Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
www.ridoe.net

# Park View Middle School

## Cranston

## The SALT Visit Team Report

### November 22, 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 2246 or salt@ridoe.net.**

# 1. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS of this report

## Overview

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Park View Middle School from November 18, 2002 through November 22, 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 Park View Middle School was the touchstone document for the team. No matter how informative documents may be, however, there is no substitute for being at the school while it is in session—in the classrooms, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The team builds its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, the visit allows the team to build informed judgments

about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at Park View Middle School.

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

♦    *observing a total of 200 complete classes and 89 partial classes. The team spent a total of over 190 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 13 students for a full day*

♦    *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*

♦    *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*

> *teachers*
>
> *school improvement team*
>
> *school and district administrators*
>
> *students*
>
> *parents*

♦    *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*

♦    *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*

♦    *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*

♦    *analyzing five 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 Park View Middle School*
> *self study for student following*
> *self study for informal student survey*
> *teacher schedules*
> *TAC documents*
> *Park View Student Handbook*
> *Park View Honors*
> *Performance Skills Program*

*English Language Arts Curriculum Framework for Grade 6-12 for Cranston Schools*

*Mathematics Framework and Curriculum Guide for Cranston Schools*

*district strategic plan*

*2002 SALT Survey report*

*classroom textbooks*

*2002* Information Works!

*2002 New Standards Reference Examination results*

*2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment results*

*2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary*

*2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary*

*CRISS Program guide*

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 28 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.

# 2. PROFILE OF Park View Middle School

## Background

Park View Middle School is located on the eastern side of Cranston directly south of its namesake, Roger Williams Park. The school, housing grades seven through nine, opened its doors on September 8, 1954. Miss F. Harriett Dever has been the first and only secretary to serve in the main office of Park View, since it opened. In 1995, Cranston Schools adopted the middle school model to serve students in grades six, seven, and eight. Today Park View has over 900 students, a faculty of 90, an assistant principal and a principal.

Of the students at Park View 87% are white, four percent African American, five percent Hispanic, and four percent Asian/ Pacific Islander. Six percent of the student body receives ESL services directly or on a resource/monitor basis. Fifteen percent of special education students are serviced through a resource model and five percent of the students participate in special education through the self-contained model. Twenty-eight percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Park View Middle School is organized around teams consisting of four teachers, who teach English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. There are three teams for each grade. One team for each grade is designated the Special Education Inclusion Team. In addition, there is a multilevel ESL team. A vibrant Unified Arts program completes the program of study, which includes Art, Music, World Languages, Family and Consumer Science, Technology Education, Physical Education and Health, and Developmental Guidance.

At the 2002 Rhode Island Music Educators Association State Band Festival the Park View Band received a rating of Superior, the highest rating. For the fourth consecutive year, the Park View NEED (National Energy Education Development) project earned both the Rhode Island Junior Level School of the Year and the National Junior Level School of the Year awards.

## State Assessment Results for Park View Middle School

This section of the school profile shows results from the latest available 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 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. Student results are shown as the percentage of students taking the test whose score places them in the various categories at, above, or below the performance standard. Endorsed by the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education in 1998, the tested standards can be found in the publication *New Standards Performance Standards*.

