



Alice M. Waddington School

EAST PROVIDENCE

The SALT Visit Team Report

October 11, 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.ridoe.net/schoolimprove/salt/visits.htm>

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The SALT Visit Team

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1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS of this report

Overview

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Alice M. Waddington School from October 7, 2002 to October 11, 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 Alice M. Waddington 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 Alice M. Waddington School.

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

- ◆ *The team spent a total of over 155 hours in direct classroom observation. Every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once.*

- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*

- ◆ *following eight students for a full day and two kindergarten students for a half day each*

- ◆ *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*

- ◆ *discussing student work with their teachers*

- ◆ *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 Alice M. Waddington School*

 - *East Providence School Department Strategic Plan*

 - *East Providence School Department Quarterly Writing and Mathematics Performance Assessments*

 - *East Providence Appraisal of Teacher Performance*

 - *Agreement between East Providence Educational Association and the East Providence School Committee, November 1, 1999-October 31, 2002*

 - *East Providence School Department K-12 Mathematics Curriculum, Draft: June 2001*

 - *East Providence Policy Book Providence School Committee, November 1, 1999-October 31, 2002*

- *Math Performance Assessment Project 2001 (Working Wonders Closing the Gap)*
- *1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 Information Works!*
- *1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 New Standards Reference Examination results*
- *1999, 2000, and 2001, 2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- *2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*
- *2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*
- *2001-2002 SALT Survey results*
- *New Standards Performance Standards Elementary School*
- *New Standards Reading and Writing, Grade by Grade, Primary Literacy Standards for K-3*
- *Waddington School English as a Second Language binder*
- *Waddington School Talent Development Program 2002-2003 binder*
- *Parent Teacher Association binder*
- *School Improvement Team: Looking at Three-Year Trends, Equity Gaps folder*
- *Waddington School SALT Team binder*
- *The Write Traits, Trait-Based Writing Assessment and Instruction for the 21st Century*

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 representative will offer assistance in preparing the compact.

2. PROFILE OF Alice M. Waddington School

Background

Alice M. Waddington School is located in Riverside in the southwest corner of the City of East Providence, Rhode Island. Waddington opened its doors on September 26, 1955 as a seven-room schoolhouse for 290 students in kindergarten through sixth grade. The addition of five classrooms in 1960 and sixteen classrooms, including some with the open-classroom design, and library in 1969 brings the school to its present day configuration.

Failure of the heating system in November 2001 forced the closing of a major portion of the building for extensive renovations and repairs. Most students and their teachers were moved to various elementary schools across East Providence. The Waddington School community maintained its school spirit and continuity through various activities and events. Although students returned to Waddington for this school year, repairs to the building continued through the month of September.

A professional staff of a principal, 36 faculty (11 new to the school), a guidance counselor, a school nurse, two educational specialists, six special education and seven supervisory teacher assistants, two secretaries, and three custodians service the Waddington School. Along with the regular education staff, a Speech/Language teacher, a Talent Development teacher, a reading teacher, an ESL teacher, a part-time physical therapist and an occupational therapist service Waddington students. Grades one, two, three, and five include four classes each, grade four is divided among three classes and kindergarten consists of four half-day classes. The school also houses four self-contained special needs classes, two at the primary level and two at the intermediate level. This grouping allows special needs students to complete their elementary years in one school.

Of the 565 students at Waddington, 285 are male and 280 are female. Five hundred and forty-three (96%) are white, 14 (2%) are black, four (1%) are Asian Pacific Islander and 4 (1%) are Hispanic. One hundred students (18%) are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches. Seventy-two students (13%) comprise the Special Education population. Of that total, 40 receive resource services, and 32 are enrolled in self-contained classes.

Waddington School students are involved in various unique programs. These include the After Class Enrichment activities and the Puberty Program, both sponsored by the PTA. Other programs offered at the school include parenting classes; the Harvest Hop, a family-oriented night of performances, games, food and fun; the Chance to Dance Program for students in grades 4 and 5; and activities sponsored by the Cultural Arts Group. The teachers are instituting several programs including the Accelerated Reader program and Guided Reading for children in grades 3-5. A new music program utilizing computers and keyboards will begin this year.

