



# Fairmount PRIMARY Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools

Woonsocket

## The SALT Visit Team Report

October 25, 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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**For information about SALT, please contact Rick Richards at 401-222-4600, x 2194 or [salt@ridoe.net](mailto:salt@ridoe.net).**

**This report is available at <http://www.ridoe.net/schoolimprove/salt/visits.htm>**

### 1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS of this report

#### ***Overview***

#### ***Sources of Evidence for This Report***

#### ***Using the Report***

2. PROFILE OF Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools

**Background**

**State Assessment Results for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools**

3. PORTRAIT OF Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

**Sources of Evidence**

**Conclusions**

**Commendations for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools**

**Recommendations for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools**

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

**Sources of Evidence**

**Conclusions**

**Commendations for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools**

**Recommendations for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools**

**Recommendations for Woonsocket School District**

6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

**Sources of Evidence**

**Conclusions**

**Commendations for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools**

**Recommendations for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools**

**Recommendations for Woonsocket School District**

7. Final Advice to the School

*The Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools Improvement Team*

*The SALT Visit Team*

*Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report*

# 1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS of this report

## Overview

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools from October 21-25, 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:[\[1\]](#)

*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 Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools 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 Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Sec

ond Avenue Schools.

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

- ◆ *observing a total of 130 complete and partial lessons. The team spent a total of over 123 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*

- ◆ *talking with teachers about the work of their students*

- ◆ *reviewing the following documents:*

- *district and school policies and practices*

- *records of professional development activities*

- *classroom assessments*

- *school improvement plan for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools*

- *Woonsocket Public Schools Strategic Plan*

- *Woonsocket Public Schools Report Cards*

- *2001-2002 SALT Survey report*

- *The Fairmount Schools 5<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Schools self-study folder*

- *classroom textbooks*

- *2002 Information Works!*
- *2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- *Service–Learning Portfolio*
- *Contract Between the School Committee of the City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island and the Woonsocket Teachers Guild Local #95 of the American Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO*
- *Woonsocket Education Department Curriculum Frameworks, Standards and Benchmarks*
- *Woonsocket Education Department Curriculum Outlines and Guides*
- *K, 1,2 Assessment Folder*
- *Balanced Literacy Folder*
- *Teacher Evaluation Folder*
- *Principal's Goals Folder*
- *Weekly Notices Folder*
- *Partnerships Folder*
- *Reading Recovery Folder*
- *Reading Is Fundamental Folder*
- *District Initiatives Folder*
- *Staff Development Folder*
- *Parent Involvement Folder*
- *Student of the Month Folder*
- *Eisenhower Folder*
- *Parent folder*
- *Parent Handbook*
- *Summer School Folder*
- *Peace Making Program Folder*
- *Principals of Learning Folder*
- *Eisenhower Regional Alliance Folder*
- *Article 31 folder*

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 30.5 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 Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools

### Background

The Fairmount Primary Schools, consisting of Second and Fifth Avenue Schools, are located in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. Fifth Avenue School, constructed in 1918, houses nine classrooms for the first and second grades. Second Avenue School, built in 1938, houses six classrooms for kindergarten through grade four. To meet the needs of a diverse student body, a variety of classroom models are used including multi-age and multi-cultural classrooms, full-day kindergarten and full-inclusion classrooms.

One full-time principal heads both schools. Eighteen classroom teachers, six itinerant teachers, and 12 paraprofessionals service the students of the Fairmount Schools, along with four reading specialists, two speech and language specialists, one resource teacher, and one literacy coach. Additional support personnel include a counselor, a nurse, an occupational therapist, a school psychologist, a special education case manager, a social worker, two custodians, two secretaries and eight cafeteria staff.