*Table 1. 2000-01 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments*
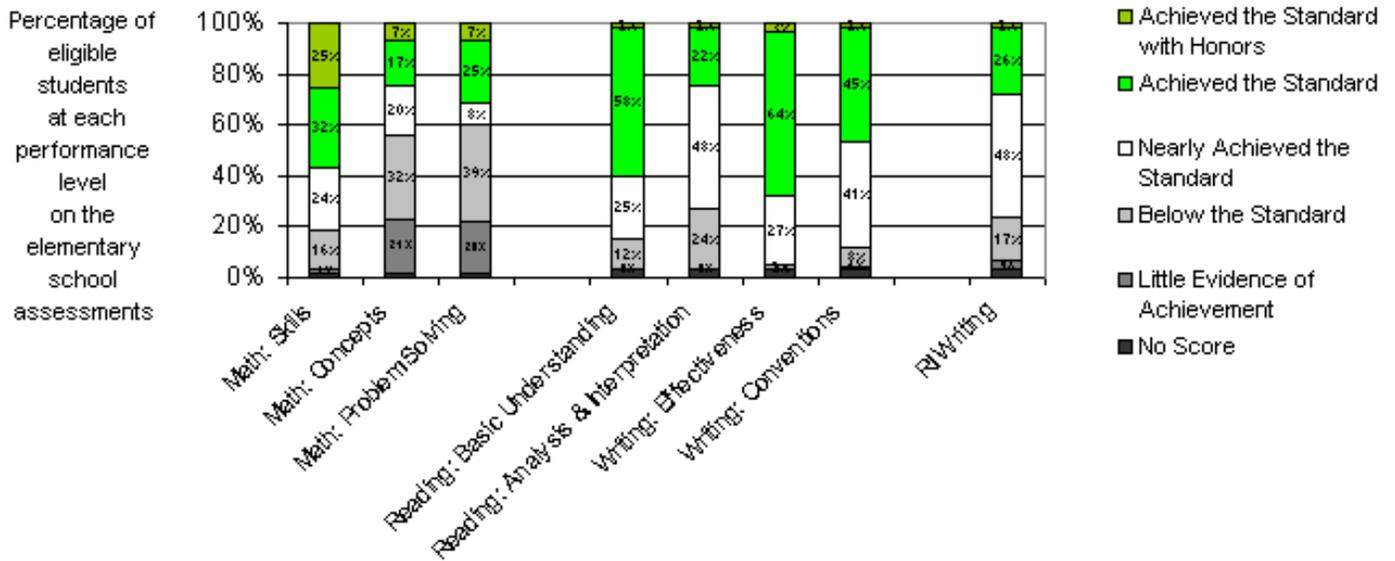
There are three areas, mathematics: skills, reading: basic understanding, and writing: effectiveness where 50 percent or more of the students achieved the standard.

### Results compared to similar students in the state

This chart includes the performance levels of students with special education needs, students participating in ESL or bilingual programs, low socio-economic status (a composite of income level, racial background and parental education), as well as the performance of students with none of these characteristics. Taking all these characteristics into account, the graph displays the overall performance of students in this school compared to a group of students from across the state whose characteristics match this school's students.

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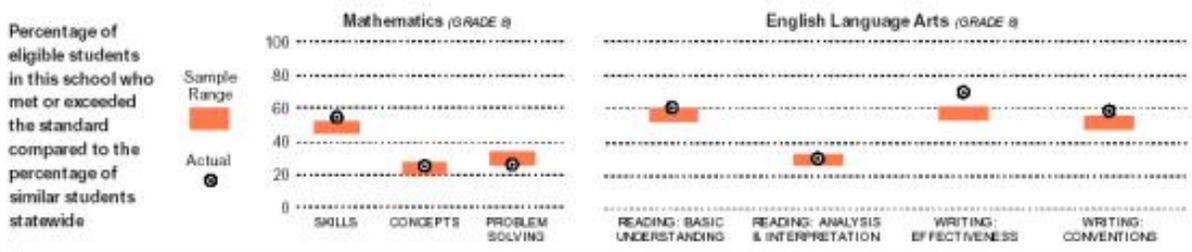


Park View students performed at the same level as similar students statewide except in the area of writing effectiveness where they scored above similar students statewide.

### 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. Since breaking students into these smaller groups can result in groups becoming too small to show accurate results, this display shows the results based on three years of testing. The Department defines an important gap between different groups (an equity gap) to be a gap of 15% or more.

*Table 3. 2000-2001 Student Results across Subgroups*
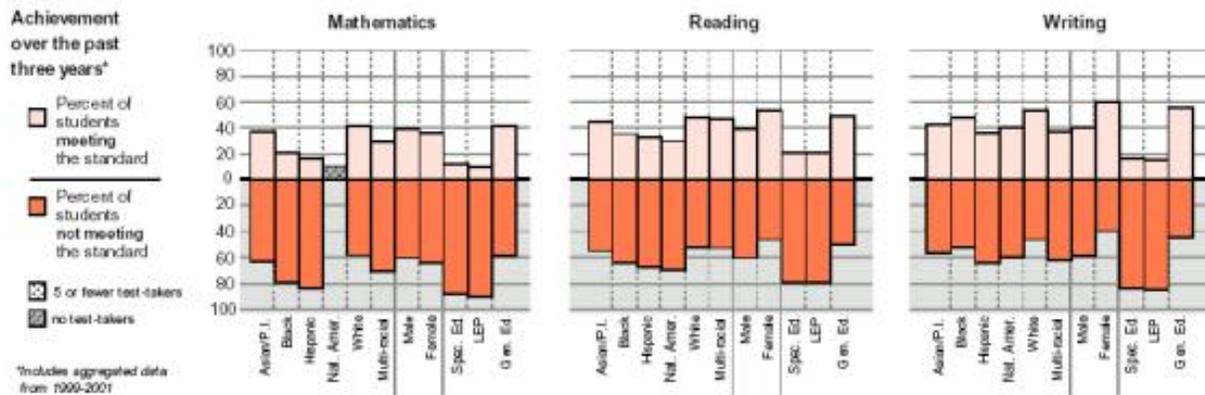
Equity gaps exist for special education students and LEP students in all areas. Gender gaps exist in reading and writing. A variety of ethnic gaps exist in mathematics, reading and writing over the past three years.