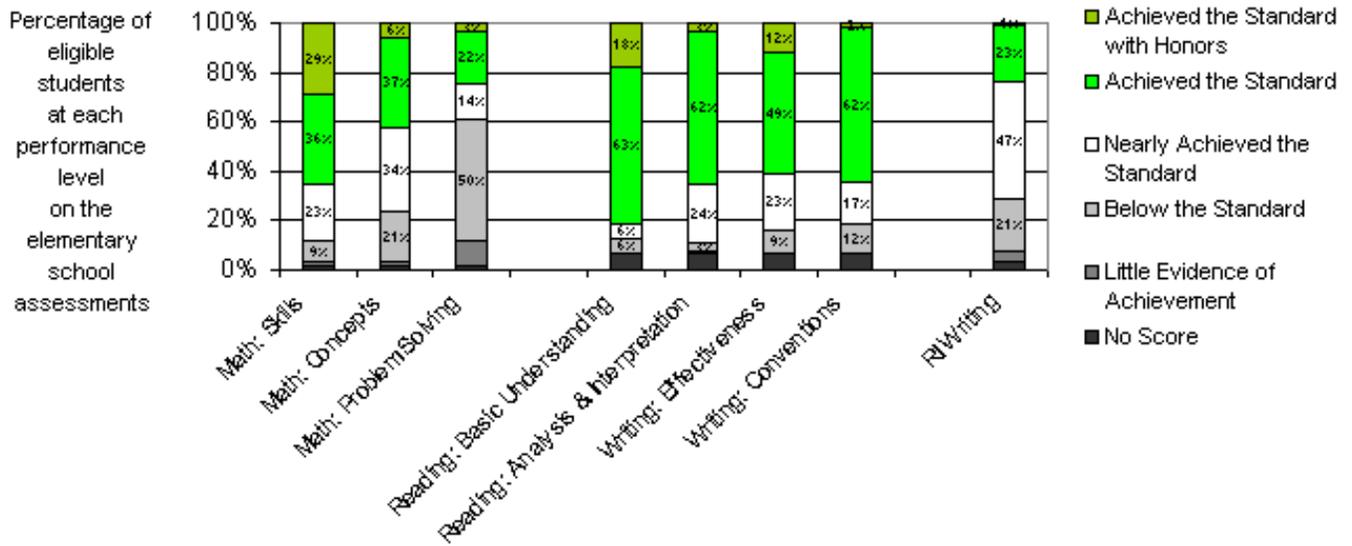
State Assessment Results for Alice M. Waddington School

This section of the school profile shows results from the state assessment program four different ways: against performance standards; compared to similar students in the state; across student groups within the school; and over time. Assessment results create pieces of evidence that the visit team uses as it conducts its inquiry. The team uses this evidence to shape its efforts to locate critical issues for the school. It also uses this evidence, along with much other evidence, to draw conclusions about those issues.

Results in relation to performance standards

The first display shows how well the students do in relation to standards in English/Language Arts and mathematics. The tested standards were endorsed by the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education in 1998 and can be found in the publication *New Standards Performance Standards*. In this display, student results are shown as the percentage of the test-taking grade in the various categories at, above, and below the performance standard.

Table 1. 2001-02 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments



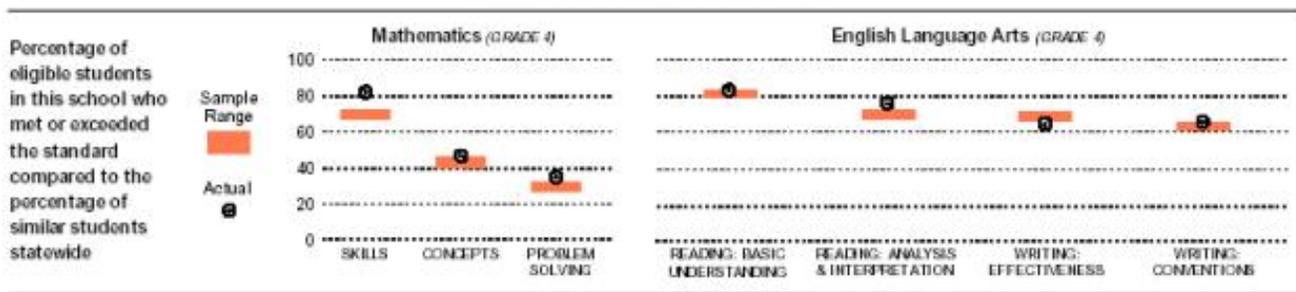
While students at Waddington School are high performing over all, they perform with less proficiency in the subtests that require the more complex aspects of literacy and numeracy.