Of the 304 students at the Fairmount Schools, 33% are white, 41% are Hispanic, 16% are black, 9% are Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% are American Indian/Alaskan. Approximately 22% of the students receive ESL services, and 15% receive special education services. In addition, 88% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

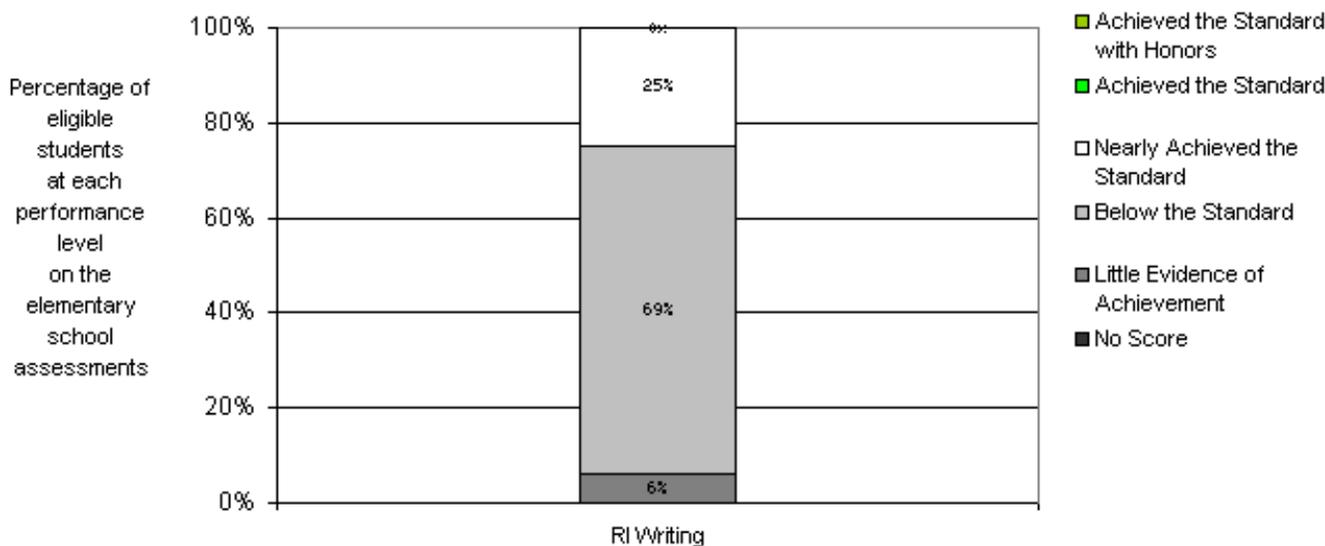
A variety of programs and initiatives meet both the academic and affective needs of a diverse population. A Twenty-First Century Grant provides the complete funding for three full-day kindergartens. A federally funded Title I reading program offers extensive literacy support including four reading specialists, who are also trained in Reading Recovery. Title I funding also provides for a full-time guidance counselor, who conducts one-on-one counseling and a year-long classroom counseling program based on a Peace Making Curriculum. The schools participate in the Reading Is Fundamental program and have used two \$30,000 Working Wonders Grants to upgrade the technology available to their students.

### State Assessment Results for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools

#### State Assessment Results for the Fairmount Campus

The only state assessment results for the Fairmount campus come from the Rhode Island Writing Assessment administered at Second Avenue School, which are shown in the chart below. This table shows that no third grade students achieved proficiency on this assessment.

Table 1. 2000-01 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments



Other information about this school is available at <<http://www.rido.net>>.

### 3. PORTRAIT OF Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

The Fifth and Second Avenue Schools that make up the Fairmount Primary Schools are located two blocks apart within a densely populated section of Woonsocket. These two buildings operate as one school under the leadership of a visible, caring principal, who is

well respected by his students and staff. Within their walls lie a multitude of learning models including multi-cultural, multi-age, looping and inclusion.

Upon entering these buildings, the slogan of "I Care" is prominently displayed and evident in the nurturing demeanor of the teachers and support staff. One gleans a sense of family and familiarity as the children enter eager to learn. Teachers are welcoming, accepting of all students, and exhibit a deep level of camaraderie. They are committed to providing a safe, happy learning environment despite the age of the buildings and the lack of space.