## 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 Student Results Showing Change Over Time*
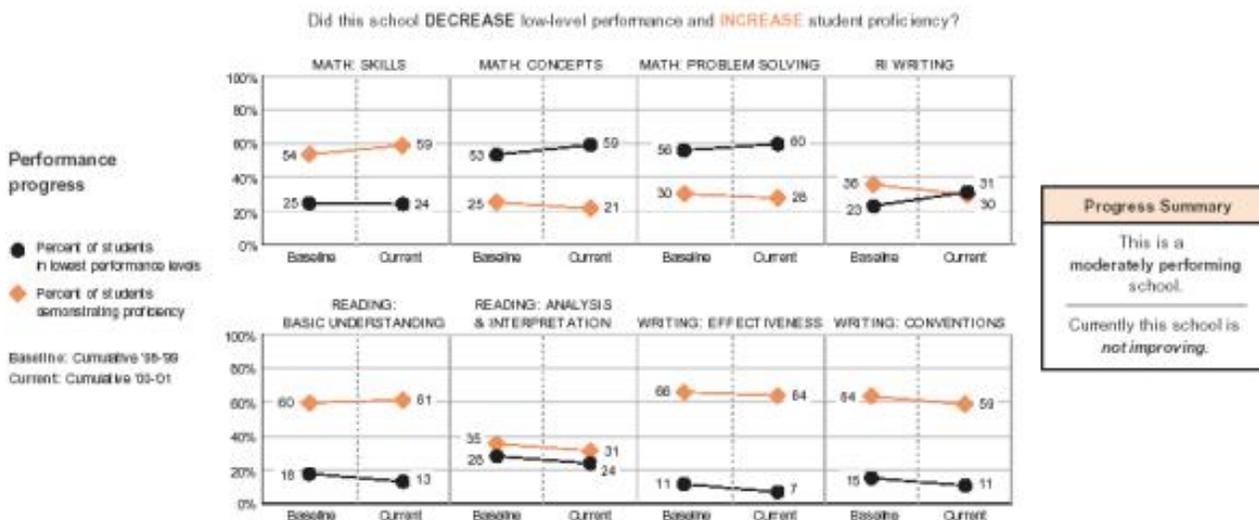


Mathematics skills was the only area that shows a larger than 3 percent increase in proficiency. In the reading and the writing subtests, the percent of students in the lowest performance levels decreased by greater than three percent, but the level of students demonstrating proficiency fell.

Information Works! data for Park View Middle School is available at http://www.ridoe.net.

# 3. PORTRAIT OF Park View Middle School AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Park View Middle School, the flagship school for Cranston's adoption of the middle school philosophy in the early 90s, is stalled on its journey towards full implementation. While many of the essential elements of a middle school are in place, Park View clings to many components of the junior high school model.

The students are capable of so much more than is asked of them. Traditional methods of instruction and homogeneous grouping for core classes severely limit the ability of the teachers to meet the needs of all students. While some students approach their classes eager to learn, a significant number do not. Low expectations, a lack of academic rigor, and inconsistent expectations for their behavior hold many students back. Many students are allowed to be off task, and there are neither visible consequences for their behavior nor accountability for their learning.