Results compared to similar students in the state

The characteristics of students change from school to school and it is important to know how well the students in a school perform in relation to students with similar characteristics.

This chart takes into consideration the performance levels of students with special education needs, students participating in ESL or bilingual programs, low socio-economic status (a compound of income level, racial background and parental education), as well as the performance of students with none of these characteristics. It displays the overall performance of students in this school--taking all these characteristics into account--in relation to a group of students with matched characteristics from across the state.

Table 2. 2000-2001 Student Results in Comparison to Similar Students Statewide

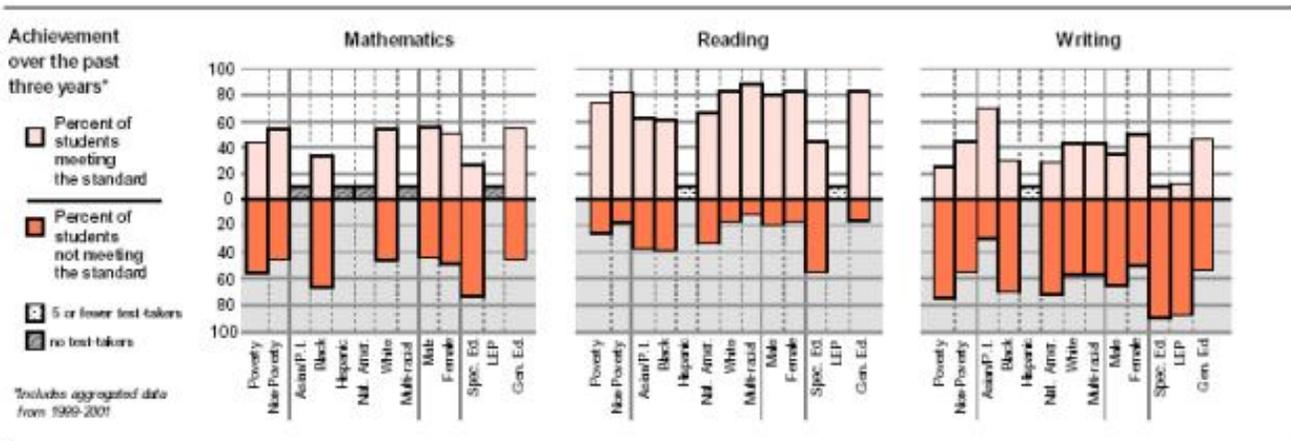


The percentage of students at Waddington Elementary who meet or exceed the standard in Mathematics Basic skills is higher than similar students statewide while all other indicators show that students work at the same level as similar students across the state.

Results across student groups within the school

An important way to display student results is across different groups of students with different characteristics who are in the school. This display creates information about how well the school meets the learning needs of its various students. Breaking results into smaller groups can result in groups that are so small it is hard to get good information about them. To create better information, the results from three years are used in this display.

Table 3. 2000-2001 Equity Gaps (Differences of Greater than 15% Proficient) across Student Groups in the School