Many new initiatives are underway at the district level that can help Fifth and Second Avenue Schools move forward in their endeavors to increase student achievement. Much work is needed to help teachers effectively implement standards-based instruction and comprehensive literacy. A focus has yet to be established as teachers struggle to begin to make the changes necessary to improve student learning.

## 4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *observing classes*

◆

talking with teachers about the work of their students

- ◆ *reviewing classroom textbooks*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrator*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*

### Conclusions

Student performance in math is inconsistent. Students are beginning to use the language of math and to apply their math understanding to classroom tasks. They are eager to learn and show what they know. Some students successfully count, compute simple sums and differences, and demonstrate one-to-one correspondence. Given the opportunity, some can articulate steps for solving word problems and can illustrate and explain their solutions independently, while others can do so with assistance. Some students easily solve the problem of the day, while others do not know where to begin. In a rote manner, students perform daily routines, such as naming the day of the week, reporting the daily weather, and counting the number of school days. Students yearn for feedback and do not reflect on their work or share it with others. Some students are frustrated and lack a variety of strategies to help themselves. Many often are confused and do not have an opportunity to clear up their misunderstandings before moving on to the next task. As long as these inconsistencies exist, student performance in math will not improve. (*following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work,*

*talking with teachers about the work of their students, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, reviewing classroom textbooks)*

Students love to read, and some report it is their favorite subject. They especially enjoy read alouds, and they are active listeners. Some choose reading as their free-choice activity. Students read and comprehend at a literal level, demonstrating basic decoding skills, use of context clues and picture cues, and their ability to identify high-frequency words. They practice reading texts, which they select

and their teachers select, as well as language experience stories, poetry, chants, and leveled texts. All students are learning the strategy of retelling to improve their comprehension. Some students are learning to cite evidence in the text to support their answers to comprehension questions. However, most students do not engage in frequent analysis and interpretation of the text in order to develop the skills necessary to become more effective readers. (*following students, observing classes, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, reviewing classroom textbooks, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school administrator)*

In their daily writing students demonstrate an adequate understanding of writing conventions and mechanics. They explain in writing their solutions to math word problems. They use the retelling strategy to connect their reading to their writing. It is

impressive to see that some of the younger students make connections between ideas and written language, when they include writing with their journal drawings. Some students brainstorm their ideas before they write and then edit their work for writing conventions. Although some students collect their writing pieces in a folder, they rarely write on one piece for an extended period of time. While their writing reflects compliance with routine assignments, it lacks originality and student choice that will lead to improved student proficiency and scores. *(following students, observing classes, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, talking with teachers about the work of their students, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators)*

Students come to school eager to learn. They are active participants, who are proud of what they know. They are polite and respectful of their teachers and their peers. They understand and accept the rules for appropriate behavior both within and outside the classroom. The students are receptive and responsive to learning and are ready for more. *(observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators)*

## Commendations for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools

Receptive, eager students

## Recommendations for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools

Provide consistent feedback to students so that they may have the opportunity for deeper understanding and reflection.

Provide students with opportunities to articulate their thinking with their peers.

Anticipate the various needs of students to alleviate the frustration and misunderstandings that some students experience in math. Model and provide a variety of strategies and resources for solving problems.

Provide students with more opportunities to read silently from books they select.

Model and provide more opportunities for students to analyze and interpret text.

Continue and extend students' exposure to a wide-variety of language-rich literature.

Use the third grade writing assessment to improve student writing.

Increase opportunities for student choice, while encouraging original and creative thought.