Many teachers are dedicated to their jobs and their students. While they participate in professional development offerings, many have not fully incorporated these effective practices into their classes. Many of the unified arts, ESL, and special education classrooms are models of effective teaching practices. The influence of teachers, who have expertise, does not extend beyond a few classrooms. Teachers use their team meeting time to meet with parents, complete bookkeeping tasks, and discuss individual students, rather than to discuss cross curricula planning or to look at student work. Most of the staff has not yet established true collegial and trusting relationships among themselves. Although teachers are caring and compassionate toward some students, other students are hurt by labeling and thoughtless remarks. There is no celebration of the increasingly diverse population. In fact, some students are effectively isolated from the student population by their schedules.

The Park View Middle School administration is distant from the faculty. Teachers perceive favoritism. There is a lack of accountability for the implementation of the curriculum, for student performance, for team meetings, and for subject area meetings. Frustration is high among teachers, who believe that the behavior code is not consistently applied to all students. Student behavior issues are most obvious in the lower level classes. Time teachers spend addressing student behavior interferes with their instruction. Although Project Pride is conspicuously on the walls, it is not a part of the school culture.

The school building with its three floors of corridors measuring 1/8 of a mile each is in desperate need of upgrading and expansion. Windows are coated, blocking natural light. Teachers regulate the temperature of their classrooms by opening and closing the doors and windows. The lack of space for some programs, poor air quality and dirty conditions in the building contribute to the low teacher morale.

## Sources of Evidence

♦ *2002 Information Works!*

♦ *2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment School Summary*

♦ *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 and teachers*

- *meeting with the students*

- CRISS Program guide

## Conclusions

Many students are not motivated to learn and are not actively involved in their learning. They approach learning tasks by doing what they must do to get by. Others are disinterested learners, who draw pictures and talk to their friends during instruction time. Students enter classes poised and ready to learn, but many readily disengage from their instruction because of the low-level of the activities. This mindset stifles students' love of learning, curiosity, motivation and enthusiasm. Because of their lack of engagement, students cannot take full advantage of their learning capabilities and thus, their performance is limited. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work)*

Students enjoy reading. They are aware of the 25 books standard. They carry books with them to read during gap times in the classroom and sometimes during instructional times. Many students read books at home and perform follow-up activities to demonstrate their understanding. Few students share their reading with other students or adults or connect what they read to their lives. In their classes, many students read aloud across the content areas for specific information. Most reading responses are simple recall in the form of drawing a picture, writing a book report, making a project and answering low level questions. Although teachers reinforce basic skills, the lack of analysis and interpretation of reading materials impedes student performance. The low performance of students on the New Standards Reference Examination, Reading and Analysis, substantiates this. *(2002 New Standards English Language Arts Reference Examination School Summary, meeting with students, talking with students, observing classes, following students, reviewing completed an ongoing student work, 2002 Information Works!)*

Park View students write across the curriculum. Most students effectively use the writing process. Some students enthusiastically share their writing with their peers. In all areas of the curriculum, students spend too much time taking notes in a rote manner. The exclusive use of the five-paragraph model, while beneficial for most student writing, limits students' creativity and exposure to other styles of writing. *(reviewing completed an ongoing student work, following students, observing classes, talking with students and teachers, 2002 Rhode Island Writing Assessment School Summary, 2002 New Standards English Language Arts School Summary, CRISS Program guide)*

While some students engage in open-ended performance tasks in mathematics, many complete multiple worksheets that emphasize only basic skills. Student work shows little evidence that students can apply these skills to their conceptual understanding or problem solving. This is evident by the low scores on the New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination. Students report that mathematics is boring and too easy. *(talking with students, following students, observing classes, 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, reviewing completed an ongoing student work, 2002 Information Works!)*

## Commendations for Park View Middle School

Student understanding of their learning needs

Quantity of student writing

## Recommendations for Park View Middle School

Move to heterogeneous grouping practices in all areas of the curriculum.

Increase academic rigor for all students in all areas.

Use the district curriculum guide for English language arts to implement a reading program.

## Recommendations for Cranston School District

Support Park View School as it moves to heterogeneous grouping practices in all areas of the curriculum.