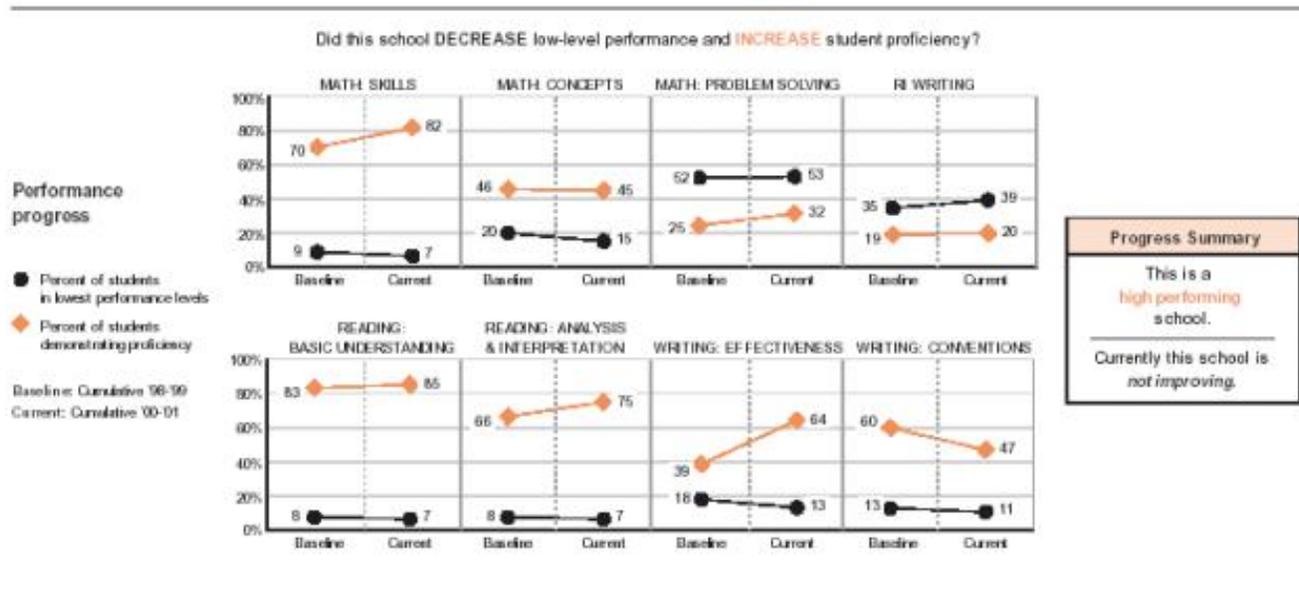


The Waddington School results are characterized by numerous equity gaps among the various ethnic and racial groups. This is also true for students in poverty and students who participate in special education and limited English proficiency programs.

Results over time

Now that the state assessment program has been functioning for five years, it is possible to show results over meaningful periods of time. This display shows changes in the percentage of students at or above standard and the percentage of students in the lowest performance categories. These displays correspond to the targets the department of education asked schools to set four years ago and are the basis for the department categorizing schools as improving or non-improving.

Table 4. 2000-2001 Changes in Student Results over Time



In over half the New Standards Reference Examination subtests, the school exceeded the 3% target for increasing the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency. The percentages of students in the lowest performance levels for six of the seven subtests are so low that it may be extremely difficult for this school to meet the target of 3% reduction in this population.

Information Works! data for Alice M. Waddington School is available at <<http://www.rido.net>>.

3. PORTRAIT OF Alice M. Waddington School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Tucked away in the tightly knit section of East Providence, Rhode Island, known as Riverside, the Alice M. Waddington School is a learning community in transition. Weathering the storm of renovations and subsequent relocations during the last school year, the faculty, staff, children and parents now are poised for changes in teaching and learning to increase success for all students. As the new and returning faculty settle into their classrooms, the resilient students display their comfort in this friendly, nurturing environment.

As the new blended faculty and principal work hard to establish classroom and school routines quickly, there is great potential for them to share their expertise and knowledge of best educational practices. Exciting activities are happening in the classrooms, as teachers begin effectively to use standards, criteria and rubrics. The teachers utilize them effectively and the children and parents understand their benefits to enhance the learning of all students at Waddington.

However, much work is needed to firmly establish the clarity of educational purpose and direction of this blended faculty. Consistency in the implementation of Everyday Mathematics curricula instruction; good reading instruction and practice, which includes using guided reading activities; and differentiated instruction are needed so that more students are challenged to meet and exceed their own personal standards.