## 5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *talking with teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *2002 SALT Survey Report*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan*
- ◆ *reviewing classroom assessments*
- ◆ *2002 Information Works!*

### Conclusions

Teachers provide a safe, nurturing environment and are genuinely concerned for their students. They respect and listen to their students and try to find the resources to meet their needs. They set the standard for expected positive behavior and create a calm, peaceful environment. (*following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, 2002 SALT Survey Report*)

Teachers are at the beginning stages of implementing standards-based instruction. While they exhibit high expectations for behavior, they have yet to expect that same high level for academic achievement. Much of the teaching in the areas of numeracy and literacy is teacher directed and involves basic level skills. Teachers do not often expect students to meet grade-level standards, and many of their teaching methods and tasks they assign reflect this belief. Pacing is slow and transitions are long, resulting in time that is not productive for anyone. (*meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, following students, observing classes, talking with teachers and school administrator, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, 2002 SALT Survey Report*)

Teachers are actively engaged with students throughout the day either in small groups or with the whole class or individual students. Yet, instruction is not always differentiated to address individual academic needs. Teachers report that they use running records and retellings as assessment tools. However, they miss other opportunities for on-going student assessment. This limits the effectiveness of small group instruction and diminishes the teacher's ability to make the best-informed decisions to drive instruction. (*observing classes, following students, reviewing school improvement plan, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, and school administrator, reviewing classroom assessments*)

A variety of teaching styles is evident throughout the school. Groups of students work at work centers and/or tables. Nonetheless, much of the instruction does not allow for authentic cooperative learning or inquiry-based activities. Teachers give little or no time to reflecting on student work, whether with individual students, through talking with students, or providing feedback to a whole class. Teachers use the newly instituted general rubric. However, this rubric serves as a checklist for scoring mechanics and

conventions, rather than as a measure of the quality of student performance. There is a lack of exemplary student work used as models. A considerable imbalance exists between the amount of time given for teacher-talk as compared to the amount of time given for student-talk. Given the high percentage of ESL students, more opportunities for language expression are needed. (following students, observing classes, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, talking with teachers about the work of their students

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## Commendations for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools

Caring, nurturing staff

## Recommendations for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools

Continue to set high expectations for student behavior.

Accelerate professional development for all staff on Principles of Learning, standards-based and differentiated instruction, comprehensive literacy, inquiry-based and cooperative learning.

Continue to utilize embedded professional development (literacy coach, professional development coordinator, teacher leaders).

Analyze and adjust the use of time and pacing to optimize instruction.

Use formal and informal assessments frequently to drive instruction.

Provide instruction and then give students time to reflect on their work.

## Recommendations for Woonsocket School District

Support the teachers as they strive to improve their instruction.

## 6. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

### Sources of Evidence

- ◆ *observing classes*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *talking with many students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*
- ◆ *reviewing school improvement plan*
- ◆ *reviewing district strategic plan*
- ◆

talking with teachers about the work of their students

- ◆ *meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents*
- ◆ *2002 SALT Survey Report*
- ◆ *reviewing district and school policies and practices*
- ◆ *following students*
- ◆ *reviewing records of professional development activities*
- ◆ *self-study folder*
- ◆ *Article 31 folder*
- ◆ *partnerships folder*

### Conclusions

Computer labs exist at Fifth Avenue and Coleman Elementary School, the receiving school for Second and Fifth Avenue students. While Second Avenue School does not have a computer lab, Second Avenue students use the well-equipped lab at Coleman on a weekly basis. Fifth Avenue students use a more limited lab located in the school's small basement library. Although they are visible in classrooms, computers are not used regularly as instructional tools. Some students report they use computers to play games, during recess time or at learning centers. Few classrooms effectively employ this valuable resource to address the diverse learning styles of the students. (*observing classes, following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district strategic plan*)

The school provides a variety of classroom configurations with the hope of helping all students reach the standards. The implementation of these varied configurations demonstrates risk-taking, belief in the least-restrictive environment, and an attempt to reach the affective needs of the students in an equitable manner. The benefits from so many classroom models are not clear. (*following students, observing classes, reviewing school improvement plan, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents,*