# 4. FINDINGS ON TEACHING

## Sources of Evidence

- *observing classes*

- *observing the school outside of the classroom*

- *talking with students, teachers, school administration, and staff*

- *reviewing completed an ongoing student work*

- *reviewing records of professional development activities*

- *self study for student following*

- *self study for informal student survey*

- *meeting with students, school improvement team, parents, school and district administrators*

- *following students*

- *2002 Information Works!*

- *2002 SALT Survey report*

- *discussing student work with teachers*

- *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework for Grade 6-12 for Cranston Schools*

- *Mathematics Framework and Curriculum Guide for Cranston Schools*

- *classroom textbooks*

- *CRISS Program*

- *classroom assessments*

- *2002 New Standards Mathematics School Summary*

## Conclusions

Most teachers at Park View Middle School care about their students and believe that they meet their needs. Many focus too much time trying to establish effective class routines and behavior management at the expense of student learning. This particularly is evident in the lower level classes. There are pockets of teaching excellence where students are engaged in hands-on learning, problem solving and higher-level critical thinking. However, most instruction is primarily teacher directed and student interaction often is discouraged. Although teachers participate in professional development, most continue to rely

on traditional methods of instruction such as lecture, note taking, homework review, and low-level worksheets. This leads to students' lack of involvement in their learning, which contributes to their disengagement and poor behavior. *(2002 Salt Survey report, observing classes, meeting with the students, following students, reviewing ongoing and completed student work, talking with students and teachers, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

Teachers rigorously defend the practice of homogeneous grouping. Students are placed when they arrive at Park View Middle School. Teachers' attitudes toward students and their expectations of them are shaped by that placement. Expectations for learning and behavior vary among the four levels and students are aware of these inconsistencies. Park View's homogeneous grouping promotes lower expectations for some students and creates information gaps that limit transitions between levels. Many teachers do not make a purposeful effort to move students to higher levels. Most teachers are frustrated by and/or ignore student disengagement and are unaware of the need to change their instructional practices to address the problem. A few teachers even openly refer to and address students in disparaging ways. *(following students, observing classes, talking with students, staff, and school administrators, 2002 SALT Survey report, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, self study for student following, self study informal student survey, observing the school outside of the classroom)*

All teachers accept the responsibility for, and recognize the importance of, integrating writing into their curricula. English teachers consistently use the writing process and score student work, using the Rhode Island Writing Assessment rubric. A few teachers instruct students in the use of this rubric and provide effective feedback so students can revise their own work to achieve a higher standard. Teachers also effectively use the five-paragraph model to improve student skills in organization and the structure of their writing in other content areas. This is a good beginning toward the development of cross curricula writing; however, its sole use is limiting. *(observing classes, meeting with students, school and district administrators, parents, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed an ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, following students, CRISS Program guide)*

Teachers do not provide a consistent reading program for their students at any grade level. Some classes read novels, anthologies, and texts and engage in teacher directed whole class discussions. Teachers require students to read orally or silently from textbooks, to take notes, and extract detail oriented information from what they have read. In content areas, teachers often have students take turns reading aloud; this is followed by a class discussion about the text. The majority of student assessment is multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, or matching responses. There is limited evidence that students can analyze and interpret information. Teachers' reliance on so few strategies impedes the development of analytic higher level thinking skills. *(following students, observing classes, English Language Arts Curriculum Framework for Grade 6-12, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing completed an ongoing student work, talking with students, CRISS Program guide)*

Teachers of mathematics are not collaborating between and across grade levels in order to provide consistent quality of mathematics instruction. Most teachers focus on reinforcing basic mathematical skills. Although standards are displayed on the walls, students are not engaged in a standards-based program. In the absence of a standards-based mathematics program, most teachers are not clear about what students should know or what they should be able to do at each grade level. Teachers do not engage students in discussions about problem solving strategies; they do not use math manipulatives or apply skills toward conceptual understanding. Mathematics instruction lacks rigor. Continuing these practices will perpetuate low student performance in mathematics. *(following students, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed an ongoing student work, 2002 New Standards Mathematics Reference Examination School Summary, discussing student work with teachers, observing classes, classroom textbooks, Mathematics Framework and Curriculum Guide for Cranston Schools)*

## Commendations for Park View Middle School

Beginning the implementation of school wide writing

## Recommendations for Park View Middle School

Move to heterogeneous grouping practices in all areas of the curriculum.

Hold teachers accountable for implementing and sharing best practice that will improve the learning of all students.

Collaborate between and across all grade levels in all subject areas.

Consistently use CRISS Program so that students learn through reading, writing, talking, and listening.

Use New Standard Performance Standards to drive instruction.

Use New Standards release tasks to supplement and support instruction.

Increase expectations and academic rigor for all students.