The large number of students in most classes, the partial inclusion of Waddington's special needs population in the regular classrooms, the limited number of trade books and leveled readers are obstacles to developing a strong viable program for all students.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *2002 Information Works!*
- ◆ *2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards Reference Examination results*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *reviewing portfolios*
- ◆ *meeting with students, parents, and school improvement team*
- ◆ *discussing student work with teachers*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom textbooks*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*

Conclusions

Students write well in a variety of forms including conveying their responses to literature and poetry. They write narratives, letters, and tall tales, as well as keep journals. They effectively use criteria, rubrics, brainstorming, Six Traits, graphic organizers, word walls, and webbing. Many successfully prewrite, draft, edit, revise, and often publish their work. Students regularly revisit their work, using criteria and teacher feedback in an effort to meet or exceed the standard. In their reflection pieces, students demonstrate that they care and think about their writing. This attention to writing in English Language Arts (ELA) lessons extends to other subject areas. These attitudes and practices should result in improved student performance. However, these attitudes and practices are not found consistently, especially in some of the primary classes. (*following students, observing classes, meeting with students and parents, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing student portfolios, and reviewing completed and ongoing student work*)

In the primary grades, students complete phonics activities as the primary component of their new reading program at the exclusion of other reading activities. Throughout the school, students demonstrate their excitement about reading by seizing every free minute to engage in self-selected reading. They are working to meet the standard of independently

reading 25 books. Some students use trade books, actively discuss their reading, and develop reading strategies in small, guided reading groups. However, during reading time, many students simply copy vocabulary sentences from the board, fill in vocabulary worksheets, and read round robin from the basal texts. The quality and quantity of these student-reading activities are inadequate to raise student performance significantly in reading. (*observing classes, following students, reviewing classroom textbooks, talking with students, meeting with students and parents, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, reviewing completed and ongoing student work*)

Students primarily learn and practice a variety of computation strategies in math lessons. All students practice math skills by using games and worksheets. Some students in the intermediate grades also enjoy working with math concepts and solving math problems by effectively using a variety of strategies. They enthusiastically and competently recognize and identify problems, organize data, propose solutions, and defend and explain their problem-solving thinking. Most students conscientiously revise their work using rubrics. While students in the primary grades competently work on patterning and number sense, they demonstrate limited knowledge and experience with problem solving in math. Although the math assessment scores indicate a high level of achievement in math skills, they indicate only developing capabilities in concepts and problem solving. Generally, students are not developing the more complex thinking skills needed to become proficient problem solvers. (*observing classes, following students, meeting with students, talking with students, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing classroom textbooks, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, 2002 Information Works!*)

Most students cooperate in their learning by sharing their knowledge with one another. They respectfully edit one another's work in various subjects. They appropriately take turns during class, without interrupting each other, and they hold their classmates, teachers, school staff, and visitors in high regard. This behavior enhances their educational experiences and the opportunities they have to learn. (*following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, meeting with school improvement team, students, and parents*)

Commendations for Alice M. Waddington School

Students' willingness to revisit their work

Students' respect for themselves and others

Recommendations for Alice M. Waddington School

Extend good writing instruction and practice to all grades.

Provide more opportunity for students to read independently.

Read aloud to your students on a daily basis.

Engage your students in discussions about what they have read.

Involve all children in problem solving across the curriculum and at all grade levels.

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *discussing student work with teachers*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *reviewing the school improvement plan*
- ◆ *1998, 1999, 2001, and 2002 Information Works!*
- ◆ *2001-2002 Salt Survey Report*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom textbooks*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *reviewing district and school policies and practices*
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities*
- ◆ *2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*
- ◆ *East Providence School Department k-5 Quarterly Writing and Mathematics Performance Assessments binder*

Conclusions

The teaching of writing is not consistent at all grade levels. Writing instruction takes various forms, ranging from filling in worksheets to working on more rigorous writing activities. The quality of Kid Writing, journaling, letter writing and story writing varies considerably among the primary grades. Teachers in the upper grades more strongly emphasize writing as a process. Criteria make expectations clear, and students understand the rubrics used to score their work. Student use of word walls, Six Traits, teacher commentary, graphic organizers, peer editing, and reflection is evident. Teachers motivate students to revisit their work, when necessary, and to use feedback to improve their work to meet or exceed the standard. These writing practices occur across the curriculum. Greater consistency and varied writing experiences at all grade levels will increase proficiency in communication skills for all students. (*following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, meeting with school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, and school administrator*)

