Hard-working teachers who contribute to the supportive atmosphere in the school

Recommendations for Curvin-McCabe School

Engage all teachers in professional development around rubrics, criteria charts, and benchmark papers. Implement what is learned in all classes.

Involve all teachers in using common unassigned time during the school day for sharing and planning.

Participate in professional development in the effective use of instructional time and in the effective use of varied instructional strategies so that all students are consistently engaged in learning.

Continue to support the individual needs of students throughout the day. Expand these practices to include all learners.

Recommendations for the Pawtucket School District

Work with the Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance to include formal grade level common planning time in teacher schedules.

Provide Curvin-McCabe School with the resources necessary for teachers to engage in and to implement what they learn in the following areas of professional development: time management, the effective use of varied instructional strategies, and the development and use of rubrics, criteria charts, and benchmark papers.

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students and teachers*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *meetings with school administrator, district administrators, school improvement team, parents, and students*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *CIRC Reading Manual for Teachers*
- ◆ *Curvin-McCabe School Improvement Plan, September, 1999*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *Educational Support in Pawtucket, ESP, Mentor and Mentee manuals*
- ◆ *SWAP brochure*
- ◆ *SWAP, Start With Arts Program binders*
- ◆ *Final Evaluation Report for the Start With Arts Program (S.W.A.P.) for the 2000-2001 School Year Executive Summary*
- ◆ *2000 SALT Survey Report*
- ◆ *ESL binder*
- ◆ *Pawtucket School Department Teacher Evaluation binder*
- ◆ *Contract Between the School Committee of the City of Pawtucket and the Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance*

Conclusions

Curvin-McCabe School provides reading instruction through the use of different reading programs for the different grades. These programs differ in their approaches to how reading is taught. Kindergarten through grade two uses a guided reading program in which teachers use appropriately leveled books for all learners within a flexible grouping system. Grades three through six use The Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC)

program in which teachers use un leveled books for all learners. Gaps in learning result for some students when they shift from one reading program to the other. *(CIRC Reading Manual for Teachers, talking with teachers, observing classes, following students, meeting with school administrator, district administrators)*

The Curvin-McCabe School Improvement Plan is not a comprehensive document. The plan was developed so that it would align with the Pawtucket School Department's improvement plan. However, as a guide for the improvement of teaching and learning, its use is limited. The plan includes five tactics; two of these deal with instruction—the implementation of standards-based instruction and the continuation and expansion of the SWAP program. The plan does not specifically address how teachers will change their instructional practices so that students learn more in reading, writing, math, and health. Nor does the plan include how the school will measure the impact of the tactics on student achievement. *(Curvin-McCabe School Improvement Plan, September 1999, meeting with the school improvement team, school administrator, and district administrators)*

The Start With Arts Program is an innovative and valuable program that strengthens the lessons and units taught in all classrooms by fully integrating art and music into the daily classroom curriculum. It provides for different learning styles to be incorporated into student work and also enhances the importance of special subject areas. SWAP allows students to make more personal, social, emotional, and cultural connections with the material that is being taught. Students are proud of what they create, and they share their art and music in public displays. Additionally, the program facilitates common planning time for teachers within grade levels. *(following students, observing classes, SWAP brochure, SWAP, Start With Arts Program binders, talking with teachers, meeting with school improvement team, parents, students, and school administrator, Final Evaluation Report for the Start With the Arts Program (S.W.A.P.) for the 2000-2001 School Year Executive Summary)*

Although the Library Media Center at Curvin-McCabe School is spacious and physically the center of the school, it is not effectively used as a resource for teaching and learning. Library funding for print resources was increased in 1999-2000, but the current funding of \$5.00 per student annually is insufficient for the expansion of the library's collection to a level that could effectively support the curriculum and student recreational reading. While some reference materials are current, the collection also includes out-of-date materials. In addition, while the Library Media Specialist meets weekly with the music, art, and physical education teachers, her schedule prevents her from participating in the formal planning sessions held every six weeks between SWAP teachers and grade level teachers. *(observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with teachers and students, meeting with district administrators, parents, and students)*

The Curvin-McCabe School is a facility that sufficiently serves the needs of both students and staff. The interior is clean and well maintained. However, the lack of windows and natural ventilation in many rooms is a major concern of both teachers and students. Parents, students, and staff are also very concerned about the safety and security of the outside play areas, as well as the bus drop off areas. *(observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with parents and students, talking with teachers and students)*