## Recommendations for Cranston School Department

Support Park View School as it moves to heterogeneous grouping practices in all areas of the curriculum

# 5. FINDINGS ON THE SCHOOL

## Sources of Evidence

♦ *observing classes*

♦ *observing the school outside of the classroom*

♦ *talking with many students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*

♦ *meeting with school and district administrators, parents, students, school improvement team*

♦ *following students*

♦ *reviewing School Improvement Plan for Park View Middle School*

♦ *Park View Self Study*

♦ *Park View Student Handbook/Park View Honors*

♦ *Performance Skills Program*

♦ *2002 SALT Survey report*

♦ *reviewing records of professional development activities*

♦ *reviewing district and school policies and practices*

♦ *teacher schedules*

♦ *TAC documents*

## Conclusions

There is a significant lack of focus and common vision at Park View Middle School. Pervasive junior high school practices conflict with middle school philosophy to the detriment of good teaching and learning. Instruction time is underutilized. The curriculum is disjointed and not clearly articulated.  Team planning is used ineffectively. There is little evidence of any cross curricula discussion, collaboration of instruction or coordination of assignments. Too much team planning time is spent on student issues, parent conferences and other business, rather than on activities that focus on student learning. There is lack of accountability and lack of protocols for team planning. Most important, the active promotion of the current homogeneous grouping practices has a pervasive negative impact on student learning.  *(following students, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with teachers, meeting with school administrator*

During Team Time, students often are unengaged and idle; they complete their homework assignments, do makeup work, silently read or study for tests. A few teachers do use this time to support students and their learning. Too many teachers use this time as an additional planning period and ignore the needs of their students. Surprisingly, many students are unsupervised during portions of this time. The potential this time has for student learning is not fully or consistently maximized. By design, the school-wide Performance Skills Program has the potential to reinforce students' skills and the implementation of strategies that might improve their performance. The exclusive and inconsistent use of this program for all students, regardless of need, is a waste of critical instruction time. *(following students, observing classes, talking to students and*

*teachers, observing the school outside of the classroom, reviewing district and school policies and practices, meeting with students, school and district administrators)*

The principal is not a visible presence within the school. Accountability measures for programs, student learning, team responsibilities and school reform are not in place. The lack of focus and direction in this school results in complacency. While parents and teachers find the principal approachable, they share a concern about his lack of follow up. Consequently, many teachers do not feel they have the principal's support. The spirit of cooperation, trust and mutual respect among the staff, faculty and administration is disparate. Therefore, morale continues to decline. *(observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with teachers and staff, meeting with district administrators and parents, reviewing records of professional development activities, 2002 Salt Survey report)*

There are inequities in use of space, in the length of school day, and in some student's access to some of the Unified Arts courses for English as Second Language (ESL) students and some special education students. Some of these students have no opportunity to interact with the general education students. This is unacceptable. In spite of obstacles and the restrictions the school places upon them, the ESL and special education self-contained programs are conducive to effective learning. Special education and ESL teams demonstrate evidence of their flexibility and cooperation in scheduling and planning to meet the needs of the students. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, and school and district administrators, teachers schedules)*

The Unified Arts Program is an integral part of students' overall education. The majority of these classes actively involve students in an academically rigorous environment. However, inequitable distribution of time, grading practices, and the lack of availability of Unified Arts courses for all students minimize their importance. District policy allows a student to be on the honor roll with a C- grade in any or all unified arts courses. This further diminishes the importance of the Unified Arts. *(Student Handbook, Park View Honors, following students, observing classes, reviewing district and school policies and practices, talking with students and teachers)*

A lack of academic rigor and student disengagement leads to persistent student misbehavior in many classrooms. Many teachers lack effective classroom management strategies, and teachers do not apply discipline in a constructive or consistent manner. The inconsistent supervision in TAC (The Alternative Classroom) is not effective for many students. While responsibilities for behavioral policies are defined, they are blurred in practice. *(meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, parents, following students, TAC documents, talking with students, teachers, staff and school administrators, observing classes, reviewing school improvement plan)*

The teachers, students, and parents at the Park View Middle School completed a very thorough self-study that identifies strengths, challenges, opportunities, and barriers. Some of this visit team's conclusions are consistent with this self-study. The school improvement plan, however, lacks measurable goals and expected results. *(reviewing school improvement plan, Park View Self Study, meeting with the school improvement team)*

## Commendations for Park View Middle School

Outstanding Unified Arts Program

Thorough and thoughtful self-study included the majority of the school community members.