Teachers express frustration in their attempts to meet the varied needs of students in reading. Many report that it is impossible to assess student learning on an ongoing basis and to close gaps, especially for children reading below or above grade level. The lack

of classroom libraries and sets of leveled books makes it impossible for even the trained and willing teachers to implement guided reading in an effective manner. Many teachers over-rely on specific programs and do not provide students with time for daily self-selected reading. It is rare both in classrooms and in the library for students to participate in lively discussions about books or to ask high-level questions about them. They have few opportunities to hear stories, poems, or books read aloud by teachers. Without these necessary components of a balanced reading program, students cannot achieve proficiency in reading beyond basic skill acquisition. *(following students, talking with students, teachers, and school administrator, observing classes, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom textbooks, meeting with school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing district and school policies and practices, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

Although they use the Everyday Mathematics curriculum, teachers complete only some components of the program. They do not always provide their students with opportunities for hands-on active learning using manipulatives. Assessment of math skills and concepts occurs in a variety of ways, including district-wide quarterly assessments in which teacher generated and clearly stated criteria and rubrics are used to score student work. Teachers sometimes give children opportunities to discuss their work, but students, especially those in the primary grades, require additional opportunities to solve problems by using a variety of strategies. The current teacher practices of using math word walls, setting criteria, using rubrics, giving feedback, and allowing students to improve their work are positive steps that will lead students to greater achievement in math. Students' limited exposure to developing strategies for problem solving, as well as for explaining and defending their thinking, both orally and in writing, impedes their progress in problem solving. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing classroom assessments, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom textbooks, talking with students, teachers, 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, East Providence School Department k-5 Quarterly Writing and Mathematics Performance Assessments binder)*

A general sense of high expectations for student learning and behavior exist at Waddington. However, learning gaps are evident with various student populations. The school addresses these learning gaps by the shift from homogeneous to heterogeneous grouping within classes. Despite this, many lessons are teacher-directed and are geared toward the average student. These lessons do not effectively reach all students including special needs, ESL, high-achieving and non-traditional learners. Varied instruction with high expectations for all children is limited. Teachers are aware that they are not reaching all students and want training in differentiating their instruction to rectify this disparity. *(talking with students, teachers, and school administrator, observing classes, following students, meeting with school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, observing the school outside of the classroom, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 Information Works!, 2002 SALT Survey Report, reviewing records of professional development activities, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Teachers at Alice M. Waddington are dedicated professionals with varied classroom experience. They take advantage of district, school, and individually selected professional development activities. Most are working to meet the challenges presented by higher expectations and greater accountability for teachers. The diversity of talent and experience among the faculty are strengths upon which to build a stronger learning community. As teachers become more aware of both their own strengths and the areas in which they need coaching and/or support, mutual accountability will emerge. Stronger student performance will increase as teachers use a wider range of instructional tactics to reach diverse student needs. *(following students, observing classes, talking with teachers, staff, and school administrator, meeting with school improvement team, school and district administrators, parents, reviewing records of professional development activities, 2002 SALT Survey Report)*

Commendations for Alice M. Waddington School

Successful reopening of the school and start of this school year

Generous use of unassigned time for common planning

Opportunity for students to revisit their work

Recommendations for Alice M. Waddington School

Provide consistent and varied writing experiences such as dialogue journaling, responding to literature, sharing and reading student writing especially in the primary grades. Read aloud to students to provide models of effective writing.

Include self-selected reading time as part of your reading program. Teach reading strategies to improve student comprehension in all subject areas. Use your training to institute guided reading and insist on the materials, books, and support you need to do the work.

Strengthen students' skills in problem solving by providing problems and the strategies to solve them, along with opportunities

for students to explain and defend their thinking.

Ensure that appropriate math skills are secure before students advance to the next grade level. Provide enrichment opportunities for students, who are secure in a given skill.

Utilize the expertise of your colleagues to promote teacher development in best practices.

Use a broader range of instructional tactics to address diverse student needs. Hold high expectations for all students.

Recommendations for East Providence School District

Provide ramp-up opportunities for students who have not achieved secure math skills before they move to the next grade level.

Support your initiative in guided reading by providing teachers with the tools and materials they need to implement it. Provide continued support, as the teachers implement this initiative.

Find creative ways to help teachers build the classroom libraries necessary to implement a sound reading program for all students.