Various opportunities for parent involvement in the school exist at Curvin-McCabe School. Parents read daily with their children and attend teacher conferences and school functions. Some parents are active in the PTO, which sponsors social activities. The PTO also conducts two major fundraisers a year that help pay for field trips, the school yearbook, and periodicals for classroom use. The PTO also donates to the school library from these funds. Some parents volunteer in the classroom, while others say they want to be included in this activity. Most parents are very supportive of their children's learning, but some express a concern that they do not have enough information about what their children are learning. *(meeting with parents, school administrator, and school improvement team, 2000 SALT Survey Report)*

Curvin-McCabe School has increased the ESL faculty to better serve this population. The school makes a good effort to involve the parents of these students and translates school related information, including rubrics, into their native languages. The school has developed an intensive ESL program for non-English speakers and students who have been in this country less than two years. The program uses both pullout and in-class resource models. Unfortunately, the ESL faculty does not have the time in their schedules to accommodate all students at all times in regular education classrooms. The regular classroom teachers also have limited time and resources to commit to these students. As a result, some of these students are not always engaged in learning activities. *(interviewing*

teachers about the work of their students, talking with teachers and students, following students, observing classes, ESL binder, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)

Teachers are supported in their professional growth in several ways at Curvin-McCabe School. Professional development days are built into the school calendar, and teachers can also attend additional training appropriate to their needs. Through the district mentoring program, trained mentors provide pre-tenured teachers with professional and personal support for three years. The teacher evaluation instrument for non-tenured teachers is a "formative evaluation process" that includes a rubric and provision for a "professional growth plan." However, the teacher evaluation instrument for tenured teachers is little more than a checklist. It does not include a professional growth plan, and it is not a valuable tool for teacher improvement. Within the school, the principal supports the teachers. They feel she provides them with great leadership and a positive work environment that includes staff recognition. The principal has been key in securing grants that provide innovative programs, which include opportunities for extensive professional development and provide teacher support. *(2000 SALT Survey Report, Pawtucket School Department Teacher Evaluations binder, Contract Between the School Committee of the City of Pawtucket and the Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance, meeting with school improvement team, parents, school administrator, district administrators, talking with teachers, Educational Support in Pawtucket, ESP, Mentor and Mentee manuals)*

Commendations for Curvin-McCabe School

The Start With Arts Program

Principal support of teachers

Recommendations for Curvin-McCabe School

Investigate, adopt, and implement a unified reading program for kindergarten through grade six.

Conduct a thorough self-study that includes looking at student work and analyzing state assessment data. Revise the school improvement plan to focus on increasing student performance. Include more specific action steps and provisions for measuring the achievement that is the result of these tactics.

Investigate ways to better serve the ESL population in the regular education classrooms in the school.

Automate and increase funding for the Library Media Center.

Investigate ways to assure safety and security in the outside play and bus drop-off areas. Implement those measures.

Recommendations for the Pawtucket School District

Work with the school to investigate, adopt, and implement a unified reading program for students in kindergarten through grade six.

Support the school in its school improvement efforts.

Provide the resources necessary for Curvin-McCabe School to automate and update the Library Media Center and to secure the outside play and bus drop-off areas.

7. Final Advice to the School

The collaboration among many teachers at Curvin-McCabe School is both commendable and important. Continue those sharing and planning practices; strengthen them so that all teachers work together to serve the needs of all students and to increase the learning of all students.

Involve the entire school community in an in-depth self-study that focuses on student work, as well as on a careful examination of state assessment data. Use the information you gain to determine which classroom practices move students forward and which do not. Then develop a revised, comprehensive school improvement plan that is based on this information. In the plan include high goals and clear and measurable action steps that will lead to the achievement of those goals and that will result in closing the current gaps in student learning. Implement the revised plan schoolwide.

Continue and expand the work in writing that is moving many of your students to higher levels of learning in writing. Take a hard look at both the reading and math programs currently in place at Curvin-McCabe School. Investigate and implement one comprehensive, schoolwide reading program that provides students with opportunities to develop skills and to practice reading at their individual reading levels. Designate more time for student reading and less time for teacher reading. In math classes, as well as other classes throughout the school, provide students with many opportunities to develop complex problem solving skills that engage them in higher order thinking.

Continue the work you have begun in the adoption of standards-based instruction and in the development and implementation of rubrics to assess student work. Engage in more professional development around the use of rubrics to ensure that all students are held accountable to the same high standards. Expand those teaching strategies that support and engage all students in learning.

With a more focused effort Curvin-McCabe School can move all its students to higher levels of learning.

The Curvin-McCabe School Improvement Team

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

Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

Curvin-McCabe School

February 8, 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.
March 23, 2002