## Recommendations for Park View Middle School

Restructure the school day to maximize instruction time, and include all ESL and special education students in the Unified Arts courses.

Review the need for Performance Skills for all students.

Participate in research-based professional development to prepare to implement the school-wide middle school model that incorporates heterogeneous grouping practices in all areas of the curriculum.

Articulate and implement standards-based curriculum.

Define a clear focus, empower the leadership team, and demand accountability on all levels.

Develop as a school community an equitable school-wide policy for behavior that has clear guidelines for accountability.

Use this report and the information from the school self-study to prioritize measurable action steps.

# Recommendations for Cranston School District

Establish honor roll criteria that support the importance of the Unified Arts Program.

Support Park View School as its staff participates in research-based professional development in preparation for the implementation the school-wide middle school model that incorporates heterogeneous grouping practices in all areas of the curriculum.

# 6. Final Advice to the School

Many of the components of the successful middle school model exist at Park View—team time, team planning, performance skills and the self-study. Use these to their fullest advantage.

Recognize and accept that current practices are not moving your students forward. Teachers must search for new and better ways to teach their students. Focus your hard work on exploring and developing an exciting student-centered learning environment. Build collegiality to develop pride and trust in your school and among yourselves. Always model the same respectful behavior that you expect of your students.

Harness your energy and that of your students. You have the resources, schedule, personnel and community support to move your school forward.

As expectations are raised and rigor is strengthened, student motivation, behavior and performance will improve.

Most importantly, immediately start to implement heterogeneous grouping. All students know that the "number one" group is the best, however all students should be made to feel that they are "number one."

This SALT team realizes that this is a difficult report to hear. Recognize your potential to make the changes necessary to enhance your practices and improve student performance.

# The Park View Middle School Improvement Team

Mrs. Carolyn Peck, Co-Chairman

Mrs Susan Mastrati, Co-Chairman

Dr. Gary Spremullo, Principal

Mr. Paul DePalma, Assistant Pricipal

Ms. Lisa Beaudoin, Teacher

Ms. Norma Colaccio, Department Chair, Special Education

Mrs. Donna DiIorio, Teacher

Dr Richard Gannon , University of Rhode Island

Mrs. Debra Lancia, Teacher

Mrs. Mary-Jeanne Latina, Teacher

Mr. Joseph May, Department Chair, Social Studies

Mrs. Carolyn Montalbano, Teacher

Mr. William Morris, Teacher

Mr. Joseph Schiavulli, Parent/Teacher

Mrs. Joanne Spaziano, Parent/Teacher

Mrs. Jeannine Thompson, Parent

Mrs. Jean Tesser, Teacher

Mrs. Christine Volpe, Teacher

Mr. Michael Watson, Guidance

Mrs. Pamela Wood, Parent

# The SALT Visit Team

Donna H. Reinalda, Chair
On leave to RIDE as a
SALT Fellow
Sowams School, Barrington,


Carol Belair
On leave to RIDE as a
SALT Fellow
Wilbur and McMahon,
Little Compton

Sherri Mooney
Grades 6,7, and 8 Special Education English Teacher
DelSesto Middle School, Providence

Vernon Brown
Grade 7 History Teacher
Esek Hopkins Middle School, Providence

Ann Sulllivan
Grade 6/7 Guidance Counselor
Davisville Middle School, North Kingston

Lisa Dunphy
French Teacher
Vincent J. Gallagher Middle School, Smithfield

Lawrence Filippelli
Assistant Principal
Sciutate Middle School and
Scituate High School Scituate

Marian McMahon
Grade 6 Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies Teacher
Edward Martin Junior High, East Providence

Terry Packer
Grade 6 Math/Science Teacher
Metcalf School, Exeter-West Greenwich

Michael Convery
Principal
Coventry Middle School, Coventry

Kimberly Larocque
Grade 7/8 English Teacher
Delsesto Middle School, Providence

William Jeonnotte
Grade 8 English Teacher
Joseph Jenks Junior High, Pawtucket

Peter Kmiec
Grade 7/8Tech Education Teacher
Aldrich Junior High School, Warwick

# Endorsement of SALT Visit Team Report

## Park View Middle School

November 22, 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 two 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.
DATE: January 8, 2003