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *meeting with school improvement team, school and district administrators, students, and parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan*
- ◆ *reviewing teacher schedules*
- ◆ *Agreement between East Providence Educational Association and the East Providence School Committee, November 1, 1999-October 31, 2002*
- ◆ *reviewing district and school policies and practices*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *reviewing the PTA folder*
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities*

Conclusions

Some special education students receive services in four large and bright self-contained classrooms. Although their classmates accept them when they are included in the general population, they are physically separated from their peers during most of the day. These special education students attend music, art, and physical education classes with the general education students, but very few of them are included in classes for the academic areas. These students are generally well behaved and successful in their special education classes. A behavior specialist accompanies many of these students, when they attend regular classes. Teachers report success with including these students to date, although many classroom teachers feel class size makes this inclusion difficult. Too few special education students benefit from academic inclusion in the regular classroom. (*following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*)

The Parent Teacher Association at Waddington is a dedicated organization that supports a variety of events to enhance the school community and benefit the students. Children participate in PTA-sponsored cultural arts programs, field trips, and an after school enrichment program (ACE). Family activities, such as the Harvest Hop and Family Skate Night, build community. The PTA supports curriculum through health programs and reading events and activities; it purchases Weekly Reader and Accelerated Reader for the students. Through PTA efforts, computers have been donated to the school, and PTA volunteers have set up the computers for the teachers. The Waddington PTA successfully links the school, the family and the community. (*reviewing PTA folder, observing the school outside of the classroom, reviewing school improvement plan, meeting with school improvement team, students, school administrator, and parents, talking with students*)

Because the school can rely on the PTA to provide computers and technology assistance, the district postpones its own responsibility for providing adequate technology, support and training to Waddington School. The library needs substantial attention to become a powerful resource for learning. Along with additional print inventories and materials, additional technology

is needed to provide adequate resources to meet the growing needs of the faculty and, especially, the students. (*observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with school improvement team, students, and parents*)

The School Improvement Plan, adopted in February 2002, is an incomplete document for moving the school forward in its effort to improve student learning. A self-study of teaching and learning at Waddington does not inform this plan, nor do the strategies of the plan detail the specifics of what the school will do to accomplish its goals. The professional development strategies do not align the development needs of teachers with the learning needs of the students. While several of the components of an effective plan are present, action plans with assigned accountability, assessment of progress, as well as specific timelines for implementation are noticeably missing. As written, this plan is not an effective agent for change. (*meeting with school improvement team, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing records of professional development activities*)

There is no formal process for teachers to share their expertise and articulate their expectations cross-grade. Teachers voluntarily make effective use of their unassigned time to work with their colleagues. Teachers need time for job-embedded professional development to advance the ambitious educational goals and initiatives underway here. This will have a positive effect on student learning. (*talking with teachers, meeting with school and district administrators, reviewing teacher schedules, Agreement between East Providence Educational Association and the East Providence School Committee, November 1, 1999-October 31, 2002, reviewing district and school policies and practices*)

The faculty, staff, and students of Alice M. Waddington School are fortunate to have Bill Marcel as principal. District leaders, teachers, and parents are unanimous in their praise of his leadership through the difficult and unusual circumstances of the 2001-02 school year. All credit his ability to maintain a Waddington identity, even though students were scattered among four schools. He has begun a transition that is more than just the reopening of the school. His vision for this school includes meeting the needs of all children by building on the strengths of new and veteran staff. He respects the traditions of the past, while redefining them to meet the needs of today's families. His leadership and strength will be a vital force in moving Waddington forward. (*observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*)

Commendations for Alice M. Waddington School

Principal as educational leader

Strong commitment of the PTA

Recommendations for Alice M. Waddington School

Engage teachers in job-embedded professional development.

Consider relocating the upper grade special needs classrooms so that students are closer to their age-appropriate peers. Expand the inclusion of these students in academic areas.

Assist the librarian to expand the role of the library to create an instructional and technological environment that will promote student learning.

Use the findings in this report to rewrite your school improvement plan. Be sure to incorporate the specifics of how you will reach all the goals you set to improve student learning.

Recommendations for East Providence School District

Provide resources to upgrade the library with appropriate technology and up-to-date print materials for student and teacher use.

7. Final Advice to the School

The Alice M. Waddington School is a welcoming place. The teachers genuinely welcome their students into this community for learning. The principal, teachers, staff and students warmly welcome visitors into this learning environment. Today, the entire school population welcomes its most important visitors of all –change and growth.