*talking with teachers about the work of their students, talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrator*)

Fairmount Schools have established on-going relationships with several outside agencies to meet the affective needs of their students and families. Collaboration between the agencies and district support staff promotes an enhanced networking system designed to improve services for this school community. The school has made many attempts to involve more families in school governance and extra-curricular activities. However, these lines of communication are not adequate. Some parents and other family members express a continued desire and need to be included. Stronger family and school alliances will enhance student learning. *(following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, reviewing school improvement plan, partnerships folder, 2002 SALT Survey Report, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

The school improvement plan for the Fairmount Primary Schools is an incomplete document for moving the school forward in its efforts to improve student learning. A self-study was completed in January 2002. It details the teaching and learning status of the school at that time, but it does not correlate with or inform this plan. The strategies and action steps of the plan do not outline the detailed specifics of what the school will do to accomplish its goals. The professional development action steps do not indicate how the various activities in which teachers engage will be applied to their everyday practice in the classroom. While several of the components of an effective plan are present, action steps with assigned accountability

and assessment of implementation and progress, as well as specific timelines for completion, are noticeably missing. As written, this plan is not an effective agent for change. *(reviewing school improvement plan, meeting with the school improvement team, self-study folder, reviewing district strategic plan)*

Library resources at Fifth Avenue School are inadequate. The inventory is limited and outdated. Many classroom collections are also meager. It is not clear whether the school plans to increase these inventories. Within classrooms there is a limited variety of leveled texts to provide students with choices for their self-selected and guided reading, teacher-directed reading, and read alouds. These classroom libraries are not arranged in a manner that guides and encourages students to select reading material on their own. *(observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, following students, meeting with the school improvement team, students)*

District level professional development opportunities are numerous and varied. Teachers have started and/or are planning to access the many opportunities afforded them by the district. A newly appointed Professional Development Coordinator at the district level leads and supports these school-based efforts. A literacy coach is available to work directly with classroom teachers, modeling lessons and consulting on literacy instruction. When fully implemented, these additional supports will help the teachers of Second and Fifth Avenue Schools increase student achievement. *(meeting with teachers, the school improvement team, school and district administrators, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district strategic plan, reviewing records of professional development activities, record of professional development*

*activities, Article 31 folder)*

## Commendations for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools

Effective partnerships with outside agencies

## Recommendations for Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools

Find ways to use computers as instructional tools in the classroom.

Create equitable access to technology between the two schools.

Evaluate current classroom configurations for effectiveness to make informed decisions.

Continue to investigate ways to enhance communication between home and school. Survey your parents to determine their talents and willingness to share.

Use this report to review and amend the school improvement plan.

Increase library and classroom collections for general use and comprehensive literacy instruction.

Accelerate professional development for all staff on Principles of Learning, standards-based and differentiated instruction, comprehensive literacy, inquiry-based and cooperative learning.

## Recommendations for Woonsocket School District

Support the school in its efforts to increase its resources and its professional development.

Support the school in its efforts to revise and implement the school improvement plan so that it reflects the recommendations in this report.

## 7. Final Advice to the School

Fairmount Primary School is a nurturing and accepting place

for both students and teachers to grow. Your students have a deep desire to learn, and they adore their home away from home. Capitalize on this eagerness to learn, and push yourselves and your students to greater heights. Assess your students frequently. Provide differentiated instruction wherever it is appropriate. Strive to implement standards and rubrics effectively in your lessons so that you raise the bar for all students. Take full advantage of the many resources that are becoming available to you in the form of professional development, support staff, and material resources. The collegiality and camaraderie among staff is commendable and can serve as the foundation for continued learning. Consider opportunities to network with other schools, and observe other schools and districts that face similar challenges. Look beyond what you know to what might be.

## The Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools Improvement Team

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## Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

## Fairmount Primary Schools: Fifth and Second Avenue Schools

October 25, 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, 1<sup>st</sup> 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 three portions 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.

November 25, 2002

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