Under the steady hand of your charismatic leader, Principal Bill Marcel, your school maintained its identity despite the upheaval and separation of last year. Having weathered that stormy year and a difficult start to another, you have arrived at a safe port. Teachers, parents and students need to take some time to relax and reflect on the difficult journey. Please do not be satisfied with “safe.” Set your course to reach new and greater levels of success. Begin with the simple things – read to your students, put shiny new books into their eager hands and question them about everything. Work together to implement guided reading in all classrooms. Make your library a learning center for the school. Have high expectations for all students and for yourselves, as well. Let your district and community know loud and clear that there are too many children in your classes.

Your willingness to do more than the minimum that is expected or required, to embrace rather than merely accept change, and to celebrate diversity will provide you with guideposts for growth and improvement. The key to your success will be in forming new and improved collaborations that focus on student achievement. These collaborations must include self-study to inform your practice on an ongoing basis and the sharing of your ideas with others.

Recognizing your many strengths, this visiting team has confidence that your crew, under the capable leadership of your principal, will continue to seek out those opportunities that will assist you, as you strive to meet the needs of all students. We wish you well on your journey.

THE ALICE M. WADDINGTON School Improvement Team

Kathy Butler, Parent

Kathi Gouveia, Parent

Jennifer Hurley, Parent

Lloydanne Leddy, Teacher

Linda Lewis, Teacher

Donna Lord, Teacher

William Marcel, Principal

Peg Racca, Community Member

John Savage, Community Member

Karin Smith, Teacher

Dennis Streit, PTA President

Heather Vine, Parent

The SALT Visit Team

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Wilbur and McMahon School
Little Compton, Rhode Island

Mary Murray
Grade 3 Teacher
Flora S. Curtis School
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

Alice M. Waddington School

October 11, 2002

Catalpa Ltd. monitors all SALT visits and examines each SALT visit team report to determine whether it should be endorsed as a legitimate SALT report. The endorsement decision is based on procedures and criteria specified in *Endorsing SALT Visit Team Reports*. (available on Catalpa website). Catalpa Ltd. bases its judgment about the legitimacy of a report on these three questions:

Did the SALT visit team and the host school conduct the visit in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the protocol for the visit?

Do the conclusions of the report meet the tests for conclusions specified in the visit protocol (important, accurate, set in present, shows the team's judgment)?

Does the report meet the tests for a report as specified in the visit protocol (fair, useful, and persuasive of productive action)?

Using the answers to these questions, the final decision to endorse the report answers the overall endorsement question: Is this a legitimate SALT team visit report? In order to make this determination, Catalpa weighs all the questions and issues that have been raised to decide whether a report is legitimate or not. While it is possible that a challenge related to one of the three questions listed above would be serious enough to withhold or condition the endorsement, it is more likely that issues serious enough to challenge a report's legitimacy will cut across the three questions.

While the SALT visit protocol requires that all SALT visits are conducted to an exceptionally high standard of rigor, visits are "real-life" events; it is impossible to control for all unexpected circumstances that might arise. The protocol for the conduct of the visit is spelled out in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs, 1st edition*.

Since unexpected circumstances might result in either the team or the school straying too far from the protocol for a visit, Catalpa monitors both the school and the team during a visit regarding the conduct of the visit.

Most often actual visit events or issues do not challenge a report's legitimacy and Catalpa's monitoring and endorsement is routine. A district administrator, principal, faculty member or parent may not like a report, or think it is too negative, or think the visit should have been conducted in a manner that is not consistent with the protocol. None of these represent a challenge to a report's legitimacy; concerns that might challenge an endorsement are based on events that stray too far from the protocol.

The Catalpa review of this visit and this report was routine.

The steps Catalpa completed for this review were:

- discussion with the chair about any issues related to the visit before it began
- daily discussion of any issues with the visit chair during the visit,
- observation of a major portion of the visit
- discussion with the principal regarding any concerns about the visit at the time of the visit
- thorough review of the report in both its pre-release and final version form

The findings from the review are:

1. This team was certified to meet team membership requirements by RIDE staff.
2. 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.

3. The conclusions are legitimate SALT visit conclusions.
4. The report is a legitimate SALT visit report.

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD

Catalpa Ltd.

DATE: December 9, 2002